



Accreditation Report

Internal audit procedure within the framework of system accreditation

Study Programme: Master Psychology & Sustainability (M.Sc.)

Date of the expert report: January 25, 2021

Leuphana University Lüneburg has been system accredited since 2014 and conducts the accreditation of its study programmes under its own responsibility. With the award of the Quality Seal, Leuphana confirms that a study programme meets the criteria of the Lower Saxony Study Accreditation Ordinance (Nds. StudAkkVO) and that this has been verified in a procedure by external experts (programme advisory board). In accordance with the guidelines for quality reports (Drs. AR 85/2019), the expert report includes the audit process, a short profile of the programme, the names of the experts, the evaluation of the programme by the programme advisory board and the agreed measures for the further development of the programme.

The Internal Audit Procedure is coordinated by the staff unit Quality Development (Team Q). Usually it replaces the external programme accreditation of study programmes and is regulated in the QE-guideline (Guideline of the Presidential Board on Quality Development of Studies and Teaching).

A) Process of the Internal Audit Procedure

Kick-off Meeting

In a **kick-off meeting**, study programme directors, representatives of the School, the Dean's Office and Team Q clarify the procedure and responsibilities in the process and schedule important milestones in a written agreement.

Documentation

The so-called programme folder documents all essential information on the study programme. For the following evaluation process, the programme directors describe the profile, the learning outcomes, the curriculum and the resources used analogous to the audit mandate of the programme advisory board.

Evaluation

Leuphana University Lüneburg sets up independent **programme advisory boards** for all study programmes, partial study programmes and overarching study programme elements. In the case of teaching training-related study programmes, the Lower Saxony Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the regional church for the subject Protestant Religion are included. The programme advisory board evaluates compliance with the subject-related criteria for study programmes of the Nds. StudAkkVO1 (§§ 11 to 16 as well as 19 to 20). For this purpose, the advisory board receives the programme folder and conducts discussions with programme directors and students. In its meeting, the programme advisory board evaluates the study programme and submits a written statement. In an **audit report**, Team Q combines this evaluation of the programme advisory board with the evaluation of the formal accreditation criteria according to the Nds. StudAkkVO1 (§§ 3 to 10) and prepares a consultation template for the development agreement.

Development Agreement

For the development discussion, the programme directors propose measures through which the requirements of the external programme advisory board can be implemented. These proposals are examined and, if necessary, modified in an internal university **development discussion**. Comparable to an "internal accreditation commission", it is here determined which of the criticisms and recommendations are to be rectified or implemented by when and by whom. The results are usually confirmed by consensus of all members entitled to vote and documented in a development agreement. If an agreement is not possible, defined escalation levels

[Stabsstelle Qualitätsentwicklung | Team Q](#)

Dokumentenname	Version	Stand	Ansprechpartner/in
Expert Report Master Sustainability Psychology	V01	Sep. 30, 2021	Dr. Andreas Soltau



take effect. In the case of teaching training-related study programmes, the Lower Saxony Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the regional church for the subject Protestant Religion are included in this step of the process.

Awarding of the Leuphana Quality Seal and Monitoring

Once the development agreement has been signed by all members of the development meeting entitled to vote, a written confirmation of the accreditation decision by the Lower Saxony Ministry of Cultural Affairs follows for the teaching training-related study programmes. Subsequently, the Presidential Board awards the **Leuphana Quality Seal** for Studies and Teaching. Team Q is responsible for **monitoring** the implementation of measures, and the final decision is made by the Executive Board.

¹Niedersächsische Verordnung zur Regelung des Näheren der Studienakkreditierung (Niedersächsische Studienakkreditierungsverordnung — Nds. StudAkkVO) vom 30. Juli 2019, Nds. GVBl. Nr. 13/2019, ausgegeben am 09.08.2019.

B) Results of the Internal Audit Procedure of the Master Psychology & Sustainability (M.Sc.)

Profile of the study programme	<p>The one-year Master programme Psychology & Sustainability is part of a Double Degree programme, namely Sustainability and Environmental Psychology, in which Leuphana University offers the first year of the curriculum, while the partner University of Groningen provides the second year of teaching in Environmental Psychology. All students complete the first year in Lüneburg and spend the second year in Groningen.</p> <p>The major aim of the curriculum is to link theories and research from psychology to the empirical field of sustainability science in an inter- and transdisciplinary teaching programme. Therefore, not only skills and techniques of one discipline, i.e. psychology or sustainability science, are addressed. Rather the approach is expanded in an inter- and transdisciplinary manner. Students learn to develop empirical, scientific problem solving skills in order to tackle challenges on the individual, the community, and the societal level (micro-, meso-, and macro-level) by means of theoretical and practical psychological approaches. Specifically, to address the three different levels of analysis, sustainability issues are, first addressed on the level of the individual with a special focus on individual development and self-regulation. Second, sustainability issues are examined from the perspective of social groups and communities with a special focus on joint decision-making processes. Third, sustainability issues are explored from a societal perspective with a special focus on the diagnosis of time and the impact of social systems on individuals acting within these systems. This multi-level perspective acknowledges dynamic and reciprocal interactions between levels which enrich the understanding of change and societal transformations. Building on the acquired knowledge, skills, and personal competencies, the programme provides the opportunity to engage in an actual transdisciplinary research project with interdisciplinary supervision including team members with different disciplinary backgrounds and partners from the field of practice.</p> <p>Another characteristic is the strong practice and research orientation of the Master programme. On one hand, this is rooted in methodological modules, introducing methods of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches to psychology, especially in the domain of sustainability-focused issues. On the other hand, societal research questions are core features of several modules. These questions are discussed individually, in small groups or the plenary, so that students become more independent and autonomous in the</p>
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	<p>utilisation of empirical, psychological research. Beyond that, the Master “Psychology & Sustainability” deals with case studies, examples, and recent media content, which not only adds environmental but also political and societal relevance.</p> <p>Embedding in Leuphana University Lüneburg: Faculty: Education School: Graduate School</p>										
Reason of the Quality Evaluation	First Accreditation for the Introduction of Psychology & Sustainability (M.Sc.)										
Timing of the procedure	<table> <tr> <td>Date of the kick-off meeting</td> <td>February 18, 2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Programme folder (Self documentation)</td> <td>August 07, 2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date of the Advisory Board meeting</td> <td>August 27, 2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date of the Development Discussion</td> <td>December 01, 2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Awarding of the Quality Seal</td> <td>September 30, 2021</td> </tr> </table>	Date of the kick-off meeting	February 18, 2020	Programme folder (Self documentation)	August 07, 2020	Date of the Advisory Board meeting	August 27, 2020	Date of the Development Discussion	December 01, 2020	Awarding of the Quality Seal	September 30, 2021
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Composition of the expert group (Programme Advisory Board)	<p>Science and Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Dr. Immo Fritsche, Institute of Psychology, Leipzig University • Prof. Dr. Eva Jonas, University of Salzburg <p>Labour Market:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dipl. Psych. Sandra Driedger, Hamburg Wasser <p>Student Representative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jana Beckmann, Leipzig University 										
Legal basis of the evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Treaty on the Accreditation of Studies • Nds. StudAkkVO Part 2 and Part 3 										
Content basis of the evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme folder including appendix • Conversations of the Programme Advisory Board with following people/groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Programme director Master Psychology & Sustainability ○ Students of the major Psychology (Basics) and the minor Psychology & Society ○ Conversation with programme coordinator University of Groningen 										
Results of the Evaluation	<p>The members of the programme advisory board praise the convincing profile of the Masters programme; it is unique in Germany and very contemporary in terms of research topics. The University of Groningen has been acquired as an excellent partner in the field of environmental psychology. Overall, the programme is consistently oriented towards the mission statement of Leuphana University Lüneburg.</p> <p>Due to the thematic overlap of the two study programmes, the programme advisory board believes that there may be content overlaps within individual modules. This applies in particular to the modules in the core areas of both study programmes (Sustainability and Environmental Psychology). In the coming years, the programme advisory board recommends close monitoring of the Masters programme in order to avoid redundancies in the content of certain modules between the two locations.</p> <p>In the eyes of the advisory board, the research- and action-oriented curriculum enables a great amount of research work with students. In addition, the very good separation of environmental and sustainability psychology is found to be convincing.</p>										



	<p>It is discussed that the research focus in the area of Sustainability Psychology at Leuphana University Lüneburg is only in the process of being built up, while the research focus "Environmental Psychology" in Groningen is already established. Individual module descriptions should be specified again and previous methodological knowledge should be taken into account in the design of the methods modules.</p> <p>Overall, the programme advisory board considers the study programme to be under-equipped with 2 CH of classroom teaching per 5 credit points. For individual modules it is desirable to enable even more contact time between lecturers and students with the help of additional CH.</p> <p>The programme advisory board recommends monitoring institutional development within the next few years to ensure the development of appropriate research expertise; a joint summer school of the universities could also contribute to this, for example.</p> <p>It seems important to give programme participants the opportunity to repeat failed examinations in good time in order to avoid unnecessarily prolonging their studies.</p> <p>With regard to possible career paths, the lack of a compulsory internship - as is common in other psychology Masters programmes - is intensively discussed. The programme advisory board fears that students are not supported enough in their career orientation, especially since this is a new professional field. Despite the research orientation of the study programme, it should also be kept in mind that only a very small part of graduates can/will pursue a scientific career.</p> <p>The members of the programme advisory board uniformly recommend the introduction of an optional internship (possibly as part of the Complementary Studies). Should feasibility of studies across both locations not be jeopardised, a compulsory internship should also be considered. In addition, alumni and networking events should be promoted, also between both university partners, to facilitate an easier entry into professional life. Additionally, job crafting, job shadowing and regular career fairs are recommended.</p> <p>Regarding the resources allocated to the programme, the programme advisory board points out the high share of positions that have not (yet) been filled. The programme advisory board notes with approval that several filling procedures have already been completed or are in the final phase.</p> <p>The Complementary Studies are viewed as an enrichment and constructive addition of the Masters programme's content.</p>
Measures for further development	<p>Based on the above-mentioned evaluation of the programme advisory board, the following measures were decided within the framework of the internal university development discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Prior to the start of the programme, a coordination meeting will be held with the programme directors in Groningen and the participation of the newly appointed colleagues in Lüneburg. At this meeting, the content-related differentiation and complementarity of the curricula at both locations will be reviewed and, if necessary, adjustments will be agreed upon and documented.▪ In the academic year 2021/22, a summer school for scientific offspring will be prepared jointly with the University of Groningen and the planning status will be documented as part of the monitoring process.▪ In a module conference, the design and allocation of the modules to the micro, meso and macro levels is reviewed together with the newly appointed professors at Leuphana. Any resulting changes are documented and submitted to the programme advisory board for comment.▪ The Subject-Specific Schedule is passed and published in accordance with the committee path before the start of the programme.▪ The cooperation agreement with the University of Groningen will be signed and legally effective before the start of the programme in accordance with the committee procedures of both universities.



	<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ In Groningen, the integration of a practical module or a practical component in combination with the Masters thesis is possible according to the Groningen examination regulations and obligatory from the winter semester 21/22. Students are already made aware of this possibility at Leuphana in the information material on the study programme.▪ The contact times, which the programme advisory board evaluated as too low, are planned in accordance with the CNW for Psychology. As the number of students increases (e.g. to 30 students), the number of CH offered in individual modules should also be increased in accordance with the specifications of the CNW for Psychology.
Decision on the Awarding of the Quality Seal of Leuphana	<p>With its decision of 30.09.2021, the Presidential Board awards the Master Psychology & Sustainability (M.Sc.) the Quality Seal for Studies and Teaching for study programmes at Leuphana University Lüneburg. It thus confirms that this study programme meets the criteria of the Nds. StudAkkVO (Part 2 and Part 3) and that this has been verified in a procedure by external experts. The prerequisite for the specified period of validity of the Quality Seal is the signing of the cooperation agreement and the timely implementation of the measures stipulated in the development agreement. The monitoring of the measures is carried out by Leuphana Quality Management.</p>
Measure implementation	<p>Fulfilled according to Presidium resolution of January 26, 2022</p>
Validity of the Quality Seal	<p>8 years – Duration from October 01, 2021 – September 09, 2029</p>