



ASSOCIATION FOR TRANSNATIONAL
HIGHER EDUCATION ACCREDITATION



ATHEA – Transnational Quality Assurance

The Association for Transnational Higher Education Accreditation (ATHEA) is a not-for-profit international membership association registered in Vienna, Austria. It was founded and is administered by its European member institutions of higher education. ATHEA is dedicated to quality assurance and improvement through accreditation via peer evaluation. The institutional accreditation by the THEA Board of Commissioners instils public confidence in the institutional mission, goals, performance, and resources through its rigorous accreditation standards and their enforcement of those standards.

The standards for accreditation are based on the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) required for recognition by the European Quality Assurance Register in Higher Education (EQAR). A summary of the accreditation standards is as follows:

1. Policy for Quality Assurance.

The institution has an integrated policy for quality assurance.

2. Design and Approval of Academic Programmes.

The institution has quality-based processes for the design and approval of academic programs.

3. Student-Centred Learning, Teaching, and Assessment.

The institution's academic programmes encourage active learning with outcomes-based assessment.

4. Student Admission, Progression, Recognition, and Certification.

The institution consistently applies its published regulations covering all phases of the student cycle including student admission, progression, recognition, and certification.

5. Teaching Staff.

The institution assures itself of the competence of its teachers and applies fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff. The institution performs research appropriate to the institution's mission.

6. Learning Resources and Student Support.

The institution has appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and provides adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support.

7. Information Management.

The institution collects, analyses, and uses relevant information for the effective management of academic programs.



8. Public Information.

The institution publishes information about their activities, including academic programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date, and readily accessible.

9. On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes.

The institution monitors and periodically reviews their programmes to ensure that their programmes achieve the objectives set for them and are responsive to the needs of students and society.

10. Cyclical External Quality Assurance.

The institution undergoes cyclical external quality assurance in accordance with the ATHEA standards and expectations.

ATHEA aspires to be the preeminent resource for institutions of higher education striving to achieve excellence in fulfilling their missions.

ATHEA intends, through voluntary assessment and adherence to high standards for student learning outcomes and operational behaviour, to assure the public that its accreditation institutions of higher education are fulfilling their stated purposes and addressing the public's expectations.



ATHEA Founding Meeting in Vienna, May 2015

The Accreditation Imperative

Recognised institutional accreditation satisfies a number of key stakeholder requirements including national-level legalities, regional transferability of students, and is often a prerequisite for programmatic accreditation.

With ATHEA, our goal is to provide internationally recognised institutional accreditation so that the academic institution meets the quality assurance standards required by a variety of stakeholders. ATHEA believes that institutional accreditation must be mission-based, strategic planning driven, outcomes and competency centred, and based upon peer-review.

Accreditation signifies that an institution has a purpose appropriate to higher education and has resources, programs, and services sufficient to accomplish and sustain that purpose.

Accreditation indicates that an institution maintains clearly specified educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate to the degrees it offers, and that it is successful in achieving its stated objectives.



ATHEA Membership and THEA Accreditation

1. Institutional Membership

This is the entry into the ATHEA and the starting point for all institutional members who seek accreditation.

To become a member of the Association for Transnational Higher Education Accreditation an institution must

- have legal authorization to operate as a tertiary educational institution,
- have students in an academic programme,
- be in existence for at least 1 year, and
- offer and teach their own institution's programmes.

2. Candidacy for Accreditation

An Institutional Member who has completed all of the requirements for candidacy status as stated in the THEA Board of Commissioners Accreditation Policy Manual will be considered a candidate for accreditation.

To apply for THEA accreditation candidacy an Institutional Member must

- have graduates of the programme,
- be in existence for at least 3 years.

The specific term for candidacy is Transnational Higher Education Accreditation-Candidate, or THEA-Candidate.



3. Accredited

Once a candidate for accreditation completes a self-study, passes a site evaluation, and is accepted into accreditation status by the THEA Board of Commissioners, the institution is awarded accreditation.

To get accredited a THEA-Candidate must have at least 2 cycles of graduates (students that start and finish the programme) from the institution.

The specific ATHEA term for being accredited is Transnational Higher Education Accreditation-Accredited, or THEA-Accredited.



Affiliated Institutions

Additional to the three levels of membership status an Affiliated Institution denotes a status of being associated with ATHEA that is reserved for organisations associated with higher education that wish to learn, be informed, and potentially receive assistance from ATHEA relative to quality improvement in higher education.

Affiliated Institutions are not necessarily on an immediate path for THEA accreditation, but may choose to pursue it at a later time.

Our Accreditation Approach through THEA

Our approach to accreditation through THEA (Transnational Higher Education Accreditation) is based on the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) as adopted by the European Union education ministers in May 2015. ATHEA's accreditation standards and expectations, the procedures used for peer evaluation, and the internal governance and structure are aligned specifically to the ESG, which also means alignment to the global quality assurance standards from the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).

Our strategic goal is to be listed on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) once ATHEA satisfies the Register requirements for listing.

Fees

Annual fees for the Institutional Membership	3'000 EUR
One-time payment with the Candidacy Application	5'000 EUR
One-time payment with submission of the self-study	10'000 EUR
Annual Accreditation Maintenance payment starting the year after accreditation is awarded	2'000 EUR
Annual dues for an Affiliated Colleague	1'500 EUR





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