



**ACEEU**

ACCREDITATION COUNCIL  
FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL &  
ENGAGED UNIVERSITIES



# Accreditation Process Manual

# Purpose of this document

The Accreditation Process Manual is the central document and starting point for all those aiming at ACEEU accreditation or re-accreditation. Addressing both entrepreneurial university as well as engaged university accreditation, the document provides relevant background information and guides through the accreditation process.

## OTHER KEY DOCUMENTS

The document refers to other key documents applicant institutions should consult during the (re)accreditation process, including:

- Accreditation Standards for Entrepreneurial University Accreditation
- Accreditation Standards for Engaged University Accreditation
- ACEEU Accreditation Policies
- Application documents
  - Eligibility datasheet
  - Self-evaluation form

All these documents are included in ACEEU's Application Package, available at the ACEEU website.

## QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the ACEEU Office via email or phone.

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction to ACEEU Accreditation .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Accreditation profile .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Key stakeholders and responsibilities .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Accreditation process .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Process overview .....	15
Initial accreditation process .....	19
Re-accreditation process.....	25
<b>Accreditation costs .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>ACEEU membership .....</b>	<b>30</b>

## Appendix:

Appendix 1: Example of peer review schedule

# Introduction to ACEEU Accreditation

The higher education ecosystem has significantly changed over the past decades with universities and other education institutions now being considered to not only have a special capability but also a certain responsibility to make a greater social, economic and cultural impact. ACEEU has been founded to contribute to this favourable change through promoting the recognition and development of entrepreneurial and engaged institutions.

## THE NEED FOR A NEW ACCREDITATION

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are key actors in today's knowledge society. Since the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, these institutions have been both education and research oriented organisations. More recently they have become more entrepreneurial and engaged to external stakeholders such as business and society, thereby adding a third mission to their organisation. There are today many reasons why institutions actively engage with their environment. Universities aim to provide students with the skills demanded by organisations in the private, public, not-for-profit and governmental sector, to generate the best possible return on their research investments, to address today's societal challenges and to collaborate with a variety of stakeholders for mutual benefit, just to name a few.

Given the benefits of accreditation to provide recognition and to support organisational development and cultural change, most universities today accredit their study programmes and many accredit their quality management and international focus. The university's entrepreneurial orientation and engagement with their surrounding region and society, however, has been largely neglected in accreditations.

## ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL AND ENGAGED UNIVERSITIES

The Accreditation Council for Entrepreneurial and Engaged Universities (ACEEU) is the first council focusing on entrepreneurship and engagement on an institutional level. ACEEU aims to set a global standard for entrepreneurial and engaged institutions.

ACEEU's focus is reflected in its belief, vision, mission and values.

**Our belief**

We believe that universities can and should create greater social, economic and cultural impacts.

**Our vision**

The way we envision universities creating these impacts is by them becoming more entrepreneurial and engaged.

**Our mission**

ACEEU's mission is to promote cultural change, to accelerate institutional development and to amplify the recognition of excellence through the provision of world-class accreditation services.

**Our values**

The following core values form the foundation on which we perform work and conduct ourselves:

- *Integrity*  
We are honest, transparent and fair.
- *Collaboration*  
We work with others to create mutually beneficial partnerships.
- *Respect*  
We acknowledge the diversity of university missions and cultures.
- *Excellence*  
Through customer orientation and continuous innovation, we create extraordinary results.
- *Accountability*  
We are committed to meeting the highest professional standards.

**ACEEU ACCREDITATION**

The ACEEU accreditation process for both entrepreneurial and engaged universities has been established through a process of close cooperation between a wide variety of experts from various backgrounds, nationalities and career levels in the fields of entrepreneurship, collaborative innovation, university-business cooperation, 3<sup>rd</sup> generation universities and associated fields. These experts have worked collectively on the accreditation process, standards and guidelines as well as policies which combined provide a framework and tool for recognising and advancing entrepreneurship and engagement in higher education.

**BENEFITS OF ACEEU ACCREDITATION**

In addition to promoting entrepreneurship and engagement in higher education worldwide, ACEEU provides significant benefits for institutions that aim at, and are awarded, ACEEU accreditation:



### **Promotion of cultural change**

Given that entrepreneurship and engagement have become crucial in a university's missions rather recently, universities need to drive mind-set and behavioural change among individuals and groups within the organisation. Aiming for ACEEU accreditation creates a mutual goal and requires collaborative efforts, allowing institutions to initiate and support the process of reconstructing or changing the culture across the organisation. Ultimately, this mind-set and behavioural change will drive staff to actively contribute to the generation of social and economic impact.



### **Acceleration of organisational development**

As the first accreditation of its kind, ACEEU accreditation allows universities to evaluate their status-quo in respect to entrepreneurship and engagement. Through the accreditation procedures, the results and derived recommendations institutions gain significant insights into their current entrepreneurship and engagement practice, ultimately enabling them to make more informed decisions on their strategic planning and operational activities, and to improve their performance. Associated with ACEEU are also large scale events that are focused on entrepreneurship and engagement, allowing universities to network with peers, exchange ideas and take home new concepts to implement in their organisation.



### **Amplification of the recognition of excellence**

There is an ongoing debate if universities are educating their students with the appropriate skills and capabilities, if they conduct impactful research, and if they fulfil their societal role as knowledge provider. ACEEU accredited institutions receive acknowledgement for addressing the above and related issues and promote themselves as a suitable organisation for current and future students, employees and partner from the public and private sector. The accreditation also contributes to the institution's standing amongst national and international funding bodies, governmental organisations, the scientific community as well as the general public.

# Accreditation profile

While several other accreditations involve entrepreneurship and/or engagement elements, they are targeted towards another main goal, e.g. education, internationalisation or quality management. ACEEU's accreditation for entrepreneurial and engaged universities is the world's first comprehensive approach to accredit institutions with respect to their third mission, clearly promoting the entrepreneurial and engagement orientation of an institution.

ACEEU provides institutional accreditation for both entrepreneurship and engagement. Universities can apply for single accreditation (either entrepreneurship or engagement) or dual accreditation (both entrepreneurship and engagement). The accreditation process takes between 10 to 16 months with estimated staff efforts of 240 to 440 hours for single accreditation, depending e.g. on the university's experience with accreditation procedures, the availability of written information and the institution's pro-active behaviour. ACEEU's entrepreneurial and engaged university accreditation is awarded for a period of 5 years.

## Accreditation types

The below descriptions highlight ACEEU's understanding of entrepreneurial and engaged universities and provide a reference point for those universities interested in applying for one or both accreditations.



### Entrepreneurial University Accreditation

An entrepreneurial university is oriented towards and strategically positioned to deliver a range of societal contributions, with a focus on economic impacts. The institution undertakes education that is focused on the development of entrepreneurial mind-sets and skills, and promotes a wide range of career opportunities, including intrapreneurship, self-employment, and entrepreneurship. Research leads to income and intellectual contributions with a high potential for commercialisation. The priority in third mission activities is entrepreneurship and the university accordingly develops its people and organisational capacity to foster innovation. An entrepreneurial university is an influential stakeholder within the entrepreneurial ecosystem and is focused on greater economic impacts in the region.



### Engaged University Accreditation

An engaged university is oriented towards and strategically positioned to deliver a range of societal contributions, benefits and impacts. The institution undertakes education and research aligned with society and business needs. Education integrates external stakeholders and promotes a wide range of career opportunities, including the private, public and not-for-profit sector. Research and projects are collaborative and mutually beneficial. The priority in third mission activities is engagement and the institution accordingly develops its people, organisational capacity and external collaborations. An engaged university is an influential organisation within the wider ecosystem and is focused on providing greater social and cultural impacts for the city and region.

## Accreditation levels

ACEEU is committed to advancing higher education ecosystems with regards to entrepreneurship and engagement. Next to promoting those institutions that are already leaders in the field, ACEEU also aims to support and acknowledge promising and well-performing organisations in their efforts to develop their entrepreneurship and engagement activities. In accordance with this two-fold objective, accreditations are offered at two levels.



### Standard accreditation

Standard accreditation is awarded to those institutions that meet the standards as set by ACEEU's Accreditation Council.



### Premium accreditation

Premium accreditation is awarded to those institutions that provide an exceptional performance with regards to the standards. Please refer to the ACEEU's Standards and Guidelines document for more information.

*Please note that the graphical presentations of the seals above are exemplary. Premium accreditation is awarded for both entrepreneurial university accreditation as well as engaged university accreditation.*



# Key stakeholders and responsibilities

Accreditation procedures are complex undertakings involving a variety of stakeholders at both sides, the applicant institution as well as the accreditation organisation. To make the procedure as efficient as possible, it is key that all stakeholders not only understand their own but also the function and structure of other stakeholder groups.

## Accreditation Council

### FUNCTION

The Accreditation Council is ACEEU's highest decision making body. It approves changes to the accreditation process, standards and guidelines as well as policies. Changes can be proposed by individual members of the council, by the Accreditation Office, or members of the Advisory Board. The Council oversees initial and re-accreditations in order to ensure the consistent application of the set standards.

The Accreditation Council functions as a pool of experts from which various other committees are formed, including:

- Accreditation Committees
- Institutional Review Committees
- Appeal Panels

The members might also serve on Peer Review Teams that visit applicant institutions.

### STRUCTURE & APPOINTMENT

The Accreditation Council is composed of a chair, vice-chair and a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 40 members. The members of the council are recognised experts in the field. Members might be recruited from institutions that have received ACEEU accreditation in the past, given that they bring in specific expertise with respect to ACEEU's accreditation process, standards and guidelines, and policies. The majority of members currently hold or have held management positions within higher education institutions or institutions in the field of entrepreneurship and engagement. The members are appointed by the chair and vice-chair of the council.

## Accreditation Office

### FUNCTION

The Accreditation Office is the operational backbone of ACEEU. It is the first point of contact for interested institutions, applicants as well as already accredited institutions. Apart from other activities, the Accreditation Office helps universities with questions regarding eligibility, the accreditation process, billing and status updates. Next to providing services to current and future members, the Accreditation Office also supports the Accreditation Council, the Advisory Board as well as the Accreditation Committees and Peer Review Teams that are set up for each accreditation process. The Accreditation Office works closely with the Chair and Co-chair of the Accreditation Council.

### STRUCTURE

The Accreditation Office is composed of a head and a support team. The size and structure of the support team is reviewed every twelve months with the main performance criterion being its ability to respond to inquiries within two to three business days.

## Advisory Board

### FUNCTION

The Advisory Board advises the Accreditation Council and the Accreditation Office. Advise might include but is not limited to:

- Adjustments of ACEEU's accreditation process, standards and guidelines, and policies
- Services offered to members
- Changes in national or international accreditation
- Opportunities for ACEEU's development
- Future challenges ACEEU has to face
- Potential candidates for ACEEU's Accreditation Council

### STRUCTURE & APPOINTMENT

The Advisory Board is composed of a chair and a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 12 members. Members of the advisory board can include a variety of stakeholders, including representatives from higher education institutions, intermediaries (such as technology transfer offices, incubators, and science parks), businesses, governmental organisations or other organisations supporting innovation, entrepreneurship and engagement (e.g. regional development offices or associations active in the field). The chair and members of the Advisory Board are appointed by the Accreditation Council chair and vice-chair.

## Accreditation Committees

### FUNCTION

Accreditation Committees are formed to manage the initial or re-accreditation procedure of a single institution. During each accreditation, the Accreditation Committee reviews the self-evaluation reports and prepares an “Initial Evaluation Report”, including a recommendation on the continuity of the process. The Accreditation Commission appoints the Peer Review Team with the applicant institution being able to challenge the appointment. Having received and reviewed the report of the Peer Review Team, the committee prepares a “Final Evaluation Report”, including a recommendation to the council to grant accreditation without conditions, with condition(s) or refuse the accreditation.

### STRUCTURE & APPOINTMENT

Each Accreditation Committee is composed of three members of the Accreditation Council, one of whom will act as Chair of the committee. The members of the committees are selected based on the following conditions:

- ability to judge the respective application institution from a technical perspective
- ability to relate to the applicant institution’s environment (e.g. culture)
- availability during the accreditation lifetime

Both the chair and the additional members of the Accreditation Committees are appointed by the chair and vice-chair of the Accreditation Council. In case applicant institutions determine any potential conflicts of interests between the members of the Accreditation Committee and their accreditation process, they can challenge the appointment (see ACEEU’s Conflict of Interest Policy for more information).

## Peer Review Teams

### FUNCTION

Peer Review Teams are formed to visit the applicant institution and assess the institution on the basis of the self-evaluation report as well as information gathered through interviews and observations during the visit. The Peer Review Teams compose a “Peer Review Visit Report”, including a recommendation to the Accreditation Committee to grant accreditation without conditions, with condition(s) or refuses accreditation.

## STRUCTURE & APPOINTMENT

Each Peer Review Team is composed three individuals that all currently hold or have held senior positions in the world of education or business with extensive experience in the field of entrepreneurship and/or engagement. One of them will act as chair of the team. The members of the Peer Review Teams can, but do not have to, be members of the Accreditation Council and are selected based on their ability to judge the respective applicant institution as well as their availability. A member of the Accreditation Committee cannot act as a Peer Review Team member in the same accreditation procedure.

The members of Peer Review Teams are appointed by the Accreditation Committee overseeing the respective accreditation procedure. In case there are several potential candidates that fulfil the criteria for participation in the Peer Review Team, those candidates that are located the nearest to the premises of the applicant will be preferred as long as it does not affect the quality of the judgement.

In case applicant institutions determine any potential conflicts of interests between the members of the Peer Review Team and their accreditation process, they can challenge the appointment (see ACEEU's Conflict of Interest Policy for more information).

## Institutional Change Review Committees

### FUNCTION

Institutional Change Review Committees investigate all changes that might significantly affect the quality or scope of the institutions approach towards entrepreneurship and/or engagement. Please refer to the ACEEU's Institutional Change Policy for detailed information on the institutional change review procedure and the function of the committee.

### STRUCTURE & APPOINTMENT

Each Institutional Change Review Committee is comprised of a chair and two additional members, all being members of the Accreditation Council. For further information on the selection of the committee members, please refer to the ACEEU's Institutional Change Policy.

## Appeal Panel

### FUNCTION

Appeal Panels handle all appeals in accordance with ACEEU's Appeal Policy. Please refer to the ACEEU Policies document for detailed information on the appeal procedure and the function of the Appeal Panel.

### STRUCTURE & APPOINTMENT

Each Appeal Panel is comprised of a chair and two additional members, all being members of the Accreditation Council. For further information on the selection of the Appeal Panel members, please refer to the Appeals Policy.

## Legal Representative of the Applicant Institution

### FUNCTION

The applicant's legal representative is the central stakeholder with respect to management and administrative issues, being responsible for:

- applying for eligibility,
- signing the (re-)accreditation agreement between the applicant institution and ACEEU
- authorizing the payment of fees
- challenging the nomination of Accreditation Committee, Peer Review Team and Institutional Change Review Committee members (optional)
- presenting a position statement on the peer review report and/or final evaluation report (optional)
- appealing decisions (optional)

## Accreditation Manager

### FUNCTION

ACEEU requires the applicant institution to appoint an Accreditation Manager who becomes the driving force within the university seeking entrepreneurial and/or engaged university accreditation. Optimally, the Accreditation Manager is well connected within the institution, has experience in accreditation procedures and has been granted a reduction of other responsibilities for the time of the accreditation procedure.

The Accreditation Manager is expected to actively move the accreditation procedure forward by preparing the required documents and fostering

the integration and input of the legal representative when required. As the main contact point for the ACEEU Office, the Chair of the Accreditation Committee as well as the Peer Review Team members, the Accreditation Manager shall be able to respond to requests within 2 to 3 business days.

# Accreditation process

The ACEEU accreditation process is a standardised, multi-step endeavour, involving a variety of stakeholders. Following their successful initial accreditation, universities are required to apply for re-accreditation every five years.

## Process overview

### Key elements

Initial accreditation starts with an eligibility application in which it will be determined if the applicant falls within the scope of the accreditation. Having declared eligible, an agreement is signed and the institution undertakes a self-evaluation of their entrepreneurship and/or engagement practices. Following this, the institution will be visited by a 3-person Peer Review Team with the final evaluation being undertaken by the Accreditation Committee and the Accreditation Council. As a result, the institution will be granted accreditation for a 5-year period with or without conditions, or accreditation will be rejected.

Institutions that have been awarded ACEEU accreditation are required to continuously improve their approach towards entrepreneurship and engagement and to apply for re-accreditation around 3.5 years into their accreditation cycle in order to get re-accredited by the end of their accreditation period. The re-accreditation process is similar to the initial accreditation process with the key steps being agreement, self-evaluation, peer review and final evaluation. The focus of the re-accreditation process, however, differs slightly as it puts emphasis on continuous improvement and how the institutions continue to satisfy the ACEEU standards.

The following figure presents the initial accreditation process as well as the re-accreditation process (continuous improvement review) in a simplified version. Please refer to the next sections for a step-by-step description of ACEEU's initial accreditation and re-accreditation process.

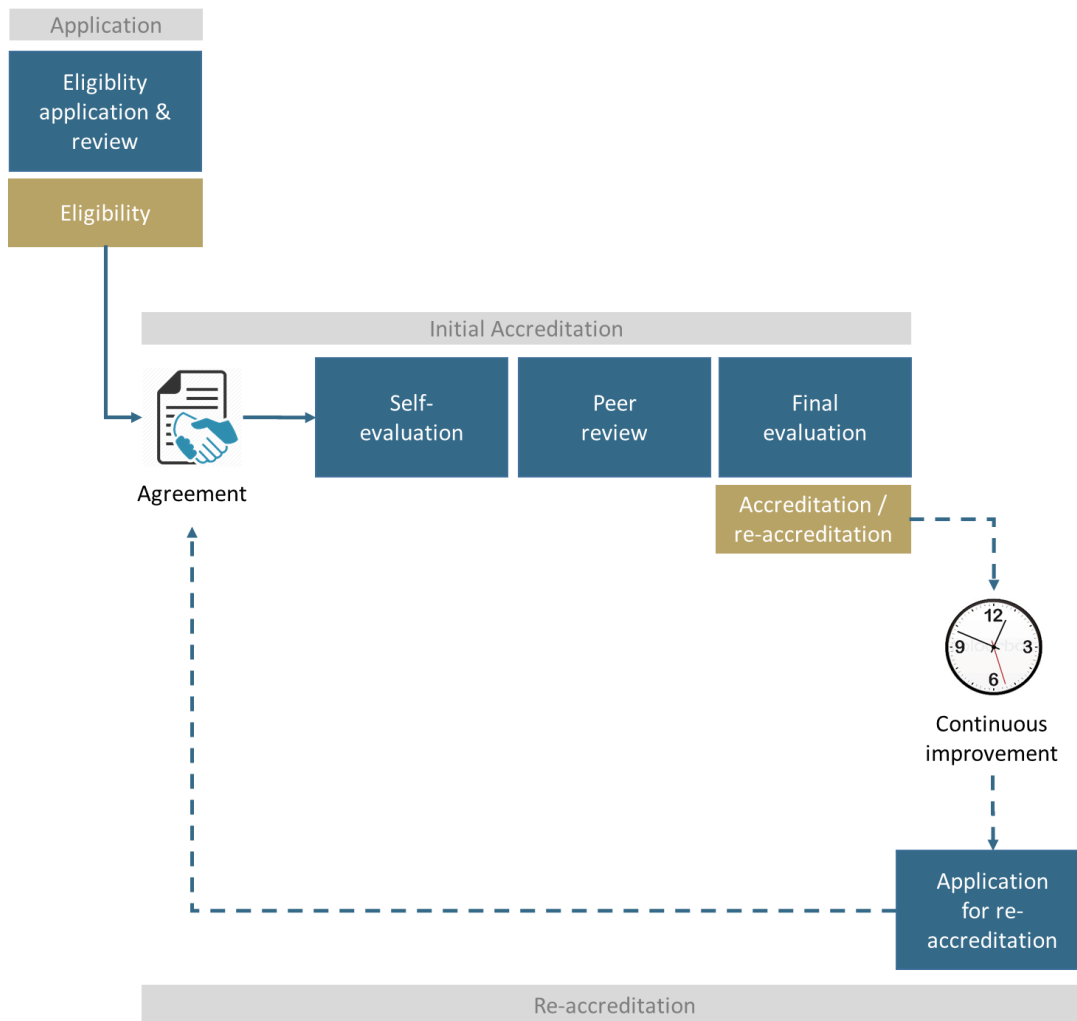


Figure 1: Process overview

## Process management

Applicant institutions are supported throughout the accreditation procedure by ACEEU's Accreditation Management System. The web-based system allows applicants to:

- determine the current status of their application
- access key documents needed for the procedure
- upload all required material during the accreditation procedure



The Accreditation Management System is accessible via the ACEEU website or directly at <http://ams.aceeu.org>



### Example timetable (initial accreditation)

The following table highlights the main actor(s) in each step of the accreditation process and presents the average time frame required for the step. The time frames are indicative and depend significantly on the applicant's commitment to the process. For example, some institutions might be able to sign the contract within a week, whereas others need a longer period of time. Similarly, institutions can speed up the process of the Accreditation Committee respectively the Peer Review Team selection by waiving their right to challenge the selection, as opposed to waiting for the expiration of the 30-day challenge period.

On average, an initial accreditation (single accreditation) takes 10 months. In the most favourable circumstances and when actively driven by the applicant institution, an accreditation may be achieved in 8 months. The average time-frame for re-accreditation can be expected to be 9 months, however, re-accreditation might be achieved in 6 months given an optimal environment. While the re-accreditation process is not much shorter than the initial accreditation one, it should be noted that several steps require much less efforts by the applicant institution (e.g. for the self-evaluation only an update is necessary, compared to a full evaluation in an initial accreditation procedure).

STEP	Actor(s)	Indicative time frame
APPLICATION	1 Information procurement	Applicant
	2 Eligibility application	ACEEU
	3 Eligibility review	ACEEU
	4 Signing of the contract	Applicant
	5 Payment of application fee	Applicant
SELF-EVALUATION	6 Appointment of Accreditation Committee	ACEEU
	7 Accreditation Committee challenge	Applicant
	8 Self-evaluation	Applicant
	9 Initial Evaluation Report	ACEEU
PEER REVIEW	10 Payment of peer review fee	Applicant
	11 Appointment of Peer Review Team	ACEEU
	12 Peer Review Team challenge	Applicant
	13 Peer review visit planning	ACEEU Applicant
	14 Peer review visit	ACEEU Applicant
	15 Peer review report	ACEEU
	16 Position statement on peer review report	Applicant
FINAL EVALUATION	17 Final Evaluation Report	ACEEU
	18 Position statement on final report	Applicant
	19 Final evaluation	ACEEU
	20 Publication	ACEEU
≈ 10 months		

## Initial accreditation

The process for initial accreditation contains 20 steps. Each step is isolated and stands on its own, allowing all stakeholders to easily determine the current status of an application and the tasks that have to be performed next and by whom.

### INFORMATION PROCUREMENT

#### STEP 1

Applicant

Before officially applying for eligibility and ACEEU accreditation, universities should inform themselves about the accreditation's focus, its procedure, standards and guidelines, and policies. The ACEEU website ([www.aceeu.org](http://www.aceeu.org)) provides a great deal of information, with the most important documents being the ACEEU "Application Package" and FAQ. However, interested institutions are encouraged to engage with the ACEEU Office to clarify any potential questions or concerns they might have.

### ELIGIBILITY APPLICATION

#### STEP 2

Applicant

The interested institution completes and submits an "Eligibility Application" through the ACEEU website (<http://eligibility.aceeu.org>). Through the eligibility application, ACEEU will determine if the university falls within the scope of the accreditation and whether or not it is likely that the university may be awarded ACEEU accreditation. The latter, however, should be considered as a preliminary evaluation that is of advisory nature and thus does not limit institutions to proceed.

To be considered eligible, the university needs to:

- highlight a true commitment to entrepreneurship and/or engagement and have a reasonable prospect of satisfying the ACEEU standards within two years of being declared eligible
- has reasonable autonomy in order to develop and implement strategies, structures, policies and operational activities fostering entrepreneurship and/or engagement
- demonstrate sufficient institutional stability

Central documentation to be provided includes:

1. Request for accreditation letter
2. Eligibility datasheet

The datasheet needs to be provided in MS Word format to give ACEEU representatives the opportunity to insert feedback.

## ELIGIBILITY REVIEW

### STEP 3

ACEEU

The chair/vice-chair of the Accreditation Council reviews the institution's eligibility application within 30 days after submission. The applicant institution will be notified of the result of the eligibility review via email. In case of a negative decision, ACEEU will provide the university with the ground for rejection. The university has the right to appeal the decision, following the procedure outlined in ACEEU's Appeals Policy. Should the committee decide that the university is eligible for ACEEU accreditation, the applicant will receive an agreement and information on the payment of the application fee, together with the notification of the eligibility review result.

## SIGNING OF THE CONTRACT

### STEP 4

Applicant

Being declared eligible, the university signs the accreditation agreement and sends two original signed copies to the address specified in the agreement's accompanying letter. The chair of the Accreditation Council will sign the agreement and return one original copy to the applicant.

## PAYMENT OF APPLICATION FEE

### STEP 5

Applicant

The university pays the non-refundable application fee as specified in the letter that has been sent with the agreement. With the receipt of payment of the application fee, the accreditation procedure officially starts, the university becomes a member of ACEEU and receives its login details to access the Accreditation Management System that will support the institution throughout the entire accreditation procedure.

## APPOINTMENT OF ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

### STEP 6

ACEEU

As soon as the accreditation procedure has started, the chair/vice-chair of the Accreditation Council will appoint an Accreditation Committee for the accreditation procedure. Refer to the section "Key stakeholders and responsibilities" in this document for more information on the function and structure of the committee. The applicant institution will be informed via email about the appointed committee members.

## ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE CHALLENGE

### STEP 7

Applicant

Within 30 days of receipt of the appointed committee, the applicant institution has the right to challenge any committee member by pointing out actual or potential conflicts of interest. The procedure for challenging an Accreditation Committee member is defined in ACEEU's Conflict of Interest Policy.

Should the applicant institution not have any objection against the appointed committee, it can waive the right to challenge the committee by uploading a waiver (a template is provided in the ACEEU Application Package) to the Accreditation Management System. With receipt of the waiver, the accreditation procedure will immediately move to the next step, thus speeding up the process. Without providing the Accreditation

Council with a waiver, the procedure automatically continues with the next step after the 30-day committee challenge period has expired.

## SELF-EVALUATION

### STEP 8

Applicant

The institution completes a self-evaluation report and submits it through ACEEU's Application Management System. All documents required for the self-evaluation process as well as any supporting guidelines can be found in the Application Management System as well as in the Application Package that is available at the public ACEEU website.

The report must be reflective, as opposed to promotional, and feature a critical, evidence-based assessment. The applicant should at all times keep in mind that the self-evaluation report needs to allow the Accreditation Committee to undertake an initial evaluation and serves as a supporting document for the site visit. The report should not exceed 50 pages. Therefore, the applicant should ensure to provide comprehensive information in a concise matter. The report needs to be submitted in PDF and MS Word format (the latter to allow committee members to make notes within the document).

Unless explicitly prohibited by the applicant, ACEEU may use the information provided for aggregate reporting. ACEEU assures both confidentiality and anonymity in this case.

## INITIAL EVALUATION REPORT

### STEP 9

ACEEU

Based on the submitted self-evaluation report, the Accreditation Committee members will prepare an Initial Evaluation Report. The report shall be brief (approximately 3-5 pages) and state if the committee has enough evidence to assume that the applicant could be awarded ACEEU accreditation. The report has purely informative character and, thus, has no effect on the applicant's ability to proceed in the accreditation. The purpose of the report is to highlight potential issues and prevent applicants from additional efforts and costs should an accreditation be impossible or very unlikely.

## PAYMENT OF PEER REVIEW FEE

### STEP 10

Applicant

The institution pays the non-refundable peer review fee as specified in the letter sent with the Initial Evaluation Report. With the receipt of payment, the accreditation procedure will move to the next step.

## APPOINTMENT OF PEER REVIEW TEAM

### STEP 11

ACEEU

The chair of the Accreditation Committee will appoint a Peer Review Team that will visit the applicant institution. Refer to the section “Key stakeholders and responsibilities” in this document for information on the structure of the team. The applicant institution will be informed via email about the appointed team.

## PEER REVIEW TEAM CHALLENGE

### STEP 12

Applicant

Within 30 days of receipt of the appointed Peer Review Team, the applicant institution has the right to challenge any team member by pointing out actual or potential conflicts of interest (refer to ACEEU’s Conflict of Interest Policy). The procedure for challenging a Peer Review Team member is defined in ACEEU’s Conflict of Interest Policy.

As in the case of the appointment of the Accreditation Committee, the applicant institution can waive the right to challenge the Peer Review Team by uploading a waiver (a template is provided in the ACEEU Application Package) to the Accreditation Management System and thus speed up the process.

## PEER REVIEW VISIT PLANNING

### STEP 13

Applicant

ACEEU

As soon as the Peer Review Team cannot be challenged anymore by the applicant institution, the planning of the peer review visit starts, with key activities being:

- The chair of the Peer Review Team will prepare a preliminary schedule (based on the example that can be found in appendix 1) for the visit. The schedule will highlight the different activities to be undertaken as well as the individuals the Peer Review Team would like to meet and the facilities it would like to visit.
- The ACEEU Office will facilitate the process of finding a date for the peer review visit that is suitable for the Peer Review Team, the university’s Accreditation Project Manager as well as all individuals (or appropriate replacements) that are specified in the preliminary schedule of the visit.
- The ACEEU Office will provide all Peer Review Team members with the respective documentation for the visit, including the Eligibility Application and the Self-evaluation Report provided by the applicant institution as well as the Initial Evaluation Report created by the Accreditation Committee.
- The applicant institution works directly with the individual members of the Peer Review Team to arrange travel and accommodation. All costs associated with the peer review visit are covered by the applicant institution, in accordance with ACEEU’s Travel and Reimbursable Expenses Policy.

## PEER REVIEW VISIT

### STEP 14

Applicant

ACEEU

The visit lasts between one and two full days during which the Peer Review Team meets those people that are key in developing, implementing and monitoring the institution's strategies and activities related to entrepreneurship and/or engagement.

After the visit, the applicant institution works directly with the individual Peer Review Team members to reimburse expenses they had and are related to the peer review visit and to cover daily allowance. Refer to ACEEU's Travel and Reimbursable Expenses Policy for more information.

## PEER REVIEW REPORT

### STEP 15

ACEEU

Within 30 days of the visit, the Peer Review Team prepares a Peer Review Report in which it assesses the applicant institution against ACEEU's standards. The report is based on the Self-evaluation Report presented by the applicant, enriched by the experience the Peer Review Team gained during their visit. The report will be drafted by the chair of the Peer Review Team and shared with the other team members to receive feedback. The report shall reflect the consensus of the team members. In case of disagreement, the opposing opinions shall be clearly highlighted.

The report contains a recommendation for the accreditation decision which may be:

- Accreditation without conditions
- Accreditation with conditions
- Denial of accreditation

The chair of the Peer Review Team sends the report via email to the ACEEU Office. The office will forward the digital report to the applicant institution, and in copy to the Accreditation Committee.

## POSITION STATEMENT ON PEER REVIEW REPORT

### STEP 16

Applicant

Within 30 days of the receipt of the Peer Review Report, the applicant institution can hand in a position statement in which it comments and/or provides evidence on factual inaccuracies. The chair of the Peer Review Team will correct factual errors and might also take into account comments of the applicant institution. In case of minor edits, the chair shall make these revisions alone. In case of major changes, the chair shall discuss these with the entire Peer Review Team. The chair will document all changes and send the final report, together with the recommendation, to the ACEEU Office.

Should the applicant institution not wish to provide any response to the report, it can waive the right to provide a position statement by uploading a waiver (a template is provided in the ACEEU Application Package) to the

Accreditation Management System. With receipt of the letter, the accreditation procedure will immediately move to the next step. Without such a letter, the procedure would continue after the 30-day period has expired.

## FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

### STEP 17

ACEEU

The Accreditation Committee prepares a Final Evaluation Report based on all documented material (e.g. Self-evaluation Report, Initial Evaluation Report, Peer Review Report, position statement on Peer Review Report) and recommends to the Accreditation Council the granting accreditation without conditions, or accreditation with condition(s) or rejection of accreditation.

## POSITION STATEMENT ON FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

### STEP 18

Applicant

Similar to the position statement which can be provided for the Peer Review Report, the applicant institution can hand in a statement in which it comments on the Final Evaluation Report and/or provides evidence on factual inaccuracies. This statement needs to be uploaded to the Accreditation Management System within 30 days of receipt of the Final Evaluation Report. Changes will be processed as detailed in step 16 of this process description. The committee chair will send the final report, together with the recommendation, to the Chair of the Accreditation Council.

## FINAL EVALUATION

### STEP 19

ACEEU

The chair/vice-chair of the Accreditation Council will review all documented materials in order to ensure the consistent application of the set procedure and standards. In case the chair does not observe any breach of the ACEEU procedure and standards and does not hold any objections against the recommendation of the Accreditation Committee, the Accreditation Council will adopt the recommendation. In any other case, the council chair/vice-chair will consult with the accreditation committee to discuss the issues identified.

The final decision will be communicated to the applicant institution orally or via e-mail, with an official letter following within 14 days. The final decision can be appealed within 30 days of the receipt of the official letter (refer to ACEEU's Appeals Policy for more information).

## PUBLICATION

### STEP 20

ACEEU

Should the applicant institution be granted ACEEU accreditation, ACEEU will announce the awarding of the accreditation by adding the name of the applicant institution to the list of accredited universities on the ACEEU website.



Having been granted ACEEU accreditation, the university has the following responsibilities to maintain accreditation:

- The university must inform the ACEEU Office in case it expects any substantial institutional changes that might either result in a loss of eligibility or might challenge the institution's ability to fulfil one (or multiple) of ACEEU's standards. Refer to ACEEU's Institutional Change Policy for more information.
- The university must maintain their ACEEU membership by paying the yearly membership fee. Refer to the section "Accreditation costs and efforts" in this document.
- The university must undertake a re-accreditation procedure (refer to the next section).

## Dual Accreditation

It is possible for a university to simultaneously apply for both accreditations i.e. as an entrepreneurial and as an engaged university. ACEEU will conduct two accreditation processes which will remain independent of each other. Therefore, when applying for dual accreditation, institutions must submit two separate self-evaluation reports and these will each be assessed against the relevant published ACEEU standards. Without jeopardising the independence of the two accreditations, ACEEU will work with the applicant university to minimise the duplication of efforts and manage overall costs, with the aim of ensuring an efficient and effective process which leads to robust outcomes. For this reason, normally there will be a single visit by a Peer Review Team, thus maximising the efficiency of the process and minimising the costs of expenses for the institution. However, there may be circumstances where ACEEU and the Institution will agree that two separate Peer Review Team visits would be more appropriate.

## Re-accreditation (continuous improvement review)

ACEEU accreditation is awarded for a limited period of time. Thus, universities are required to apply for re-accreditation to maintain their ACEEU accreditation. Universities that have achieved accreditation are expected to promote institutional development and quality improvement in line with the recommended areas for improvement outlined in the Final Evaluation Report of the previous accreditation procedure. The progress made in this respect needs to be documented and provided for the re-accreditation procedure.

As indicated in figure 1, the re-accreditation process is based on the same key steps as the initial accreditation process, namely application, self-evaluation, peer review, final evaluation, with only minor differences being present in the sub-steps. The 13-step re-accreditation process is detailed below. The description highlights differences in the initial accreditation process and refers to the respective step in the initial accreditation process for more information.

**STEP 1**

Applicant

The ACEEU accredited university applies for re-accreditation at least 12 months before the end of its accreditation period. It is the responsibility of the institution to ensure a timely application that allows achieving re-accreditation by the expiry date of the current accreditation, preventing a period of non-accreditation. Institutions apply by uploading a “request for re-accreditation letter” (a template is provided in the ACEEU Application Package) and an updated datasheet to the Accreditation Management System.

REF.  
STEP 2**STEP 2**

ACEEU

The application will be reviewed within 30 days by the Accreditation Council chair/vice-chair with the ACEEU Office sending the respective agreement to the institution in case of a successful application.

REF.  
STEP 3**STEP 3**

Applicant

The institution signs the contract, uploads a digital version (PDF) to the Accreditation Management System and sends two originals via post to the address specified in the accompanying letter.

REF.  
STEP 4  
& 5

The institution pays the re-accreditation fee.

**STEP 4**

ACEEU

ACEEU appoints the Accreditation Committee as well as the Peer Review Team. In contrast to the initial accreditation process, both the Accreditation Committee as well as the Peer Review Team will each consist of two members, with one member acting as chair. The members of the committee or the team may have been engaged with a prior accreditation of the institution. The applicant institution will be informed via email about the selection of the Accreditation Committee and Peer Review Team.

REF.  
STEP  
6 & 11**STEP 5**

Applicant

If desired, the applicant institution can challenge the committee resp. team members and/or speed up the process by waiving the right to challenge either one.

REF.  
STEP  
7 & 12**STEP 6**

Applicant

ACEEU

As soon as neither the Accreditation Committee nor the Peer Review Team can be challenged anymore by the applicant institution, both the applicant institution and ACEEU plan the peer review visit.

REF.  
STEP 8  
& 13

Simultaneously to the peer review visit planning, the applicant institution prepares a Self-evaluation Report. The focus of the report shall be on how the institution has improved since the last

accreditation and how the institution continues to satisfy the ACEEU standards.

**STEP 7**

Applicant

ACEEU

The institution is visited by the Peer Review Team with the team paying particular attention to the development over the past years and how this development affects the satisfaction of the ACEEU standards.

REF.  
STEP 14

**STEP 8**

ACEEU

Within 30 days after the visit, the Peer Review Team prepares and presents the Peer Review Report.

REF.  
STEP 15

**STEP 9**

Applicant

If desired, the applicant institution presents a position statement on the Peer Review Report (within 30 days after the receipt of the report) and/or waives the right to present a position statement to speed up the process.

REF.  
STEP 16

**STEP 10**

ACEEU

The Accreditation Committee prepares and presents the Final Evaluation Report.

REF.  
STEP 17

**STEP 11**

Applicant

If desired, the applicant institution presents a position statement on the Final Evaluation Report (within 30 days after the receipt of the report) and/or waives the right to present a position statement to speed up the process.

REF.  
STEP 18

**STEP 12**

ACEEU

The chair of the Accreditation Council undertakes a final evaluation and grants accreditation with or without condition(s), or rejects accreditation.

REF.  
STEP 19

**STEP 13**

ACEEU

The result of the accreditation procedure will be published on the ACEEU website.

REF.  
STEP 20

# Accreditation costs

## Administrative fees

### Initial accreditation

The total fee for an initial ACEEU accreditation procedure is €12.500 for single accreditation and €20.000 for dual accreditation, with the single fees being:

	Single accreditation	Dual accreditation
<i>Application fee</i>	€4.000	€6.000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invoiced after a successful application for eligibility</li> <li>• Covers the steps 6 to 9 of the initial accreditation procedure, including the appointment of the Accreditation Committee, the review of the Self-evaluation Report presented by the applicant as well as the creation of the Initial Evaluation Report.</li> </ul>		
<i>Peer review and final evaluation fee</i>	€8.500	€14.000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invoiced after the presentation of the Initial Evaluation Report</li> <li>• Covers the steps 11 to 20 of the initial accreditation procedure, including the appointment of the Peer Review Team, the planning and implementation of the peer review visit, the creation of the Peer Review Report and the Final Evaluation Report, the final evaluation as well as the publication of the result.</li> </ul>		

### Re-accreditation fee

Accredited institutions are required to apply for re-accreditation every five years.

*Single re-accreditation:* €8.500

*Dual re-accreditation:* €13.500

The total re-accreditation fee needs to be paid before the start of the re-accreditation procedure.

### Yearly membership fee

Accredited institutions are required to pay a yearly membership fee of €1.500 for the services continuously provided by ACEEU (see ACEEU membership section in this document). The membership period lasts from January 1 to December 31 with the fee being invoiced in November of the previous year.

The application fee of the initial accreditation procedure covers ACEEU membership for the time of the application process. Therefore, applicants only need to pay the membership fee once they have been granted accreditation for the first time. Should an institution be awarded accreditation before July 1<sup>st</sup> of a given year, the institution is required to pay the total membership fee for that year. Should the accreditation be awarded on or after July 1<sup>st</sup> of a given year, the institution will be charged half of the annual fee (€750).

*All fees are subject to 21% VAT and non-refundable.*

## **Expenses**

Expenses for travel, accommodation, daily allowance and other direct expenses need to be covered by the applicant institution and paid without delay. For more information, please refer to the Travel and Reimbursable Expenses Policy which applies to all ACEEU accreditation procedure.

## **Cancellation, postponements and (late) payments**

Applicants are liable for any non-refundable costs that occur as a result of a cancellation or postponement of a peer review visit or appeal hearing. In addition, the applicant is required to pay an administration fee of €1.500 to cover the additional efforts required to set up a new visit or hearing.

# ACEEU Membership

ACEEU members are part of an exclusive community of like-minded institutions and individuals that are dedicated to promote entrepreneurship and engagement and to enlarge the social, economic and cultural contributions the institution makes.

Institutions are required to be an ACEEU member to open the initial accreditation procedure respectively to maintain their accreditation. Initially, an institution becomes a member through the signature of the accreditation agreement and the payment of the application fee. Having been granted accreditation, the institution has to renew its membership on an annual basis through the payment of the membership fee. For more information, please refer to the section “Accreditation costs” in this document.

## Benefits for applicant institutions

Committed to offering an efficient accreditation procedure and supporting the further development of entrepreneurship and engagement practice, ACEEU provides applying members with the following benefits:



### Efficient management of accreditation procedures

All members gain access to the ACEEU Application Management System. The system provides all relevant information, helps to keep track of progress and allows the submission of all documents required through an easy to use system.



### Connecting of applicants and accredited institutions

The ACEEU member directory enables applicants to engage with other applicants or accredited institutions for knowledge and experience exchange on ACEEU accreditation or entrepreneurship and engagement in general.



### Access to case studies and tools for institutional development

The ACEEU library contains over 100 case studies and tools that can help applicants to gain new insights and ideas to advance entrepreneurship and engagement in their university.



### Acquisition of event discounts

Applicants receive exclusive offers on fees for conferences and workshops organised or supported by ACEEU.

## Benefits for accredited institutions

With the award of ACEEU accreditation begins a new period – the period of promoting the accreditation and further developing the institution to become even more entrepreneurial and/or engaged. ACEEU provides the following benefits to its members:



### **Exploitation of the full value of ACEEU accreditation**

The ACEEU Marketing Guidebook provides accredited institutions with more than 50 ideas on how to communicate the accreditation as an entrepreneurial and/or engaged university.



### **Access to case studies and tools for institutional development**

ACEEU accreditation is not only an achievement but also a commitment. Accredited institutions can explore the ACEEU library for case studies and tools that can help to become even more entrepreneurial and/or engaged.



### **Free attendance of ACEEU organised or supported events**

Accredited institutions gain free access (1 ticket) to the annual conference of the University Industry Innovation Network. Covering more than 50 countries and bringing together more than 300 academics and practitioners passionate about entrepreneurship and engagement in the education ecosystem each year, the event is the largest of its kind in Europe.

# Appendix

## Appendix 1: Example of peer review schedule

<b>From 20:00</b>	<b>Dinner at hotel or restaurant (private area) for the members of the Peer Review Team to discuss the visit</b>
<b>09:00 to 10:30</b>	<b>University Management</b> – <i>Meeting with people responsible for entrepreneurship and/or engagement at the highest management level (strategic level)</i> [Institutional Commitment] [Shared Goals] [Financial Planning] [Leadership]
<b>10:30 to 10:45</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>
<b>10:45 to 11:15</b>	<b>Entrepreneurship and/or Engagement Leaders</b> – <i>Meeting with people that are central in the implementation of entrepreneurship and/or engagement, and, as appropriate, external stakeholders</i> [Third stream activities] [Influence] [Impact]
<b>11:15 to 11:45</b>	<b>Human Resources</b> - <i>Meeting with the person responsible for Human Resources (HR) at board level, head of HR and/or key HR staff dedicated to entrepreneurship and/or engagement</i> [Staff profile] [Incentives and rewards]
<b>11:45 to 13:00</b>	<b>Entrepreneurship / Engagement Support</b> – <i>Meeting with heads of central entrepreneurship and/or engagement support unit, incl. visit(s) to central infrastructure</i> [Internal support structures] [Ecosystem]
<b>13:00 to 14:30</b>	<b>Lunch</b> – <i>Peer Review Team alone to discuss the visit (the long lunch break will be used to make up time that might have been lost before)</i>
<b>14:30 to 15:00</b>	<b>Communication &amp; Events</b> – <i>Meeting with people that are central in the fostering an internal and external culture of entrepreneurship and/or engagement</i> [Culture]
<b>15:00 to 15:45</b>	<b>Education</b> – <i>Meeting with people responsible for education at institutional level, central teaching personal as well as student representatives</i> [Education]



<b>15:45 to 16:30</b>	<b>Research</b> – <i>Meeting with people responsible for research at institutional level, central research personal in entrepreneurship / engagement as well as external stakeholders (e.g. from business)</i> [Research]
<b>16:30 to 16:45</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>
<b>16:45 to 17:15</b>	<b>Quality Management and Improvement</b> – <i>Meeting with people responsible for and implementing the institution's quality management and improvement</i> [Continuous improvement]
<b>17:15 to 18:00</b>	<b>Stakeholder meetings</b> – <i>Meeting with students, alumni, business representatives etc.</i> [All standards]
<b>18:00 to 18:30</b>	<b>Debriefing and preliminary feedback to the applicant by the Peer Review Team</b>
<b>From 20:00</b>	<b>Dinner at hotel or restaurant (private area) for Peer Review Team to discuss the overall evaluation</b>

Please note that Peer Review Teams are encouraged to involve (external) stakeholders such as students, alumni, businesses, government representatives etc. as best as possible in all others phases of the visit.



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