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Schweizerische Universitätskonferenz   Conférence universitaire suisse   *Conferenza universitaria svizzera*

Accreditation and Quality assurance
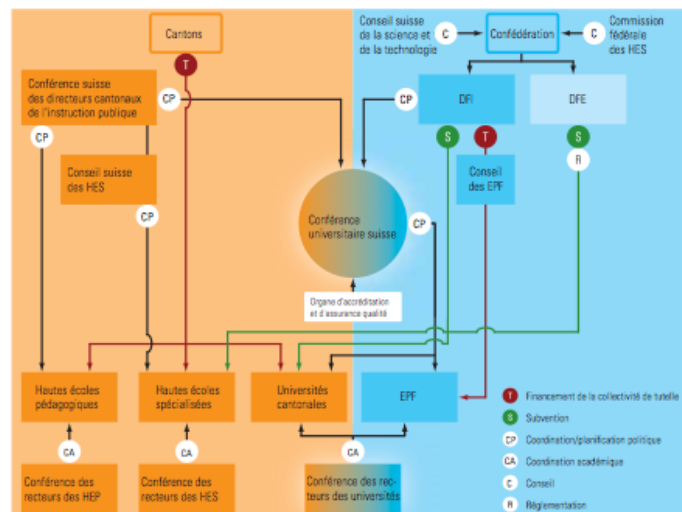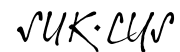# in Switzerland

Martina Weiss

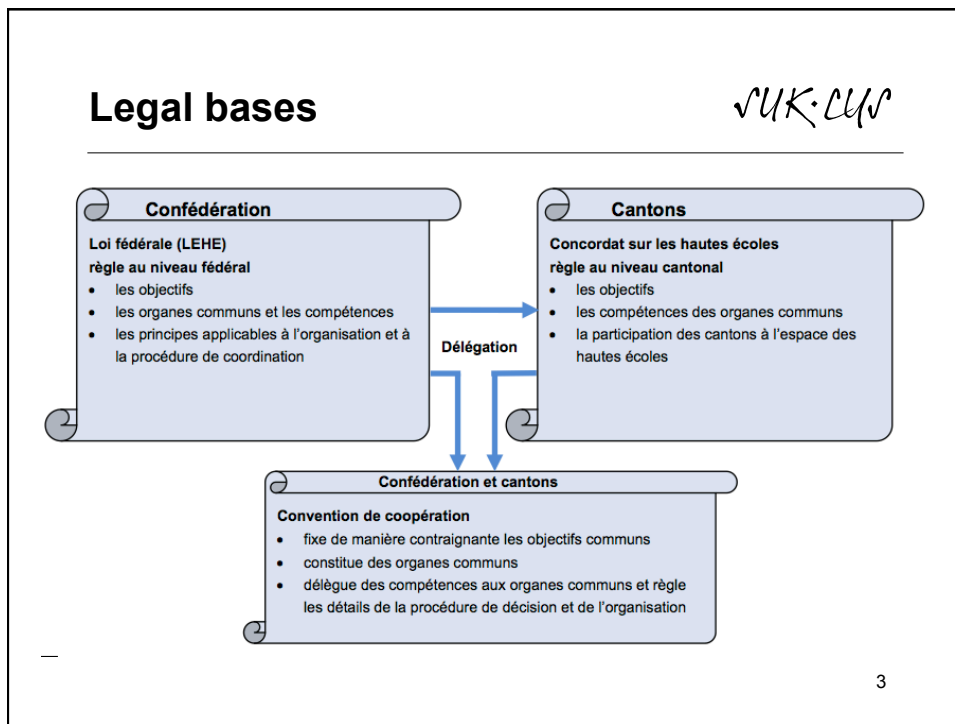Sennweg 2   Tel. 031 306 60 60   www.cus.ch
3012 Bern   Fax 031 306 60 70   cus@cus.ch

Steering of the system   ✓UK·CU✓

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Legal bases

SUK·CUS

Confédération

Loi fédérale (LEHE)
règle au niveau fédéral
- les objectifs
- les organes communs et les compétences
- les principes applicables à l'organisation et à la procédure de coordination

Délégation

Cantons

Concordat sur les hautes écoles
règle au niveau cantonal
- les objectifs
- les compétences des organes communs
- la participation des cantons à l'espace des hautes écoles

Confédération et cantons

Convention de coopération
- fixe de manière contraignante les objectifs communs
- constitue des organes communs
- délègue des compétences aux organes communs et règle les détails de la procédure de décision et de l'organisation

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Membership

SUK·CUS

- Ministers of public education of the ten cantons with a university
- Two representatives of cantons without a university
- Secretary of State for Education and Research
- President of the ETH Board

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Competences *(selection)*

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The Swiss University Conference

- issues directives on the length of studies and recognition of previous studies and qualifications
- awards project-specific grants
- decides on accreditation of academic institutions and courses
- issues directives on evaluation of teaching and research

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Quality Assurance in the Swiss Higher Education Area:
Role and Activities of the Rectors' Conference of Swiss Universities

Visit of Armenian delegation, 29 October 2012

Dr. Sabine Felder, Head Teaching Coordinating Unit, CRUS
Kalinka Huber, Vice-President of Q-Network, CRUS

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Co-operation Agreement

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Accreditation decisions:

–The Rectors' Conference can comment beforehand on accreditation decisions of the Swiss University Conference CUS (Cooperation Agreement between the Federal Government and University Cantons on Matters Relating to Universities of 14 December 2000, Art. 13 lit. b.)

➔ CRUS decided not to comment individual accreditation procedures (Plenary decision of 11.03.05)

➔ CRUS comments on general topics of procedures (e.g. Quality Audits) and Standards

Scientific Advisory Board of OAQ:

–The president and the members of the Scientific Advisory Board of OAQ are elected by the Swiss University Conference at the request of CRUS (Art. 20, 3) (term of 4 years, re-election possible)

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CRUS' internal organisation – Delegation of Quality

– The Rectors' Conference can appoint delegations for its main activity domains
– Actually, there are three delegations:
  – Delegation of Teaching
  – Delegation of Research
  – Delegation of Quality

  – Delegation of Quality:
    – 4 Rectors
    – 1 Vice-Rector of quality
– Broad understanding of quality: quality assurance and accreditation only one of the topics discussed
  („The Swiss Way to Quality in the University System": 10 quality principles, Nov. 2008)

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![crus.ch logo]

CRUS' internal organisation – Quality Network

– Presidency: universities (Vice-rector of quality and officer of quality) / administration: OAQ
– President of the Network is also member of the Delegation: = assures the connection between the Delegation and the Quality Network
– Members:
   – 2 representatives per university (1 executive level, 1 quality officer)
   – Representatives of OAQ
   – Representative of CRUS

– Discussions on QA topics
– Development of instruments for quality assurance procedures (QA)
– „Sounding board"

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![crus.ch logo]

Quality Network: a short introduction

2003   Based on **Federal Law** on Financial Support of Universities, a first Quality Audit takes place. For universities, the procedure is **mandatory**. The Federal Ministry of Education gives a **mandate** to OAQ to carry out the audit.

   4 criteria are checked in this initial procedure:
      1. QA system with quality control and quality development
      2. QA is integral part of a university's overall strategy
      3. Continuous use of evaluation results and other QA measures to improve quality of teaching and research
      4. Periodical examination of the effectiveness of QA measures

4th criterion: Quality Audit by group of international experts

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Quality Network: its instalment

Parallel to preparing the first Quality Audit, OAQ invited the universities to develop **"good practices"** in QA and collaborate in developing **guidelines** for quality assurance in the university sector.

First meeting in June 2003 with representatives of universities, CRUS and OAQ
Initially set up as an **informal network,** meeting twice a year

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Quality Network: Work on Standards and Guidelines

By mid 2004, the main issue is the **standards** for the Quality Audit:

- OAQ has drafted standards on behalf of the Swiss University Conference

- The standards are further developed by the Quality network (based on ENQA)

- CRUS discusses the standards several times between end of 2004 and 2005

- After broad political consultation, the Swiss University Conference adopts the standards on December 7th 2006

-OAQ also develops **guidelines** in co-operation with the Quality network

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Quality Network: Formal Instalment and Aims

January 18th 2007

Following the experience of the collaboration after 2003, the network is **formally constituted** as a **network of CRUS**.

Its elected president is the member of a university directorate, its vice-president a quality officer (administrative level), the assembly consists of the previous members plus 2 students.

It is administratively assisted by OAQ.

Tasks:

-Preparing issues regarding quality assurance, ranking etc. for CRUS

-Proposing issues to CRUS (and indirectly to federal level) OAQ Board

-Is consulted on matters regarding quality assurance ('sounding board')

-Exchange of information and 'best practices'

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Quality Network: Activities after 2007

1. Preparing 2nd and 3rd Quality Audit (revise guidelines; procedure)
2. Exchange of 'best practices'
3. Preparing Institutional Accreditation (after 2015)

The networks main interests concerning QA procedures:

- Flexibility to develop a QA-system that conforms with the culture of the individual university; the universities can develop their instruments (standards versus flexibility); faculties are not part of the Audit examinations; Standards should not infringe on university's autonomy (broad definition of standards; non mandatory points of reference)
- Keep procedures simple and adequate
- Clarity concerning responsibilities
- Connection between internal and external QA

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