



**Criteria for the Accreditation of  
Degree Programmes - ASIIN Quality Seal**  
Engineering, Informatics, Architecture,  
Natural Sciences, Mathematics, individually  
and in combination with other Subject Areas

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## 1. Purpose of this document

This document complements the introduction to the general criteria of ASIIN accreditation procedures (document 0).

It includes the **general criteria** and procedural guidelines for the award of:

- **ASIIN quality seal for degree programmes**
- **EUR-ACE<sup>®</sup>**-label of the *European Network for the Accreditation of Engineering Education (ENAE)* for degree programmes in engineering
- **Euro-Inf<sup>®</sup>**-label of the *European Quality Assurance Network for Informatics Education e.V. (EQANIE)* for Bachelor and Master degree programmes in the area of informatics
- **Eurobachelor<sup>®</sup> and Euromaster<sup>®</sup>**-label of the *European Chemistry Thematic Network (ECTN)* for degree programmes in the areas of chemistry

In addition to the **General Criteria** for the accreditation of degree programmes (programme accreditation), ASIIN's Technical Committees have developed the **Subject-Specific Criteria (SSC)** for the individual disciplinary fields. They are published as separate documents and are used as subject-specific orientation guidelines in accreditation procedures for the award of the ASIIN quality seal and the European subject-specific labels.

In programme accreditation, ASIIN concentrates on the assessment of degree programmes in engineering, architecture, informatics, natural sciences, mathematics, and interdisciplinary combinations of one of these subjects with other areas

This document was designed for all kinds of higher education institutions which offer educational programmes on an academic level (6 or higher) with respect to the European Qualifications Framework.

## 2. Requirements for the award of the ASIIN quality seal for degree programmes (including EUR-ACE<sup>®</sup>, Euro-Inf<sup>®</sup>, Eurobachelor<sup>®</sup> and Euromaster<sup>®</sup>)

The ASIIN quality seal for study programmes provides assurance that subject specific quality standards of the academic discipline and of the profession for which that programme prepares are met at high level. It confirms further that a suitable framework for good teaching and successful learning is provided. The award of the seal is based on learning outcome oriented standards of the involved disciplines and complies with the European Qualifications Framework and the "European Standards and Guidelines".

## 2.1 Relation between the ASIIN quality seal and the European subject-specific labels

The European subject-specific labels **EUR-ACE**<sup>®</sup> by ENAEE, **Euro-Inf**<sup>®</sup> by EQANIE and **Eurobachelor**<sup>®</sup>-**/Euromaster**<sup>®</sup> by ECTN include learning outcomes for specific subjects (Engineering, Informatics and Chemistry) defined Europe-wide in cooperation with academics and professionals. All these subject-specific labels have been developed within the framework of projects funded by the European Commission and are today supported by non-profit associations whose members belong to different European countries.

These associations provide the relevant assessment criteria and authorize agencies to award their label. ASIIN is authorized to award the above mentioned European subject-specific labels because ASIIN's accreditation procedures and General Criteria as well as the Subject-Specific Criteria have been verified and accepted by the owners of each label. Thus higher education institutions can also acquire one of the above mentioned European subject-specific labels in the course of an ASIIN degree programme accreditation procedure.

ASIIN's Subject-Specific Criteria include competency profiles for graduates of Bachelor- and Master degree programmes which are in accordance with several European reference frameworks, for instance with both the Dublin Descriptors<sup>1</sup> and the general qualification profiles laid down at European and national levels. For engineering subjects, for instance, the competency profiles for engineers (EUR-ACE label<sup>2</sup>), developed through collaboration at a European level, were taken into consideration. In the case of chemistry, the competency profiles of the Eurobachelor and Euromaster label<sup>3</sup> were used, and for informatics, the profiles of the "Euro-Inf" label.<sup>4</sup>

## 2.2 General Criteria

For the award of the ASIIN quality seal, including the above mentioned European subject-specific labels, the knowledge, skills, competences which the degree programme aims to impart are the central point of reference. It should be explained how the specific competences can be acquired through which aspects of the programme (content and form of the modules, teaching and learning methods, etc.).

Central part of the higher education institutions self assessment is therefore the description of the relation between

- the overall intended learning outcomes as (knowledge, skills and competences) and
- the contribution made by each individual module to achieve these outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> The Dublin Descriptors are a model drawn up by an informal group of European actors from the Joint Quality Initiative which aims at providing Europe-wide definitions of subject-specific and interdisciplinary competences which should be acquired by Bachelor's and Master's students during their degree. They are the basis of the qualification framework for German degrees.

<sup>2</sup> ENAEE (European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education)/EUR ACE Project: Framework Standards for the Accreditation of Engineering Programmes, 17.11.2006, cf. [www.enaee.eu](http://www.enaee.eu).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. [www.chemistry-eurolabels.eu](http://www.chemistry-eurolabels.eu).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. [www.euro-inf.eu](http://www.euro-inf.eu).

This relation should also be part of the module descriptions (cf. example for creating an “objectives matrix” on p.33).

ASIIN’s subject-specific criteria (SSC) contain **lists of exemplary ideal learning outcomes for various subject areas**. These provide orientation for the possible objectives and results of a degree programme. The selection of the specific catalogue for a programme and the type of route required to achieve the programme objectives is the responsibility of the higher education institutions.

The following table lists the general requirements for the accreditation of degree programmes.

The table shows the requirements that need to be met to acquire a certain seal. Regardless of the country in which ASIIN carries out an accreditation procedure, the ASIIN seal is always awarded based on the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). To this end, the table first shows the correspondence between the requirements for granting the ASIIN seal and those of the ESG (columns 1 and 2). The ASIIN Criteria correspond to the ESG or even exceed them. The present document quotes the standards in full, but only excerpts are quoted from the associated guidelines in the ESG where this helps to explain the standards.

In column 3, the requirements of the German Accreditation Council for granting its seal are placed in relation to the first two sets of criteria. This third column is only applicable to those cases where the Accreditation Council’s seal has been requested and where it is permissible to grant it.

For accreditation procedures in other countries or legal jurisdictions other national requirements may be included within ASIIN’s process as needed after consultation with the higher education institution commissioning the accreditation. In such cases, the contents of column 3 are replaced by the applicable requirements.

The ASIIN seal		Accreditation Council (AC) seal
ASIIN Requirements		Corresponding Requirements of the German Accreditation Council <sup>5</sup>
<b>1</b>	<b>THE DEGREE PROGRAMME: CONCEPT, CONTENT &amp; IMPLEMENTATION</b>	
1.1	<p><b>Objectives and learning outcomes of a degree programme (intended qualifications profile)</b></p> <p>The objectives and learning outcomes of the degree programme (i.e. the intended qualifications profile) are described in a brief and concise way. They are well-anchored, binding and easily accessible to the public, i.e. to students, teaching staff and anyone else interested.</p> <p>The aims and learning outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ reflect the level of academic qualification aimed at<sup>6</sup> and are equivalent to the learning outcome examples described in the respective ASIIN Subject-Specific Criteria (SSC);</li> <li>➔ are viable and valid;</li> <li>➔ are analysed on a regular basis and developed further if necessary.</li> </ul> <p>The intended qualifications profile allows the students to take up an occupation which corresponds to their qualification (professional classification).</p> <p>The relevant stakeholders were included in the process of formulating and further developing the objectives and learning outcomes. [Documentation/supporting records: guidelines, website, Diploma Supplement, student handbooks, alumni surveys etc.]</p>	<p>ESG 1.2<sup>7</sup></p> <p>ESG 1.3</p> <p>ESG 1.7</p> <p>ESG 1.8</p> <p>ESG 1.9</p>
		<p><b>2.1 Qualification Objectives of the Study Programme Concept</b></p> <p><b>2.2 Conceptual Integration of the Study Programme in the System of Studies</b></p>

<sup>5</sup> The valid version of the Rules for the Accreditation of Study Programmes and for System Accreditation at the time of the conclusion of contract is applicable. The present synopsis is based on the version of May 2015.

<sup>6</sup> The applicable academic classification is identified by matching the level of academic qualification aimed at to a correspondent level defined for higher education institution degrees within the national and/or European Qualifications Framework

<sup>7</sup> „ESG „x,y“ refers to the relevant standards and the corresponding principles of the „European Standards and Guidelines“ (Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). (2015). Brussels, Belgium.).

The ASIIN seal		Accreditation Council (AC) seal
ASIIN Requirements		Corresponding Requirements of the German Accreditation Council <sup>5</sup>
1.2	<p><b>Title of the degree programme</b></p> <p>The degree programme title reflects the intended aims and learning outcomes as well as, fundamentally, the main course language.</p> <p>[Documentation/supporting records: guidelines, website, Diploma Supplement etc.]</p>	
1.3	<p><b>Curriculum</b></p> <p>The curriculum allows the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes in order to obtain the degree.</p> <p>The overall objectives and intended learning outcomes for the degree programme are systematically substantiated and updated in its individual modules<sup>8</sup>. It is clear which knowledge, skills and competences students will acquire in each module.</p> <p>[Documentation/supporting records: guidelines, curricular overview, module/objectives matrix, website, student handbooks etc.]</p>	<p><b>ESG 1.2</b></p> <p><b>ESG 1.3</b></p>
1.4	<p><b>Admission requirements</b></p> <p>In terms of admission, the requirements and procedures are binding, transparent and the same for all applicants.</p> <p>The admission requirements are structured in a way that supports the students in achieving the learning outcomes.</p> <p>There are clear rules as to how individual admission requirements that have not been fulfilled can be compensated. A lack of previous knowledge must, however, never be compensated at the expense of</p>	<p><b>ESG 1.4</b></p>

<sup>8</sup> This includes a definition of how each module helps to reach the aims. For more details, see section objectives matrix (Example: Model Objectives Matrix, p. 33).



The ASIIN seal		Accreditation Council (AC) seal
<b>ASIIN Requirements</b>		<b>Corresponding “European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)”</b>
degree quality. [Documentation/supporting records: guidelines, website, student handbooks etc.]		<b>Corresponding Requirements of the German Accreditation Council<sup>5</sup></b>
		<b>Feasibility</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>THE DEGREE PROGRAMME: STRUCTURES, METHODS AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>	
2.1	<p><b>Structure and modules</b></p> <p>All degree programmes must be divided into modules. Each module is a sum of teaching and learning whose contents are concerted.</p> <p>With its choice of modules, the structure ensures that the learning outcomes can be reached and allows students to define an individual focus and course of study (student mobility, work experience etc.).</p> <p>The curriculum is structured in a way to allow students to complete the degree without exceeding the regular course duration.</p> <p>The modules have been adapted to the requirements of the degree programme. They ensure that each module objectives helps to reach both the qualification level and the overall intended learning outcomes.</p> <p>All working practice intervals or internships are well-integrated into the curriculum, and the higher education institution vouches for their quality in terms of relevance, content and structure.</p> <p>There are rules for recognising achievements and competences acquired outside the higher education institution. They render the transition between higher education institutions easier and ensure that the learning outcomes are reached at the level aimed at<sup>9</sup>.</p> <p>[Documentation/supporting records: guidelines, module descriptions, student handbooks, student</p>	<p><b>ESG 1.2</b></p> <p><b>ESG 1.3</b></p>
		<p><b>2.2 Conceptual Integration of the Study Programme in the System of Studies</b></p> <p><b>2.3 Study Programme Concept</b></p> <p><b>2.4 Academic Feasibility</b></p>

<sup>9</sup> Based on the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

The ASIIN seal		Accreditation Council (AC) seal
<b>ASIIN Requirements</b>		<b>Corresponding “European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)”</b>
	progression statistics etc.]	<b>Corresponding Requirements of the German Accreditation Council <sup>5</sup></b>
2.2	<p><b>Work load and credits</b></p> <p>The estimated time budgets are realistic enough to enable students to complete the degree without exceeding the regular course duration. Structure-related peaks in the work load have been avoided.</p> <p>A credit point system oriented on the amount of work required from students has been devised<sup>10</sup>. The work load comprises both attendance-based learning and self-study. This includes all compulsory elements of the degree.</p> <p>[Documentation/supporting records: module descriptions, work load surveys and analyses etc.]</p>	<p><b>ESG 1.4</b></p>
2.3	<p><b>Teaching methodology</b></p> <p>The teaching methods and instruments used support the students in achieving the learning outcomes. The degree programme is designed to be well-balanced between attendance-based learning and self-study.</p> <p>Familiarising the students with independent academic research and writing plays a vital role in the programme.</p> <p>[Documentation/supporting records: module descriptions etc.]</p>	<p><b>2.2 Conceptual Integration of the Study Programme in the System of Studies</b></p> <p><b>2.4 Academic Feasibility</b></p>

<sup>10</sup> Within the European Higher Education Area, the ECTS Users' Guide is the expected basis for calculating credits.

The ASIIN seal		Accreditation Council (AC) seal
<b>ASIIN Requirements</b>		<b>Corresponding “European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)”</b>
<b>Corresponding Requirements of the German Accreditation Council<sup>5</sup></b>		
2.4	<p><b>Support and assistance</b></p> <p>There are resources available to provide individual assistance, advice and support for all students.</p> <p>The allocated advice and guidance (both technical and general) on offer assist the students in achieving the learning outcomes and in completing the course within the scheduled time.</p> <p>[Documentation/supporting records: consultation concepts, student handbooks etc.]</p>	<p><b>ESG 1.6</b></p>
		<b>2.4 Academic Feasibility</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>EXAMS: SYSTEM, CONCEPT AND ORGANISATION</b>	
	<p>Exams<sup>11</sup> are devised to individually measure to which extent students have reached the learning outcomes defined. Exams are structured to cover all of the intended learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences). Exams are module-related and offer students continuous feedback on their progress in developing competences.</p> <p>The degree programme comprises a thesis/dissertation or final project which ensures that students work on a set task independently and at the level aimed for.</p> <p>For each module, a form of assessment (including suitable alternatives, if any) has been defined. There are mechanisms in place which ensure that all students learn the details of what is required in order to pass the module (pre-examination elements, assignments etc.) no later than at the start of the module. Rules have been defined for re-sits, disability compensation measures, illness and other mitigating circumstances etc.</p>	<p><b>ESG 1.2</b></p> <p><b>ESG 1.3</b></p> <p><b>ESG 1.4</b></p>
		<p><b>2.2 Conceptual Integration of the Study Programme in the System of Studies</b></p> <p><b>2.3 Study Programme Concept</b></p> <p><b>2.4 Academic Feasibility</b></p> <p><b>2.5 Examination System</b></p>

<sup>11</sup> Exams are all methods of ascertaining to which extent the learning outcomes have been reached as well as any pre-examination elements, assignments etc., as set forth by the higher education institution in question.

The ASIIN seal		Accreditation Council (AC) seal	
<b>ASIIN Requirements</b>		<b>Corresponding “European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)”</b>	<b>Corresponding Requirements of the German Accreditation Council <sup>5</sup></b>
	<p>The number and distribution of the exams ensure that both the exam load and preparation times are adequate. All exams are organised in a way which avoids delays to student progression caused by deadlines, exam correction times, re-sits etc.</p> <p>All exams are marked using transparent criteria. There are mechanisms in place which ensure that exams marked by different examiners are comparable. The higher education institution vouches for the quality in terms of relevance, content and structure of all student assignments completed outside the institution.</p> <p>[Documentation/supporting records: guidelines, inspection of exams, work placement and project reports, examination minutes, theses/dissertations etc.]</p>		
<b>4</b>	<b>RESSOURCES</b>		
4.1	<p><b>Staff</b></p> <p>The composition, scientific orientation and qualification of the teaching staff team are suitable for sustaining the degree.</p> <p>There are sufficient staff resources available for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ providing assistance and advice to students</li> <li>➔ administrative tasks</li> </ul> <p>The research and development activities carried out by the teaching staff are in line with and support the level of academic qualification aimed at.</p> <p>[Documentation/supporting records: staff descriptions, overview of research and development activities</p>	<b>ESG 1.5</b>	<b>2.7 Facilities</b>

The ASIIN seal		Accreditation Council (AC) seal	
<b>ASIIN Requirements</b>		<b>Corresponding “European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)”</b>	
<b>Corresponding Requirements of the German Accreditation Council <sup>5</sup></b>			
4.2	<b>Staff development</b> There are offers and support mechanisms available for teaching staff who wish to further develop their professional and teaching skills. [Documentation: staff overview etc.]	ESG 1.5	2.7 Facilities
4.3	<b>Funds and equipment</b> The available funds and equipment form a sound and solid basis for the degree programme including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ guaranteed funds</li> <li>➔ sufficient and high quality infrastructure</li> <li>➔ solid, binding rules for all internal and external cooperations</li> </ul> [Documentation: cooperation agreements, overview of funds and equipment etc.]	ESG 1.6	2.6 Programme-related Co-operations 2.7 Facilities
<b>5 TRANSPARENCY AND DOCUMENTATION</b>			
5.1	<b>Module descriptions</b> The module descriptions are accessible to all students and teaching staff and contain the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ module identification code</li> <li>➔ person(s) responsible for each module</li> <li>➔ teaching method(s) and work load</li> <li>➔ credit points</li> </ul>	ESG 1.7 ESG 1.8	2.2 Conceptual Integration of the Study Programme in the System of Studies

The ASIIN seal		Accreditation Council (AC) seal	
ASIIN Requirements		Corresponding “European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)”	Corresponding Requirements of the German Accreditation Council <sup>5</sup>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ intended learning outcomes</li> <li>→ module content</li> <li>→ planned use/applicability</li> <li>→ admission and examination requirements</li> <li>→ form(s) of assessment and details explaining how the module mark is calculated</li> <li>→ recommended literature</li> <li>→ date of last amendment made</li> </ul> <p>[Documents: module descriptions]</p>		
5.2	<p><b>Diploma and Diploma Supplement</b></p> <p>Shortly after graduation, a diploma or degree certificate is issued together with a Diploma Supplement printed in English.</p> <p>These documents provide information on the student's qualifications profile and individual performance as well as the classification of the degree programme with regard to its applicable education system.</p> <p>The individual modules and the grading procedure on which the final mark is based are explained in a way which is clear for third parties. In addition to the final mark, statistical data as set forth in the ECTS User's Guide is included to allow readers to categorise the individual result/degree.</p> <p>[Documentation/supporting records: sample diploma, specific (course-related) English Diploma Supplement, transcript of records etc.]</p>	ESG 1.4	2.2 Conceptual Integration of the Study Programme in the System of Studies

The ASIIN seal		Accreditation Council (AC) seal
<b>ASIIN Requirements</b>		<b>Corresponding “European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)”</b>
<b>Corresponding Requirements of the German Accreditation Council <sup>5</sup></b>		
5.3	<p><b>Relevant rules</b></p> <p>The rights and duties of both the higher education institution and students are clearly defined and binding (guidelines, statutes etc.). All relevant course-related information is available in the language of the degree programme and accessible for anyone involved.</p> <p>[Documentation/supporting records: guidelines etc.]</p>	<p><b>ESG 1.4</b></p> <p><b>ESG 1.7</b></p>
		<b>2.8 Transparency and Documentation</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>QUALITY MANAGEMENT: QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT</b>	
	<p>The programme is subject to regular internal quality assessment procedures aiming at continuous improvement. All responsibilities and mechanisms defined for the purposes of continued development are binding.</p> <p>Students and other stakeholders take part in the quality assurance process. The outcomes and all measures derived are made known to anyone involved. All methods employed and data analysed are suitable for the purpose and used to continue improving the degree programme, especially with a view to identifying and resolving weaknesses. To this end, the information they provide includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- whether the intended learning outcomes required to obtain the degree have been achieved;</li> <li>- the academic feasibility of the degree programme;</li> <li>- student mobility (abroad, where applicable);</li> <li>- how the qualifications profile is accepted on the labour market;</li> <li>- the effect of measures in use to avoid unequal treatment at the higher education institution (if any).</li> </ul> <p>[Documentation/supporting records: results obtained in internal and external evaluations, statistical data regarding new students, graduates, etc., statistics about alumni ]</p>	<p><b>ESG 1.1</b></p> <p><b>ESG 1.2</b></p> <p><b>ESG 1.9</b></p> <p><b>ESG 1.10</b></p>
		<p><b>2.4 Academic Feasibility</b></p> <p><b>2.9 Quality Assurance and Further Development</b></p>

### 2.3 Requirements for degree programmes with a special outline

Degree programmes with a special outline may include dual/cooperative programmes, combined programmes such as teacher training or dual subject programmes, project programmes, e-learning and distance learning, intensive programmes or binational and multinational programmes.

The general requirements listed in section 2, as well as the procedural directions documented in this brochure (section 3), apply for all types of programmes.

If ASIIN considers it necessary to ensure an adequate assessment, supplementary criteria will be published as separate documents on ASIIN's website. As with all questions regarding criteria and procedures, the agency's head office will provide further information as required.

Furthermore, when the seal of German Accreditation Council is awarded, its specific rules for special types of degree programmes apply.

For accreditation procedures for combined programmes (such as teacher training degrees), the appropriate procedural rules and regulations may be found in section 3.1 (procedure types) and section 5.5(guidelines for two-stage procedures) of this document.

### 2.4 Accreditation stages and interim changes

According to internationally established practice, the accreditation of a programme is always subject to a time limit. The seal granted is valid for a limited period.

We differentiate among three types of accreditation stages:

1. **Concept accreditation:** The concept for a programme is prepared and all the documents and authorisations needed to put it into practice are available. However, no students are studying the programme yet, so the evaluation as a part of the accreditation procedure is inevitably no more than a plausibility check. Compared to the other stages, concept accreditation is less meaningful with regard to quality assurance, because the data on which the procedure is based is less substantiated and harder to check.
2. **First accreditation:** Students are now studying in the programme, and this is the first time an accreditation procedure is carried out. This makes it possible to base the accreditation procedure assessment on a critical self-assessment by the institution as well as on the actual implementation of the programme.
3. **Renewed accreditation (reaccreditation):** An active programme has already been accredited at least once before. When the validity of the current seal expires, it is time to carry out another accreditation.

All three types of accreditation are subject to the same criteria inasmuch as the accreditation decisions are comparable. Typically, the seal granted for a first accreditation is valid for a shorter period than those subsequently granted.

**Renewed accreditation (reaccreditation) is the typical situation.** Assessment at this stage can increasingly be based on quantitative and qualitative data related to the results achieved over the



course of the previous accreditation period. This means that for renewed accreditation, the focus lies on the achievement of the aims defined for the programme by the higher education institution, particularly for educational objectives and learning outcomes. Above all, it is the institution's quality assurance or quality management system that is expected to provide key evidence that the goals for its degree programmes have been met, and document any deviations.

ASIIN's understanding of accreditation aims to support higher education institutions in achieving **continuous improvements** in their teaching. Improvements within an accreditation period should never be put off until the next accreditation deadline. On the contrary, being able to demonstrate that continuous improvements have been made is essential for the renewal of the accreditation.

If an institution intends to make **major changes** to an accredited programme between accreditations, and these go beyond continuous improvement, this may affect the existing accreditation. ASIIN offers an interim auditing option in order to maintain the accreditation (see section 3.8).

### 3. Procedural Guidelines

#### 3.1 Procedure models types

ASIIN offers different types of procedures for the accreditation of degree programmes:

Type of procedure	Characteristics
Individual procedure	The procedure is applied to a single Bachelor's or Master's degree programme or a consecutive Bachelor's and Master's programme.
Cluster procedure	The procedure is applied to a bundle of degree programmes (with related subjects). A group of peers assesses several programmes simultaneously.
Two-stage procedure	1st stage: Initial check of structural characteristics or models related to the faculty or higher education institution as a whole. 2nd stage: Cluster procedure for bundles of programmes (with related subjects) based on the evaluation from stage 1.

Type of procedure	Characteristics
Second tier accreditation procedure/ complementary procedure in the sense of connective procedures	<p>A complementary procedure makes use of existing results of prior external procedures (evaluation procedure or similar), <u>or</u> makes reference to an already existing and published accreditation/certification report, so that it may not be necessary to include an on-site visit in the accreditation procedure and to check criteria that have already been finally verified in the course of another recent accreditation/certification procedure.</p> <p>Such a complementary procedure for its own quality seal and possibly for the European subject-specific labels is also possible after the award of the seal of the Germany Accreditation Council. In such cases, an accreditation procedure where the Seal of the Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany has been awarded must have been completed and the relevant accreditation report must have been published within the database of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK).</p>
International cooperation procedure	<p>In the case of a degree programme involving two or more higher education institutions from different countries, a procedure based on cooperation with an agency in the other country may be carried out.</p>

Irrespective of the type of procedure being applied, **the decision on whether or not to accredit each programme is made separately for each seal and each label**. If the application is successful, each programme receives an accreditation seal in its own right.

Similarly, for combined programmes, the accreditation applies to the programme as a whole, and not a part of it.

Depending on the circumstances and needs of a particular institution, the accreditation procedure for individual degree programmes may be carried out separately or jointly for bundles of programmes (**cluster procedure**). In each case, ASIIN's responsible Technical Committees will decide if degree programmes may be bundled in this type of procedure as well as which programmes this applies to.

In a **two-stage accreditation procedure**, structures which apply to programmes throughout the institution, or a programme model, e.g. for combined programmes (teacher training or dual subject programmes), are initially checked by a group of specially appointed peers (stage 1). This may involve ASIIN cooperating with another accreditation agency to form a joint team in order to include subject areas not covered by ASIIN in the overall procedure. The end product of the first step of the procedure is an evaluation report. The report forms the foundation of the subject audits – generally in the form of bundled clusters of programmes or subjects – carried out in the second step of the procedure (stage 2). The procedure for stage 2 then follows the steps described in section 3.2. After the second stage of the procedure has been completed, a decision is made on whether to grant accreditation for the individual degree programmes. A two-stage accreditation process is particularly suitable for cases where the degree programmes to be accredited have common structural

characteristics and are offered by more than one subject area or faculty in a higher education institution.

A special type is the so called **complementary procedure**:

A **second tier accreditation procedure/complementary procedure** based on available, external results from evaluations (or similar) is possible if this preliminary evaluations cover all aspects relevant to the accreditation and were produced by an independent body. In such cases, the accreditation procedure can be slimmed down and it may not be necessary for peers to conduct an on-site visit. In each specific case, the responsible bodies within ASIIN will look into the circumstances and decide whether this variant may be used, depending on the rules for the seal which is being applied for.

The responsible ASIIN Accreditation Commission has decided on the basis of the synopsis of the General Criteria for the ASIIN quality seal with the criteria for the accreditation of degree programmes of the German Accreditation Council, as described in section 2.2, to conduct a complementary procedure for the award of the ASIIN quality seal by verifying a selection of specific criteria. This is only possible if the relevant accreditation report about the award of the Seal of the German Accreditation Council has been published in the database of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) and is accessible for third parties.

Second tier accreditation procedures/complementary procedures can also take place on the basis of procedures conducted by other EQAR registered accreditation agencies.

An **international cooperation procedure** is recommended when a programme is jointly offered and organised by two or more higher education institutions in two or more countries and requires accreditation in both or some of the countries involved. In this case, a coordinated procedure is specified on the basis of the appropriate criteria. The requirements specified by the owners of all seals being applied for are applicable. Where appropriate, exemptions must be obtained from one or more seal owners. This is done during the preparatory stage.

### 3.2 Sequence of the procedure

The sequence of an accreditation procedure can be subdivided as follows:

#### 1. Preparation

- |   |               |  |
|---|---------------|--|
| ➤ request                                       | HEI           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A request is submitted to the ASIIN Office (<b>accreditation request</b> and a <b>curricular overview</b> which clearly states the content of the programme or programmes).</li><li>- Form: electronic using the “Accreditation Request” form (<a href="http://www.asiin.de">www.asiin.de</a>)</li><li>- Required information: even in the case of an informal request, information such as the name(s) of the programme(s), type of degree, number of semesters, the seal(s) being applied for, any particularities, proposed responsibility of the ASIIN Technical Committees, proposed peer profiles, contact details is required.</li></ul>  |
| ➤ Preparation of proposal                       | ASIIN         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The responsibility of ASIIN/its respective Technical Committees and the applicable procedure model and type are determined (see 3.1).</li><li>- Where significant divergence from the applicable criteria is apparent, the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes must decide whether and on what terms a proposal can be issued; where necessary, the ASIIN office provides information on the criteria applied in this regard.</li><li>- The number and profile of peers required as well as the overall length of visits are determined by the competent Technical Committee(s).</li><li>- Calculation and forwarding of proposal, including a proposed timetable for the procedure, by the ASIIN office.</li></ul> |
| ➤ Acceptance of proposal/conclusion of contract | ASIIN and HEI | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Contract concluded by means of acceptance of the proposal by the HEI and, if desired, by means of a separate contract.</li></ul>   |
- 
- |                      |               |   |
|----------------------|---------------|---|
| <b>2. Assessment</b> | HEI and ASIIN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Presentation of self-assessment report (or draft, if preferred) by the HEI.</li></ul> |
| ➤ Pre-assessment     |               |   |

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formal pre-assessment of the draft self-assessment report by the ASIIN office.</li> <li>- (Optional) preliminary discussions at the ASIIN office.</li> <li>- Submission of final self-evaluation report by the HEI.</li> </ul>
➤ Review team	ASIIN		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nomination and appointment of the review team (ASIIN office, Technical Committees and Accreditation Commission).</li> </ul>
➤ Visit	ASIIN and HEI		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scheduling and preparation of the visit.</li> <li>- Assessment of the self-assessment report by the peers and the ASIIN office.</li> <li>- Feedback by the peers of initial impressions, any additional requirements and any preparatory questions for the HEI to the ASIIN office.</li> <li>- According to the procedure type and country in which the HEI is located, preparatory meetings or a teleconference among the review team or involving the HEI might be necessary; where necessary, the ASIIN office provides information on the criteria applied in this regard.</li> <li>- Confirmation of date, including agenda, for the visit to the HEI.</li> <li>- On-site visit to HEI carried out (review team and ASIIN representative(s)); one peer assumes the role of team spokesperson.</li> </ul>
➤ Reporting	ASIIN		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Submission of accreditation report (status version of the peers after the visit) to the HEI to be checked for factual errors and commented on.</li> </ul>
	HEI		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comments on accreditation report by the HEI and correction of factual errors, if any, and amendments.</li> </ul>

<p><b>3. Decision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Recommendation of peers</li> <li>➤ Recommendation of Technical Committees</li> </ul>	<p>ASIIN</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Final assessment by the peers with a recommendation for the decision on accreditation.</li> <li>- Comments by relevant Technical Committee(s) with recommendation for the decision on accreditation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Decision of the Accreditation Commission</li> </ul>	<p>ASIIN</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Model I: Decision by the ASIIN Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes on accreditation and, if relevant for each case, on the award of the seal(s) applied for.</li> <li>- Model II: Adoption of report and recommendation by the ASIIN Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes for the decision to be submitted to the competent external national accreditation body, depending on the country in which the HEI is located.</li> <li>- Model III: Combination of models I and II (see above).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Notification and publication</li> </ul>	<p>ASIIN and HEI</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Notification of the decision to the HEI.</li> <li>- Transmission of the <b>accreditation report (final version)</b> to the HEI and, if positive, any certificates/authorisations for the use of a <b>seal</b>.</li> <li>- Transmission of the accreditation report (final version) to the owners of any additional seals applied for (e.g. to the German Accreditation Council).</li> <li>- Publication of a summary and of the accreditation report on the website in accordance with the requirements of the ESG.</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Request submission: the HEI's self assessment report

The accreditation process is based on a so called self assessment report by the applying institution of higher education.

The preparation of the self assessment report offers the opportunity to use internal quality management systems and self examination processes in order to involve relevant stakeholder groups and to identify possible areas of improvement for the (further) development of a degree programme.

Ideally, the accreditation process will be utilized by the higher education institution as a quality development project and will not be seen as a formal inspection routine.

The self assessment report is created in two steps:

1. **Self assessment:** The higher education institution uses the self assessment report to analyze in an aggregated manner if and how the degree programme/s fulfil/s the accreditation criteria and which particularities have to be taken into account. Variations from the criteria can be explained.

There should be a special focus on evaluation and assessment rather than on mere description, including, for example strengths and weaknesses, challenges and envisaged solutions. The “guiding questions” below are designed to give some assistance in that respect.

The self assessment report is also a guide through the complementary attachments. Typically, a short and concise evaluation of each criterion together with a reference to the relevant attachment will be sufficient.

If the accreditation process includes a “cluster” of similar degree programmes, information that is relevant for all degree programmes should be summarized. At the same time, information that is important for specific degree programmes (e.g. intended learning outcomes, curriculum etc.) should be reported separately.

2. **Evidence:** It is of great importance, that the self assessment is reasonably documented and supported by suitable pieces of evidence. Therefore it is necessary to compile an annex with all pieces of evidence. This annex includes all internal regulations, documents, quantitative and qualitative data and information, etc., that the higher education institution already has in use, for example where they have been generated by internal quality management processes and must not be produced just for the accreditation process. A sample list of possible pieces of evidence is included in this guideline but can and should be altered where applicable.

ASIIN offers a template/guideline with key questions for the preparation of the self assessment report

This guideline can be used as a reference model. The structure corresponds with the accreditation criteria and differentiates between guiding questions for the analysis and suggestions for possibly useful pieces of evidence. Both are not mandatory but thought to be of assistance.

For the ASIIN quality seal and the possibly applied for European subject specific labels a guideline for the preparation of the self assessment report, based on the General Criteria and the Subject-Specific-Criteria, is available.

If a subject specific label is to be obtained in a second tier procedure after a national accreditation procedure, the ASIIN office provides an individual guideline about the necessary self assessment and documentation.

Self assessment and evidence can both be provided electronically, depending on the degree of digitalization within the institution's internal data and document management system, and can include links to specific web pages, data bases or similar.

Depending on the needs of the individual peer panels we may also ask for a printed version of the application documents in specific cases, whereas it is expected to use only electronic documents in the near future.

### **3.4 Principles for the selection of peers**

ASIIN asks the higher education institution to state the ideal expertise profile for the group of peers. ASIIN's Accreditation Commission decides who will be nominated for a given procedure based on the recommendation of the responsible Technical Committee(s), and appoints the peers.

#### **The group of peers**

For a single accreditation, the group of peers is normally composed of:

- 2-3 full-time professors (university, university of applied sciences and, if applicable, university of cooperative education)
- 1 industry representative
- 1 student

For cluster accreditations, the group of peers is expanded in accordance with the needs of the subject matter.

In all cases, the group of peers should:

- Include members who are able to understand the subject matter of the programme or programmes under review;
- Include members who understand the needs of stakeholders in the particular programme concerned and incorporate them into their evaluation;
- If possible, include peers experienced in accreditation as well as auditors who are new to the field;
- If the degree programmes under consideration are offered by higher education institutions with a special form of organisation (e.g. universities of cooperative education or privately run institutions), include members who have experience at this type of institution.

In some cases, members of ASIIN committees involved in the accreditation procedure may serve as peers as part of the agency's internal quality assurance mechanisms.

#### **Auditors with a background in higher education should:**

- Have proven subject expertise;
- Be able to demonstrate their activities in the subject area;



- Ideally: have experience in accreditation or evaluation, teaching experience at a higher education institution, international experience, and experience in the administration of higher education institutions.

**Auditors with a professional background should:**

- Have proven subject expertise;
- Have experience with direct responsibility for employing graduates in a professional setting;
- Ideally: have experience in accreditation or evaluation, teaching experience at a higher education institution, international experience, and experience in the administration of higher education institutions.

**Auditors from the student body should:**

- Be actively studying a subject relevant to the accreditation procedure;
- Be able to reflect on the experience of studying, while not having significantly exceeded the normal time taken to complete a degree;
- Be familiar with Bachelor's and Master's level programmes.

For Germany, students nominated by the Student Accreditation Pool are considered during the selection process of the student representative.

**Persons excluded from the nomination as peer:**

- Persons who are in the process of applying to the institution under review.
- Academic colleagues whose publications or projects are principally produced in cooperation with teaching staff from the institution under review.
- People who work at the institution under review and/or have a dependent relationship to it.
- Generally, professors from the same federal state or region.

**Preparation of peers**

The agency offers regular seminars/workshops for auditors and committee members to prepare them for the task and to reflect on their understanding of their role and update their knowledge of the auditing process. The agency expects its peers to make use of these opportunities or similar offers provided by other agencies.

**Confidentiality and impartiality**

Before participating in an audit, every peer must sign a **confidentiality and impartiality declaration**. The applicants are informed of the composition of the auditing team. If bias is suspected, the higher education institution may request the substitution of peers. The relevant Technical Committee handles this type of requests.

### **3.5 Role and function of project managers**

The peers and ASIIN's committees carry out their accreditation tasks on a pro bono basis. However, the overall coordination of a procedure is carried out by a full-time project manager at the ASIIN office.

ASIIN project managers coordinate and organise the accreditation procedure. They ensure that the relevant rules are followed in each procedure, are responsible for time management and the adherence to deadlines, and provide support to everyone involved in the procedure, answering questions based on their experience and background knowledge. Project managers are present with the peers during the visit and at all committee meetings. They produce draft reports, proposals and documentation for the procedure. Throughout the procedure, they also support the higher education institution seeking accreditation as the contact person within ASIIN.

Thus, project managers manage the information between institution(s), peers and other committees involved.

To be considered relevant and to be taken into account for the procedure, procedure-related communication between institutions, auditors and committee has to pass through the ASIIN office.

### **3.6 Possible outcomes of the procedure and expiry**

Accreditation is for a limited time period. A first accreditation with one of the aforementioned seals is valid for five years; subsequent renewal is valid for seven years.

Moreover, the calculation of validity periods is always based on the rules of the body granting the seal.

The time limits applicable in the individual case are notified to the higher education institution together with the letter of confirmation on the outcome of the accreditation procedure.

An accreditation procedure may have the following outcomes:

Final decision by the ASIIN Accreditation Commission for the ASIIN quality seal and the European subject-specific labels

- Unconditional accreditation for the full accreditation period.
- Accreditation with reservations, i.e. with requirements and thus for a shorter period of validity than the maximum permitted by the accreditation procedure. In this case, there are certain requirements that must be met by a due date. If the requirements are met on time, the accreditation is extended to cover the full period allowed. The fulfilment of the requirements is checked and evaluated by the review team and the responsible Technical Committee(s) and ascertained by the Accreditation Commission. The rules of the respective owner of a seal relating to the imposition of requirements are also applied. If necessary, the ASIIN office will provide detailed information on the conditions to be applied.
- The procedure is suspended ("procedure-loop"): the Accreditation Commission may suspend an accreditation procedure once if the procedure revealed that requirements

remain unfulfilled but the applicant institution can, nonetheless, be expected to resolve the issues during the suspension period. When deciding to suspend the procedure, the Accreditation Commission also stipulates the conditions to be met for resumption. The decision to suspend the procedure may be taken at the request of the institution or on the initiative of ASIIN. If the resumption of a procedure requires an additional visit, the applicant may have to meet extra costs. The rules of the respective owner of a seal relating to the suspension of a procedure are also applied. If necessary, the ASIIN office will provide detailed information on the conditions to be applied.

- Accreditation may be refused if the requirements for the award of a seal are not sufficiently met. In this case, the German Accreditation Council will be informed if its seal was applied for. The rules of the respective owner of a seal relating to the refusal of accreditation are also applied. If necessary, the ASIIN office will provide detailed information on the conditions to be applied.
- ASIIN submits a recommendation for the decision on accreditation to the respective national decision-making body; this may involve requirements or suspension.
- The responsible decision-making body may specify different/further outcomes for an accreditation procedure according to national requirements.

national accreditation, e.g. Switzerland

## Appeal

The institution immediately affected by an accreditation decision by ASIIN's Accreditation Commission may file an **appeal** against the decision; appeals are dealt with by ASIIN's special appeals committee. The submission of an appeal is subject to deadlines. Information on the requirements, procedure and deadlines can be obtained from the ASIIN office or on the web page ([www.asiin.de](http://www.asiin.de)).

## Procedure for fulfilment of requirements

- |                                    |       |   |
|------------------------------------|-------|---|
| 1. Proof that requirements are met | HEI   | – Submission by HEI of evidence that requirements have been met within the time limit as notified by ASIIN. |
| 2. Decision                        | ASIIN | – Assessment by peers of whether requirements are met and, where appropriate, questions to HEI.             |
| ➤ Recommendation by peers          |       | – Recommendation by review team for decision on   |

- |  |               |  |
|--|---------------|--|
| ➤ Recommendation of Technical Committees   |               | <p>the extension of accreditation to the full period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Comments by Technical Committee(s) in charge with recommendation for decision on the extension of accreditation.</li> </ul>   |
| ➤ Decision by the Accreditation Commission | ASIIN         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Model I: Decision by the ASIIN Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes on fulfilment of requirements and extension of accreditation and, where appropriate, on the award of the seal(s) applied for.</li> <li>– Model II: Adoption by the ASIIN Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes of report on compliance with requirements and submission of recommendation for decision to the third-party body responsible for national accreditation according to the country in which the HEI is situated.</li> <li>– Model III: Combination of model I and II.</li> </ul> |
| ➤ Notification and publication             | ASIIN and HEI | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Notification of decision to the HEI.</li> <li>– In the case of a positive decision, the documents/authorisations containing the extension to use a seal are issued to the HEI.</li> <li>– Notification of the decision to the owners of any other seals applied for (e.g. the German Accreditation Council).</li> <li>– Publication of the results of compliance with the requirements and/or removal of requirements from the website in accordance with ESG requirements.</li> </ul>  |

**Procedure relating to suspension and resumption of a procedure**

- |                                |       |   |
|--------------------------------|-------|---|
| 1. Resumption of the procedure | HEI   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Submission by HEI of evidence that conditions transmitted with the suspension decision have been met by the HEI within the time limit as notified by ASIIN.</li> </ul> |
| 2. Decision                    | ASIIN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Assessment by peers of whether conditions are met and, where appropriate, questions to HEI.</li> </ul>   |
| ➤ Recommendation by peers      |       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Recommendation of review team for decision on resumption of the procedure and accreditation</li> </ul>   |
| ➤ Recommendation               |       |   |

	by Technical Committees		and/or award of the seal(s) applied for.
			– Comments by Technical Committee(s) in charge with recommendation for decision on resumption of the procedure and accreditation and/or award of the seal(s) applied for.
➤	Decision by the Accreditation Commission	ASIIN	– Model I: Decision by the ASIIN Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes on resumption of the procedure and accreditation and/or award of the seal(s) sought. – Model II: Adoption by the ASIIN Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes of report on resumption of the procedure and submission of recommendation to the external body responsible for national accreditation according to the country in which the HEI is situated. – Model III: Combination of model I and II.
➤	Notification and publication	ASIIN and HEI	– Notification of decision to the HEI. – Handover of the <b>accreditation report (final version)</b> to the HEI and, if positive, any certificates/authorisations to use a <b>seal</b> . – Transmission of the accreditation report (final version) to the owners of any other seals applied for (e.g. the German Accreditation Council). – Publication of a summary and the accreditation report on the website in accordance with ESG requirements.

### 3.7 Extending an accreditation period

#### Extension where a reaccreditation is planned

If a request is made to reaccredit a programme up to six weeks before the previous accreditation expires, the Accreditation Commission may decide to extend the accreditation until renewal if the reaccreditation procedure is to be implemented by ASIIN. This prevents gaps in the validity of a programme's accreditation.

#### Extension for the run-down period when a programme is closed

If a higher education institution is not going to continue a programme which has previously received accreditation, and ASIIN has taken a final accreditation decision, the existing accreditation may be extended for the duration of the degrees of students who were matriculated when the validity of the accreditation expired, upon request of the institution. The relevant conditions are:

1. The programme was closed before the accreditation period expired.
2. The institution can substantiate that the programme will not differ significantly from the accredited programme.
3. The required staff and infrastructure will continue to be available.

### **3.8 Changes during the accreditation period**

Changes to degree programmes during the accreditation period are in principle possible and are indeed essential if the quality of a programme improves or is further developed. However, significant changes may change the object of accreditation in such a way that the original accreditation decision and award of the seal no longer apply.

It is therefore important to ASIIN to offer a fast and low-cost procedure which, in the event of significant changes, allows for the accreditation decision or the award of a seal to be maintained or to be extended to these changes.

If an accreditation procedure has been completed by ASIIN, the higher education institution is contractually obliged to inform the agency of significant changes. If ASIIN learns of a significant change by other means, the higher education institution will be invited to comment within a specified time limit. The higher education institution is able in its comments to request that the accreditation is maintained in accordance with the procedure described below. It is generally up to the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes to decide whether the change decreases the quality of the programme and whether a new accreditation is necessary.

#### ***Definition***

In the event of significant changes to the concept or profile of a programme, the agency will decide whether the changes decrease the quality and therefore a reaccreditation is necessary.<sup>12</sup>

#### **This type of change has generally occurred if**

1. The objectives of the programme are redefined in a form surpassing an update based on new knowledge from academic and professional sources;
2. Its characteristics as recorded in the accreditation certificate have changed (e.g. designation, programme classification (consecutive/continuing), type of degree);
3. The normal period of study has changed;
4. The enrolment cycle has changed;
5. The institution makes changes to the curriculum with the following consequences:
  - a. Compulsory modules are removed and not replaced (including practical modules and the final thesis);
  - b. A complete change in the learning objectives of several compulsory modules (including practical modules and the final thesis);

---

<sup>12</sup> Extract from the model agreement between the German Accreditation Council and the agencies, and criterion, and criterion 3.6.3. of the Rules for the Accreditation of Study Programmes and for System Accreditation.

- c. Changes to the general study conditions, where the changes are not justified by improvements undertaken as a result of the quality assurance process;
- 6. A new main focus or specialisation option is introduced;
- 7. A reduction in staff and/or infrastructure has been implemented;
- 8. The change would lead to a breach of applicable legal regulations or other binding statutory requirements.

**Principally, a significant change has not occurred if**

- 1. Improvements arising from the institution’s quality assurance or quality management system are implemented – unless the changes are in breach of applicable legal regulations or other binding statutory requirements.
- 2. Modules are brought up-to-date with the latest research within the scope of the objectives of the programme.
- 3. Additional modules are added to the range of elective or compulsory elective modules, and their learning objectives are in accordance with the goals of the programme as a whole.
- 4. In individual cases, the designation of modules is altered in keeping with the latest research.
- 5. The credit points awarded for modules are adjusted to reflect the actual workload, as long as the total number of credits for the programme is not thereby changed.
- 6. Modifications are made to the quality assurance system in the course of its ongoing development.
- 7. Staff is replaced.

These lists are not conclusive and may be expanded. If in doubt, higher education institutions are requested to report changes to the ASIIN office.

***Procedure***

The procedure in the case of a significant change is organised as follows:

- In the case of significant changes which are reported in the process of meeting a requirement, the change will be evaluated by the auditors, Technical Committees and the Accreditation Commission during the assessment of whether the requirement has been fulfilled.
- For all subsequent changes, the following procedure is used:
  - a. The higher education institution submits an informal request for the change to be assessed and for the accreditation to remain in force. This request includes a description of the change in question.
  - b. The documentation is assessed by the responsible Technical Committee(s). The Technical Committee chooses one of the following options on behalf of the Accreditation Commission and according to its instructions:
    - (1) The change is not significant.
    - (2) Although the change is significant, there is no need to carry out a new accreditation procedure (i.e. the change does not compromise the existing accreditation).

- (3) The change is significant and it cannot be covered by the existing accreditation since it might lead to a decrease of quality. If the change is to be implemented or retained, a new accreditation procedure will need to be initiated (i.e. the existing accreditation will lose its validity if the change has already been implemented and is not revoked).
- c. In case (1), the institution is informed of the Technical Committee's decision and the procedure is concluded.
  - d. In case (2), the Technical Committee may request a new assessment from all or some of the peers or, if required due to the nature of the change, new peers may be asked for their opinion. The Committee will then decide whether a new accreditation procedure is necessary. The Technical Committee forwards its recommendation, possibly including the opinion of the peers, to the Accreditation Commission, which then makes the final decision.
  - e. In case (3), a new accreditation procedure must be initiated.

The procedure for a significant change can also be carried out based on a higher education institution's plans and concepts in order to give the institution the opportunity to assess consequences for the existing accreditation before implementing a change.

Several proposed changes which affect the same programme of studies may be covered in a single procedure.

#### **4. Contractual basis**

The cooperation between ASIIN e. V. and a higher education institution is based on a **contract**. This comes into force upon acceptance of ASIIN's tender by the higher education institution or contracting party.

The detailed conditions which define the form of this contractual relationship are derived from the tender provided by ASIIN and the General Terms and Conditions (**GTC**).

An essential aspect of the contract between ASIIN e. V. and a higher education institution is that it covers the execution of an accreditation procedure, but not the result.

The accreditation procedure begins when the contract enters into force.

ASIIN informs the respective seal owner(s) whose seal is involved in the procedure.

#### **5. Appendix**

##### **5.1 Guideline and structural template for the HEI's self assessment report**

ASIIN offers a template with guiding questions for the preparation of the self assessment report.

It is recommended to use this guideline and its structure as a reference model for the self assessment report. The structure corresponds with the accreditation criteria and differentiates between guiding questions for the analysis and suggestions for possibly useful pieces of evidence. Both are not mandatory but thought to be of assistance.

This guideline is available through the ASIIN office.



## 5.2 Possible templates for objectives-module matrices

### Objectives-module matrix including ASIIN `s Subject-Specific Criteria

Possible template for

#### → Objectives-module matrices based on Subject-Specific Criteria

are available through the ASIIN office upon request. Which Subject-Specific Criteria are most fitting to the specific degree programme is decided by the HEI, possibly with support from the ASIIN office.

They can be used for an analytical comparison of ASIIN's subject-specific learning outcomes as collected in the Subject-Specific Criteria with the intended learning outcomes of other disciplinary fields. In this way the contributions of individual modules to the achievement of the overall intended competence profile of a degree programme can be shown as well as the coverage of overarching objectives.

#### Single Objectives-module matrices

If there are no suitable SSC available, it is useful to base the verification of the achievement of the objectives in a degree programme on the contribution of individual modules with the help of a simple objective-module matrix.

The relationship between the intended learning outcomes and the individual modules which implement them can be presented using the following table. Individual learning outcomes or modules can be assigned and combined in various ways. The following tables are intended as examples.

Table 1: Objectives-module matrix, example 1

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Intended learning outcomes for the programme as a whole</b> <b>(competence profile/learning outcomes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge</li> <li>- Skills</li> <li>- Competences</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Corresponding module objectives/modules</b> <b>(operationalisation)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge</li> <li>- Skills</li> <li>Competences</li> </ul>
	<i>Module designations should be clear</i>

Table 2: Objectives-module matrix, example 2

	Knowledge a	Knowledge b	Skill a	Skill b	Competence a	Competence b	etc.
Module A	**						
Module B							
Module C							
Module D							
etc.							

\*\* Classification of the module's contribution, e.g. "high"/"medium"/"low" or other categories depending on the institution's needs.

### 5.3 Example sheet for module description

A **Module Handbook** or collection of module descriptions that is also available for students to **consult** should contain the following information about the individual modules:

Module name:	
Module level, if applicable	
Code, if applicable	
Subtitle, if applicable	
Courses, if applicable	
Semester(s) in which the module is taught	
Person responsible for the module	<i>Please indicate a specific person.</i>
Lecturer	
Language	
Relation to curriculum	<i>For all programmes, including those running out, in which the module is taught: programme, specialization if applicable, compulsory/elective, semester</i>

Type of teaching, contact hours	<i>Contact hours and class size separately for each teaching method: lecture, lesson, practical, project, seminar etc.</i>
Workload	<i>(Estimated) workload, divided into contact hours (lecture, exercise, laboratory session, etc.) and private study, including examination preparation, specified in hours,<sup>13</sup> and in total.</i>
Credit points	
Requirements according to the examination regulations	
Recommended prerequisites	<i>E.g. existing competences in ...</i>
Module objectives/intended learning outcomes	<p><i>Key question: what learning outcomes should students attain in the module?</i></p> <p><i>E.g. in terms of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Knowledge: familiarity with information, theory and/or subject knowledge</i></li> <li style="padding-left: 20px;"><i>Skills: cognitive and practical abilities for which knowledge is used</i></li> <li>- <i>Competences: integration of knowledge, skills and social and methodological capacities in working or learning situations<sup>14</sup></i></li> </ul> <p><i>E.g.: "Students know that/know how to/are able to..."</i></p>
Content	<i>The description should clearly indicate the weighting of the content and the level.</i>
Study and examination requirements and forms of examination	
Media employed	
Reading list	

#### 5.4 Example sheet staff handbook ( approximately 1 page per person)

Name	<i>N.N.</i>		
Position	<i>Teaching area and designation</i>		
Academic career	<i>Initial academic appointment</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Year</i>
	<i>Habilitation [German post-</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Year</i>

<sup>13</sup> When calculating contact time, each contact hour is counted as a full hour because the organisation of the schedule, moving from room to room, and individual questions to lecturers after the class, all mean that about 60 minutes should be counted.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. European Commission: Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and the European Council on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, COM(2006) 479 final, 2006/0163 (COD), Brussels 05/09(2006).

	<i>doctoral qualification] (subject)</i> <i>Institution</i> <i>Year</i> <i>Doctorate (subject)</i> <i>Institution</i> <i>Year</i> <i>Undergraduate degree (subject)</i>
Employment	<i>Position</i> <i>Employer</i> <i>Period</i>
Research and development projects over the last 5 years	<i>Name of project or research focus</i> <i>Period and any other information</i> <i>Partners, if applicable</i> <i>Amount of financing</i>
Industry collaborations over the last 5 years	<i>Project title</i> <i>Partners</i>
Patents and proprietary rights	<i>Title</i> <i>Year</i>
Important publications over the last 5 years	<i>Selected recent publications from a total of approx.</i> <i>(give total number):</i> <i>Author(s)</i> <i>Title</i> <i>Any other information</i> <i>Publisher, place of publication, date of publication or name of periodical, volume, issue, page numbers</i>
Activities in specialist bodies over the last 5 years	<i>Organisation</i> <i>Role</i> <i>Period</i>  <i>Membership without a specific role need not be mentioned</i>

## 5.5 Guideline for the HEI's self assessment for stage 1 in a two stage procedure

If a two-stage accreditation procedure is carried out, at stage 1 of the procedure a self-assessment of the programme model (e.g. combined programmes) or the overarching structures for programmes takes place, initially independent of disciplinary assessments. For Higher Education Institutions undergoing a two-stage procedure a guide for producing the self-assessment of the programme model (stage 1 of the procedure) is available from the ASIIN office.

## 5.6 Sample plan for an on-site visit

An exemplary description of the elements and rounds of discussions of a visit by an ASIIN review team can be found below. In the case of a **cluster procedure**, an individual timetable is established on the basis of the general timetable. Timetables might also be adapted to take account of different procedure types and the sites of HEIs if applicable. Additional discussions may be necessary (e.g. with professional representatives, graduates or representatives of supervisory authorities) depending on the characteristics of the given programmes or local conditions.

### Components of a visit

#### **Discussion with the HEI management**

*Focus:* Resources, quality management, documentation, transparency, diversity and equal opportunities

#### **Discussion(s) with those responsible for programmes**

*Focus:* Integration within the curriculum; the programme: concept for content and implementation; the programme: structures, methods and implementation; examinations: organisation, concept and characteristics

#### **Discussion with students at various stages in their studies, including representatives of the student union or organised student representation**

*Focus:* The programme: concept for content and implementation; the programme: structures, methods and implementation; examinations: organisation, concept and characteristics; resources, quality management, documentation and transparency, diversity and equal opportunities

#### **Examination of documentation, tests, projects and thesis and any other material which can only be inspected on-site**

*Focus:* The programme: structures, methods and implementation; examinations: organisation, concept and characteristics (based on the quality and level of the available samples)

#### **Discussion with the programme's teaching staff**

*Focus:* The programme: concept for content and implementation; the programme: structures, methods and implementation; examinations: organisation, concept and characteristics

#### **Tour of the institutions involved**

*Focus:* Resources, the programme: structures, methods and implementation

**Internal discussion by the review team**

**Concluding discussion with those responsible for the programmes and the HEI management**

*Focus:* The peers summarise their impressions from the day

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