Application

for reaccreditation by the Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany (GAC) for programme and system accreditation

for renewal of membership of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

for renewal of membership in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)

Self-assessment & evidence

**Last revised: 21.12.2015**

Contents

A ASIIN profile[1]

The overall aim of ASIIN is to record, safeguard and strengthen the quality of academic education, as well as to support academic and professional mobility nationally and internationally.

In order to realise its objectives, ASIIN offers certification (incl. accreditation), evaluation and consulting services relating to educational offers and educational institutions, to processes and structures or the respective complete organisation and its development.

ASIIN is moreover regularly involved in the conception and implementation of third party funded projects focussing on various aspects of the development of higher education institutions and competences (generally funded through EU programmes).

The ASIIN group is composed of two entities: ASIIN e.V. – non-profit association and parent company – and ASIIN Consult GmbH – subsidiary offering part of the service portfolio.
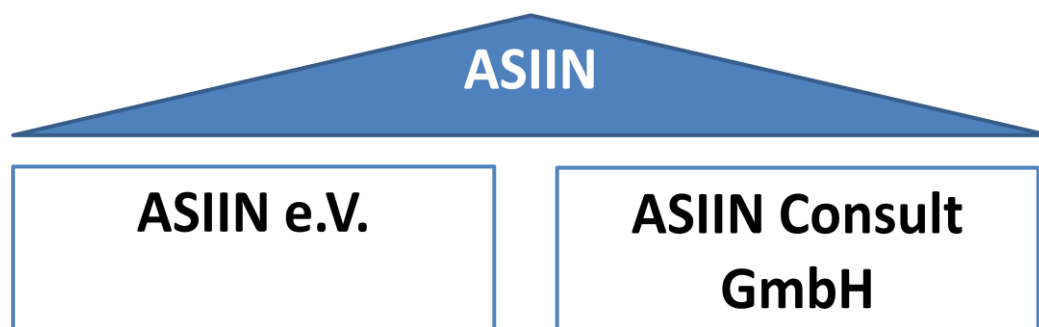
The **parent company ASIIN e.V.** is sustained by four institutional member groups:

Group 1. Technical and scientific associations as well as professional organisations

Group 2. Trade associations and central associations of social partners

Group 3. Coordination group and faculty associations of the universities

Group 4. Coordination group of the universities of applied sciences within Germany's universities of applied sciences

ASIIN is therefore based on a unique alliance of organisations operating under public and private law in Germany. This makes it possible to access academic and professional exper-

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[1] For better readability, the present report does not specifically differentiate between male and female persons. Any gender-specific terms are meant to include both men and women.

tise in specific subject areas as well as in the management and development of companies and public institutions as one body.

ASIIN member organisations nominate peers, committee members and experts working in an honorary capacity to perform the activities of the association.

ASIIN Consult GmbH is owned 100% by ASIIN e.V. The former is integrated in the latter's general organisation and benefits from its experience and expertise.

A.1 ASIIN fields of activity

ASIIN's portfolio of products and services encompasses the following offers in three fields (columns):

	Certification	*Academy*	*Quality development*
e. V.	Accreditation/Certification Degree Programmes (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)	ASIIN Dialogue Forums	Third Party Funded/EU Projects
	Accreditation/Certification Quality Management Systems (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)		

Consult	Certification of Modules and Courses	Workshops & Trainings In-House	Evaluations for Quality Assurance and Enhancement in Teaching and Learning (within scope of ESG)
			Evaluations for Quality Development and Organisation Development/Impact Analysis
	Processing of Certification Procedures for Third Parties	ASIIN Dialogue Forums	Consulting on Quality Management and Organisation Development
	Processing of Professional Cards *(not effective after 1.1.2016)*		Third Party Funded/EU Projects

- Certification services include all of ASIIN's external quality assurance procedures (incl. accreditation) as well as processing of certification procedures for third parties on their behalf.

- Academy services encompass all events offered by ASIIN on current topics (e.g. conferences) as well as subject-specific workshops and trainings for clients.

- Quality development services comprise all of ASIIN's activities concerned with consulting, evaluation and/or development as well as the conception and implementation of third party funded/EU projects incl. project management.

General information about these fields of activity is provided on ASIIN's website. This does not however fully reflect the current state of development of the portfolio. Fundamental restructuring of the website should be completed by March 2016. References to web page made in this report will however provide the latest relevant information.

A.2 Subjects of the present procedure

According to the definition of the scope of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), ASIIN considers all its activities that focus on external quality assurance of higher education as subject of the present procedure. In the terms of the product and service portfolio described above, these include:

- Accreditation/Certification Degree Programmes (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)

- Accreditation/Certification Quality Management Systems (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)

- Certification of Modules and Courses

- Evaluations for Quality Assurance and Enhancement in Teaching and Learning (within scope of ESG)

The other product and service areas are, on the other hand, not considered as activities for quality assurance in teaching and learning within the context and under the purview of ESG (Processing of Certification Procedures for Third Parties; Processing of Professional Cards; ASIIN Dialogue Forums; Workshops & Trainings; Third Party Funded/EU Projects; Evaluations for Quality Development and Organisation Development/Impact Analysis; Consulting on Quality Management and Organisation Development).

With regard to the differentiation between evaluation offers governed by ESG (type 1 evaluations) and evaluations that cannot be classified as such (type 2 evaluations), ASIIN defines the following typology:

	Type 1 Evaluations for Quality Assurance and Enhancement in Teaching and Learning (within scope of ESG)	Type 2 Evaluations for Quality Development and Organisation Development/Impact Analysis
Focus & purpose	External quality assurance and enhancement of academic educational offers and/or providers of higher education	Consulting, development and optimisation, design, and/or results analysis and impact analysis of evaluation object, usually strategic, advisory element
Subject	Degree programmes, modules and courses, quality management systems, institutions, each in the area of teaching and learning	Same as type 1, additionally upon determination by the client
Approach	Accountability and comparison with other, similar objects, based on pre-defined procedures which cannot be changed by the client	Purpose and approach are defined by the client, customised evaluation project defined in cooperation with the client, variable combination of evaluation tools and consulting elements (e.g. workshops, onsite visits, surveys, investigations)
Criteria and evaluation mandate	Analysis against pre-defined, external quality expectations or criteria in comparison with other similar evaluation objects; client cannot influence the criteria; with the acceptance of the evaluation offer, the client is bound by the criteria	Criteria for assessment of the evaluation object and analysis questions are individually defined by the client or developed jointly with the client

	set	
Method and tools	Self-evaluation by the client based on (externally) pre-defined criteria, mix of expert and stakeholder audit, external audit as quality check, evaluation report based on pre-defined criteria	Customised evaluation project defined in agreement with client, variable combination of evaluation tools and consulting elements (e.g. workshops, onsite visits, surveys, investigations)
Reports	Evaluation reports published for transparency and accountability	Expert report (if produced) used for internal discussions in the client's organisation and further development of the evaluation object, use as decided by client, i.e. for strategic decision-making, possibly in a market situation, client as sole owner of report

Especially in German-speaking areas, it is typical for higher education institutions to invite bids for their consulting requirements in the form of type 2 evaluations. Specific external expertise on questions and subjects determined by the higher education institutions themselves can be obtained in this way.

According to the logic presented, the object to which an evaluation refers is therefore not the decisive factor for differentiation of the evaluation type. In short: collection of expert opinions using evaluation elements for future restructuring of a degree programme is also classified as type 2. This is because the evaluation issues, external experts, internal benchmarks and strategies of the higher education institution form the basis here rather than external quality criteria against which a safeguarding analysis is made and improvement potentials are determined. Degree programmes or entire institutions making use of type 2 evaluations are often also subject to an accreditation requirement governed by ESG regulations. Evaluations are implemented in addition to external quality control with a different objective here. Hence all customised evaluation projects that are conceived for consulting and for organisation or strategy development, cannot fall under the purview of

ESG, even if the consulting and strategic development is related to the areas of teaching and learning in a higher education institution. Also not under the purview of ESG or quality assurance in teaching and learning are evaluation projects for which public institutions invite bids in order to e.g. obtain an assessment of the effectiveness of a funding programme or a measure – even if the funding programme itself is aimed at teaching and learning (e.g. an effectiveness evaluation of a DAAD or EU programme providing funds for degree programmes). In such type 2 evaluation cases, the evaluation parameters are agreed with the clients and considerably influenced by them. These are not evaluations for quality assurance and enhancement in the area of teaching and learning, even though evaluation tools are used and the subject is teaching and learning. Reports created for such projects are exclusively based on the client mandate and are owned entirely by the client after completion of the project. The client decides the extent to which such a report – that may contain sensitive as well as personal data – is published.

With the letter dated 24.11.2015, EQAR adopts a different typology, according to which all evaluations directly or indirectly concerning teaching and learning (educational offers or institutions/systems) are to be subject of the present procedure. In response to this classification of evaluations, ASIIN submitted the typology shown above to EQAR in December 2015 for refinement of the delineation. The outcome of this request is expected after the editorial deadline of this self-assessment and will be submitted as soon as available.

The reason for this new submission for limitation of the subject of the present procedure is that the far-reaching interpretation of the term "evaluation" in higher education beyond the function of external quality assurance and enhancement pursuant to ESG as made by EQAR, represents a considerable encroachment on the actual practice of German and international higher education institutions. A delimitation primarily based on the evaluation object (educational offer or institution/system) does not permit a viable differentiation in this reality. This undermines the autonomy of higher education institutions with regard to controlling their development in a targeted manner as intended by ESG. Either the evaluations advertised, e.g. through publication obligations, for (strategic) development of the core area teaching and learning with the help of external expertise, are prevented or hindered long before a quality assurance function comes into consideration. Or the agencies listed in EQAR, which have developed expertise not least through accreditation practice, are systematically excluded from such requests by higher education institutions and are forced to leave this field to providers who operate completely outside EQAR and ESG.

The previously mentioned letter by EQAR dated 24.11.2015 (Confirmation of Eligibility: Application for Renewal of Registration Application no. A30 of 30.10.2015) moreover

specifies the following product and service areas of ASIIN, which are subject of the procedure:

- "Programme Accreditation for the seals of GAC, ASIIN or external labels" (in the designation of the ASIIN portfolio referred to above this corresponds to: Accreditation/Certification Degree Programmes (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)

- "Programme Evaluation" (in the designation of the ASIIN portfolio referred to above this corresponds to: Evaluations for Quality Assurance and Enhancement in Teaching and Learning (within scope of ESG)

- "Institutional/System Accreditation for the seals of GAC or ASIIN" (in the designation of the ASIIN portfolio referred to above this corresponds to: Accreditation/Certification Quality Management Systems (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)

- "Institutional/System Evaluation" (in the designation of the ASIIN portfolio referred to above this corresponds to: Evaluations for Quality Assurance and Enhancement in Teaching and Learning (within scope of ESG)

- "Certification" (in the designation of the ASIIN portfolio referred to above this corresponds to: Certification of Modules and Courses)

The following service areas are specified by EQAR as not included in the present procedure (as on 24.11.2015):

- "Quality development: agency development" (this service area is no longer included in the ASIIN portfolio referred to above, the corresponding activities were discontinued in the reporting period 2011–2015)

- "Workshops and seminars" (in the designation of the ASIIN portfolio referred to above this corresponds to: ASIIN Dialogue Forums, Workshops & Trainings In-House)

The deviating designations are due to a transfer error during registration of the procedure with EQAR. The service areas Processing of Certification Procedures for Third Parties, Consulting on Quality Management and Organisation Development as well as Third Party Funded/EU Projects are furthermore not considered in the approval letter by EQAR dated 24.11.2015. These deviations should also be clarified by means of the above-mentioned request for renewal of the confirmation of approval.

B Self-assessment on basis of ESG

Criterion 2.1: Consideration of Internal Quality Assurance

External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the ESG.

Principles and tools of the ASIIN approach

ASIIN ensures that the internal quality assurance procedures described in Part 1 of ESG are followed by the reviewed higher education institutions by creating a synopsis of the criteria of Part 1 for all the criteria catalogues on which the accreditation/certification procedures are based.

The Accreditation Council has created special (unpublished) synopses of its criteria which were made available to ASIIN.

Product-specific approach

Accreditation/Certification Degree Programmes (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)
ASIIN has been working with published synopses in the area of programme accreditation for a number of years – both for the Seal of the German Accreditation Council and its own seal. Which ESG criterion relates to the individual criteria of ASIIN/the Accreditation Council is therefore immediately comprehensible to applicants.

For its own seal, ASIIN went even one step further. The strategy process demanded that award of this seal was to be associated with a specific statement. During the development of this so-called claim, all the stakeholders involved supported that an explicit reference to ESG should be made. This was based on the desire to emphasise a direct relation of the ASIIN Seal to the ESG. Past experience by ASIIN had shown that awareness of ESG criteria was only limited, particularly in a national context. Higher education institutions making an application are almost entirely concerned with national specifications. In order to promote international recognition of higher education degrees – one of the aims of the Bologna process and accreditation – it appeared expedient to make emphatic reference to the ESG and hence observation of European specifications in the accreditation procedure. On the other hand, it should also be clear to all applicants inside and outside Ger-

many, which in the case of ASIIN also includes non-European countries (e.g. Saudi Arabia, China, Peru and Australia), that ASIIN is oriented on European standards. After intensive deliberation, the ASIIN committees agreed on the following statement:

> "The ASIIN Seal confirms that a degree programme fulfils the requirements of academia and industry for the disciplines involved at a high level. It also documents that conditions for good teaching and successful learning are safeguarded. *The award of the seal is based on recognised relevant standards oriented on learning outcome in line with the European Qualifications Framework and the 'European Standards and Guidelines'*."

Accreditation/Certification Quality Management Systems (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)
Positive experiences in programme accreditation have led to the intention to also create synopses of criteria in the systems area, in order to make interconnections as well as deviations clearly discernible to outsiders as well.

Certification of Modules and Courses
Certification criteria were developed in close affiliation with the corresponding ESG.

Evaluations for Quality Assurance and Enhancement
External pre-defined criteria catalogues are used for evaluations with the purpose of quality assurance/enhancement (within scope of ESG, type 1).

Evidence

- Annex 1 - 0._Accreditation_with_ASIIN_-_Degree Programmes_Institutions_and_Systems_2015-06-26

- Annex 2 - 0.1_Kriterien_fuer_die_Programmakkreditierung_2014-12-04 (Criteria for programme accreditation, seal of the German Accreditation Council, in German)[2]

- Annex 3 - 0.2_Kriterien_fuer_die_Systemakkreditierung_2015-12-03 (Criteria for system accreditation, seal of the German Accreditation Council, in German)

- Annex 4 - 0.3_Criteria_for_the_Accrediation_of_Degree_Programmes_2015-12-10

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[2] Note for the English translation of the Self-Evaluation Report and Evidence: a number of annexes are available in German only where they are not normally used and/or needed for international activities, or are legal or formal documents from German (public) authorities or are for internal use.

- Annex 5 -
  0.4_Institutional_Accreditation_Evaluation_Criteria_for_the_ASIIN_System_Seal_
  2016-06-20
- Annex 6 - Stand-
  ards_for_the_Certification_of_Further_Education_and_Training_2015-12-02
- Annex 22 -
  ESG_ASIIN_Aequivalenz_zu_Kriterien_zur_Akkreditierung_von_Agenturen_2015
  (synopsis GAC criteria to ESG, in German only)

Criterion 2.2: Designing Methodologies Fit for Purpose

External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.

Principles and tools of ASIIN approach

ASIIN's accreditation of degree programmes and quality management systems at higher education institutions and certification of further education offers creates transparency with regard to the respective quality of academic education achieved. This promotes academic and professional mobility. ASIIN's comprehension of quality – which is published in criteria documents for accreditation/certification with various seals – presumes that the standard of quality in learning and teaching is initially set by the higher education institution itself through the definition of objectives and outcome expectations. A higher education institution can express its strategic orientation, profiling and integration in society by incorporation of external impulses and requirements from its political, legal and socio-economic environment in the realisation of its offers.

Irrespective of whether a higher education institution defines the quality of its actions itself (by aiming to achieve outcomes that it considers to be of good quality), or whether the quality of a degree programme, a higher education process or the entire higher education institution is determined by quality expectations imposed on the higher education institution by others, the following applies: Different groups of persons are always involved in or affected by the process of defining what "quality" should be to a varying extent. This makes them stakeholders.

This understanding of quality is operationalised in a "process-oriented review approach". Accreditations or certifications of quality management systems, institutions and pro-

grammes consider the quality of educational offers at various levels and to a varying extent of detail. The review approach is such that good teaching and successful learning are made visible and their further development is supported. Procedural efficiency is safeguarded for all those involved. The procedural principles stipulate that the efforts and internal/external costs arising for the higher education provider as well as for the peers and committee members, typically working on an honorary basis, should be as low as possible. If the effectiveness of internal quality assurance systems of the higher education institution is adequately demonstrated, this can be taken into consideration and the procedure consequently made more flexible and efficient.

ASIIN has defined processes for the purpose of conducting accreditation and certification procedures and analogously for evaluations for quality assurance in teaching and learning. These are equally applicable for all individual procedures of a specific quality assurance product (cf. information on criterion 2.3 and criterion 2.4).

In the course of the Strategy Process 2012–2013, ASIIN developed a so-called "principle of combinable procedures" for all its procedures. This allows an efficient combination of various accreditation and certification procedures, while at the same time ensuring that all criteria and procedural elements important for a seal are represented, if this is to be obtained through a combination of procedures. Specific procedural specifications by individual owners of a seal are moreover complied with.

Each of the seals of quality, which are based on external quality assurance procedures, offered by ASIIN can be acquired individually and fully independently. Procedures and criteria are available for this.

The principle of combinable procedures furthermore states that no criterion is reinspected in a procedure if this has already been conclusively dealt with recently in another accreditation/certification procedure or evaluation procedure according to ESG (type 1). Another existing and published accreditation/certification may therefore be utilised in the sense of diversity and profiling of higher education and subjects in an internationally networked world of education.

At request by a higher education institution, ASIIN then conducts a so-called complementary procedure, which can confirm complete fulfilment of the criteria applicable for the additional quality seal requested. The principle of combinable procedures can also include certifications that are not offered by ASIIN. If desired and requested, ASIIN is willing to verify and implement a combination of its own procedures with those of other national or international seals.

The basis for such inter-coordinated procedures, in which – simply speaking – nothing is checked twice, always consists of synopses of criteria and procedural elements created in advance. These clearly identify what has to be checked in addition, or which further procedural steps are required for an ongoing or already completed procedure for the particular seal, or in a procedure for a further seal if applicable.

A significant change in the reporting period 2011–2015 with regard to the principle of combinable procedures is the fact that as far as the Seal of the German Accreditation Council is concerned, the information on combinable procedures is no longer valid since 1.10.2015 at the latest, or that its validity is severely restricted (cf. seal decision[3] dated 23.11.2011). A complementary procedure in Germany for another seal after award of the Seal of the German Accreditation Council only takes place under the condition that the associated Accreditation Report is published beforehand and the degree programme is registered in the database of the German Rectors' Conference (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz – HRK). In addition, the internal processes of the agency and committees as well as the documents for the higher education institutions must be discrete to an extent ensuring that synergistic effects which may be favourable for the higher education institutions through the principle of combinable procedures in Germany, i.e. in association with the Seal of the German Accreditation Council, are neutralised.

The criteria for accreditation of quality management systems and degree programmes as well as for certification of further educational offers are defined as the basis of external quality assurance systems of ASIIN. These form the foundation of assessments and decisions in all procedures of the respective type of accreditation or certification. The criteria are published on ASIIN's web pages and thereby easily accessible to all stakeholders. The utilisation of paper versions of criteria documents and procedural specifications has decreased considerably in the reporting period 2011–2015, which is why very small numbers of printed editions are kept and only when the version of a document is expected to remain applicable for the typical period of about 2 years. In the reporting period 2011–2015, this was at least not the case as far as the criteria sets for the Seal of the German Accreditation Council and the ASIIN Seal in programme accreditation were concerned. The judicial disputes between the Accreditation Council and ASIIN concerning the so-called seal decision[4] necessitated frequent adaptation of the criteria texts.

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[3] Foundation for Accreditation of Degree Programmes in Germany (Accreditation Council – GAC): Awarding of own seals and third-party seals by the agencies, decision by the Accreditation Council dated 23.9.2011
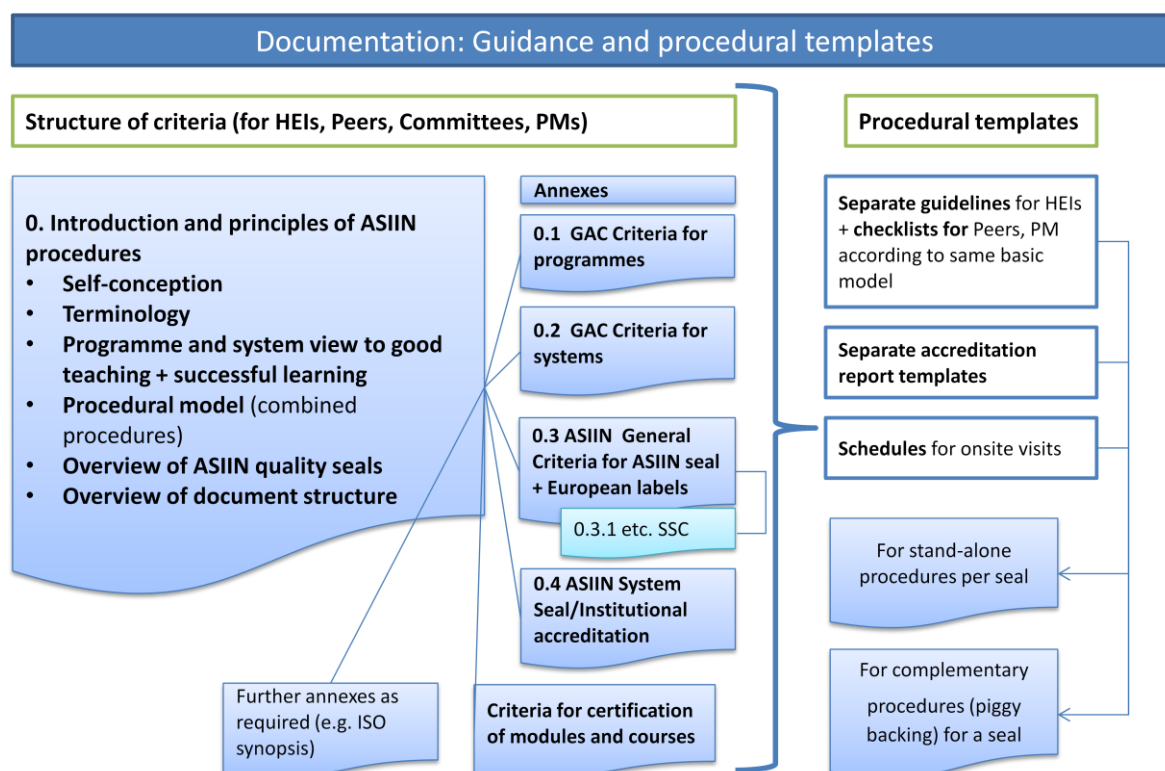[4] Ibid.

A principle of ASIIN – also corroborated in the Strategy Process 2012–2013 is that all self-accounted criteria are formulated in an outcome-oriented manner and that they avoid input specifications.

Responsibilities and processes for the adoption of various different criteria within ASIIN committees are unambiguously defined. This means that the procedural requirements cannot be changed at will and that clients can rely on the validity of the criteria applicable at the time of conclusion of the contract (cf. information on criterion 2.5).

The processes of accreditation and certification procedures are similarly defined to ensure uniform and hence comparable conduct of individual procedures. This applies to onsite visits as well as the decision-making processes in individual procedures. To ensure maximum evaluation reliability for higher education providers, ASIIN bases all of its procedures on the "checks and balances" principle (cf. information on criterion 2.3 and 2.4).

In the reporting period 2011–2015, criteria documents in accreditation/certification – used analogously for evaluation of external quality assurance (type 1) – were subjected to a revision and the document structure was adapted. A "parent document" with the numbering 0 was submitted. This contains the principles and method used by ASIIN for all accreditation procedures – analogously also applicable to evaluations of external quality assurance (type 1) – irrespective of the seal applied for. This document constitutes a summary of the individual criteria for the individual seals.

The following representation gives an overview of the criteria documents available at ASIIN and how these are related:

Documentation: Guidance and procedural templates

Structure of criteria (for HEIs, Peers, Committees, PMs)

0. Introduction and principles of ASIIN procedures
- **Self-conception**
- **Terminology**
- **Programme and system view to good teaching + successful learning**
- **Procedural model** (combined procedures)
- **Overview of ASIIN quality seals**
- **Overview of document structure**

Annexes

0.1 GAC Criteria for programmes

0.2 GAC Criteria for systems

0.3 ASIIN General Criteria for ASIIN seal + European labels

0.3.1 etc. SSC

0.4 ASIIN System Seal/Institutional accreditation

Further annexes as required (e.g. ISO synopsis)

Criteria for certification of modules and courses

Procedural templates

Separate guidelines for HEIs + checklists for Peers, PM according to same basic model

Separate accreditation report templates

Schedules for onsite visits

For stand-alone procedures per seal

For complementary procedures (piggy backing) for a seal

* HEI = Higher Education Institutions, PM = Project Manager, GAC = German Accreditation Council/Foundation D

All accreditation and certification procedures can have different outcomes. At best, accreditation or certification takes place without any requirements and recommendations. If deficits with regard to criteria are determined for the respective accreditation/certification object (QM system, institution, degree programme), requirements and/or recommendations are made, depending on the significance of these deficits for the quality of the educational offers. If deficits are so serious that they cannot be rectified in a defined period of time or if they sustainably jeopardise the quality of the respective educational offer, the procedure is suspended. Prerequisites are then formulated. These must be fulfilled before resumption of the procedure and final decision-making. Rejection of the accreditation or certification may also occur in particularly problematic cases. The higher education providers are notified of the outcomes of the procedures in writing. This involves documentation of all procedural steps in the particular Accreditation Report, making it possible for the higher education provider concerned to gain an understanding of the entire decision-making process. In line with ESG requirements, the Accreditation Report is published on the ASIIN website (cf. information on criterion 2.6 in this regard).

The tasks and composition of individual Accreditation Committees are stated in the Statutes and the respective Bye-Laws. The composition of Certification Committees is defined in the Bye-Laws. Involvement of all stakeholders (higher education institutions – both higher education institution types predominant in Germany – industry, students) in all

permanent committees is ensured. This principle is also applied regarding the composition of Peer Panels, which means that all relevant stakeholders are involved at all procedural levels and in every procedural step.

ASIIN makes use of various external and internal quality assurance elements for the sake of continuous further development of processes and criteria.

Externally, ASIIN undergoes regular inspections by national, European and international organisations. These include accreditations for authorisation to award various national and European seals (Accreditation Council, ECTNA, ENAEE, EQANIE) as well as procedures for confirmation of membership and/or listing in European institutions (ENQA, EQAR) or for approval of non-German national accreditation systems. These procedures give rise to a steady source of valuable approaches for further development of own processes (cf. information on criterion 3.7).

Internally, criteria and processes of the procedures are evaluated within the context of periodical surveys on client and peer satisfaction, so that all parties involved in the accreditation process can state any peculiarities. Impulses for further development are moreover obtained through an internal strategy process. This was initiated in 2012, with outcomes available in 2014, which led to a modified product and service portfolio. This process is to be continued; internal evaluations for implementation of the outcomes of the strategy process are taking place in the meantime.

Additional ideas for further development of own processes are gained from member organisations of ASIIN, which are divided into the four already mentioned groups "Universities", "Universities of Applied Sciences", "Technical and Scientific Associations" and "Professional Organisations as well as Trade Associations and Central Associations of Social Partners". This flow of information is institutionalised in annually conducted talks between the office and member groups as well as within the scope of an Annual General Assembly.

Experiences gained in accreditation and certification procedures moreover steadily result in indications for further development of processes and criteria for ASIIN's own seals and certificates (cf. detailed information on criterion 3.6 in this regard).

Further development of procedural flows, criteria and internal processes is realised by ASIIN committees. A recurrent agenda item regarding fundamental decisions is specified for all meetings of Decision-Making Committees for this purpose (Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes, Accreditation Commission for Quality Management Systems and Certification Committee). For preparation of more extensive changes, Decision-

Making Committees can also set up preparative working groups, as last occurred in 2014 for revision of the criteria of the ASIIN Seal.

Product-specific approach

Accreditation/Certification Degree Programmes (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)

It is currently possible to obtain the following quality seals through ASIIN on the basis of an accreditation/certification procedure (cf. information under criterion 3.2 in this regard).

- Seal of the Foundation for Accreditation of Degree Programmes in Germany (Accreditation Council) by way of programme or system accreditation

- ASIIN Seal for degree programmes

- EUR-ACE® Label for engineering sciences degree programmes (owner of seal: ENAEE)

- Euro-Inf® Seal for Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes in the field of informatics (owner of seal: EQANIE)

- Eurobachelor® and Euromaster® Label for the fields of chemistry and chemical engineering (owner of seal: ECTNA).

ASIIN may also conduct procedures in countries that have set up their own state-run accreditation systems in higher education and opened them to agencies from abroad. Subject to a positive decision by the Decision-Making Committees, ASIIN can in such a case award additional seals based on the national laws and requirements. The national accreditation system in Switzerland and the Netherlands allows performance of preparatory work up to recommendation for decision by an agency such as ASIIN. The final decision with national validity is reserved to the state authorities.

In the case of system accreditation and certification procedures, Peer Panels pass recommendations for decisions directly to the respective Decision-Making Committee (Accreditation Commission for Quality Management Systems and/or Certification Committee). As far as the accreditation of degree programmes is concerned, ASIIN has included, irrespective of the seal to be awarded, an intermediate stage with the 13 Technical Committees between recommendation for decision by the peers and decision by the Accreditation Commission. This serves to implement the checks and balances principle as efficiently and sustainably as possible, also in view of the diversity of subjects and the number of procedures.

The Technical Committees mainly focus on assessment of content by the peers, in order to identify any individual opinions. In procedures leading to the ASIIN Seal, they additionally evaluate implementation of the so-called Subject-Specific Criteria (SSC). Like the Peer Panels, the Technical Committees of the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes also merely make a recommendation for decision.

Regarding the award of third party seals, ASIIN only has a very limited influence on development of the criteria to be applied. In order to ensure implementation of ESG with regard to integration of all involved stakeholders in these cases as well, the criteria are also subjected to the internal decision-making processes of ASIIN. Special criteria catalogues have therefore been passed by the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes to implement the Accreditation Council's criteria for programme and system accreditation. The criteria for the European seals have been integrated in the respective SSC.

The procedural flow and decision-making processes are also defined by ASIIN for the award of third party seals. They are accepted by the owners of a seal in the relevant accreditation and/or certification procedures.

Accreditation/Certification Quality Management Systems (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)
It is currently possible to obtain the following quality seals through ASIIN on the basis of an accreditation/certification procedure:

- Seal of the Foundation for Accreditation of Degree Programmes in Germany (Accreditation Council) by way of programme or system accreditation
- ASIIN System Seal for Quality Management of Higher Education Providers (institutional accreditation)

Principles and tools beyond those represented above are not implemented with regard to this criterion.

Certification of Modules and Courses
It is currently possible to obtain the following quality seals through ASIIN on the basis of a certification procedure:

- ASIIN Seal for academic educational offers that do not lead to a university degree (Bachelor/Master).

Principles and tools beyond those represented above are not implemented with regard to this criterion.

Evaluations for Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Principles and tools beyond those represented above are not implemented with regard to this criterion.

Evidence

- Annex 1 - 0._Accreditation_with_ASIIN_-_Degree Pro-grammes_Institutions_and_Systems_2015-06-26

- Annex 2 - 0.1_Kriterien_fuer_die_Programmakkreditierung_2014-12-04 (Criteria for programme accreditation, seal of the German Accreditation Council, in German)

- Annex 3 - 0.2_Kriterien_fuer_die_Systemakkreditierung_2015-12-03 (Criteria for system accreditation, seal of the German Accreditation Council, in German)

- Annex 4 - 0.3_Criteria_for_the_Accrediation_of_Degree_Programmes_2015-12-10

- Annex 5 - 0.4_Institutional_Accreditation_Evaluation_Criteria_for_the_ASIIN_System_Seal_ 2016-06-20

- Annex 6 - Stand-ards_for_the_Certification_of_Further_Education_and_Training_2015-12-02

- Annex 23 - ASIIN_TC_01_Mechanical_Engineering_and_Process_Engineering_2011-12-09

- Annex 24 - ASIIN_TC_02_Electrical_Engineering_and_Information_Technology_2011-12-09

- Annex 25 - ASIIN_TC_03_Civil_Engineering_Surveying_and_Architecture_2012-09-28

- Annex 26 - ASIIN_TC_04_Informatics_2011-12-09

- Annex 27 - ASIIN_TC_05_Physical_Technologies_Materials_and_Processes_2011-12-09

- Annex 28 - ASIIN_TC_06_Industrial_Engineering_2011-12-09

- Annex 29 - FEH_ASIIN_07_Wirtschaftsinformatik_2011-12-09 (SSC Business informatics, in German)

- Annex 30 - ASIIN_TC_08_Agronomy_Nutrition_Science_Landscape_Architecture_2015-03-27

- Annex 31 - ASIIN_TC_09_Chemistry_2011-12-09

- Annex 32 - ASIIN_TC_10_Life_Sciences_2011-12-09

- Annex 33 - ASIIN_TC_11_Geosciences_2011-12-09

- Annex 34 - ASIIN_TC_12_Mathematics_2011-12-09

- Annex 35 - ASIIN_TC_13_Physics_2011-12-09

- Annex 36 - FEH_ASIIN_Lehramt_2011-12-09.pdf (SSC teacher education, in German)

- Annex 38 - Geschaeftsordnung_ASIIN_AK_Programme_2009-12-15 (by-laws Accreditation Commission for Programmes, in German)

- Annex 39 - Geschaeftsordnung_ASIIN_AK_Systeme_2014-03-20 (by-laws Accreditation Commission for Quality Management Systems, in German)

- Annex 40 - Geschaeftsordnung_ASIIN_Fachausschuesse_2010-12-01 (by-laws Technical Committees, in German)

- Annex 41 - Geschaeftsordnung_ASIIN_Zertifizierungsausschuss_2011-07-27_2011-07-27 (by-laws Certification Committee, in German)

- Annex 43 - Geschäftsordnung_Beschwerdeausschuss_2007-06-06 (by-laws Appeals Committee, in German)

Criterion 2.3: Implementing Processes

External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include

• a self-assessment or equivalent;

• an external assessment normally including a site visit;

• a report resulting from the external assessment;

• a consistent follow-up.

Principles and tools of ASIIN approach

Principles and tools: All quality assurance procedures[5], conducted by ASIIN, are based on – as already mentioned – predefined content-related criteria and procedural rules. The

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[5] These include the programme and system accreditation according to the respectively applicable criteria of the Accreditation Council or according to the respective criteria of the owner of a seal for the requested seal; module, programme and system certification according to the respectively applicable criteria of ASIIN as well as evaluations according to ESG (type 1) with the aim of quality assurance.

respective standards are applicable equally for all procedures and irrespective of the country in which the procedure is being conducted. The criteria and procedural rules on which the review is to be based are bindingly determined in the course of preparation of an offer and depend on the respective subject of the application.[6] The client is informed about the relevant standards and procedural rules in conjunction with the proposal (annexes regarding criteria sets). They are all published on the ASIIN website.

Reliability in the sense of comprehensive consistency and quality of procedural decisions is safeguarded *in terms of content* by uniform application of relevant criteria and the associated underlying principles and tools by peers and respective Decision-Making Committees (see information under criterion 2.5 in this regard).

The different *procedural flows* are available in the respectively applicable criteria for the relevant stakeholders as well as in ASIIN's web pages. Procedural standards represent a significant focus of internal quality assurance, which is why they are also a natural subject of ASIIN's internal QM documentation.[7] Standard procedure in particular includes information of the client about the procedure or procedural flow associated with a specific type of procedure whether in the context of general consulting or during initiation of concrete procedures. Peer training sessions are conducted analogously to this at regular intervals. These serve in particular to familiarise new peers with content-related and procedural standards of quality assurance. ASIIN moreover uses its own web pages, the ASIIN newsletter as well as ASIIN Consult news to provide information about criteria development (including the respective procedural rules).

One of the aims of the system of internal control and review bodies (Peers, Technical Committees, Accreditation Commissions, Certification Committee, Appeals Committee) is to continuously verify and ensure adherence to the respectively applicable procedural rules by the office, peers and committees involved using a checks and balances approach. This encompasses all procedural steps from making an application and preparing a proposal to nomination of the Peer Panel and review of the recommendation for decisions made by Peer Panels or Technical Committees, insofar as these are integrated in the procedure (cf. detailed information on criterion 2.5 in this regard). Regular client and peer surveys as well as internal staff meetings (regular QM meeting, preliminary discussions to

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[6] Subject of the application is – apart from the forms of programme- or system-related evaluation coming into consideration here – the normally requested quality seal(s) and/or the normally requested certificate(s).

[7] The "old" QM Manual was concerned exclusively with the activity fields of ASIIN e.V. (programme and system accreditation according to criteria of GAC). It will be superseded on account of its lack of user friendliness. It will be replaced by QM documentation oriented on the outcomes of the internal strategy process, which continues the QM Manual on the one hand, while at the same time making it easier to use. Work on this has already started, but is still in progress (cf. information on criterion 3.6 in this regard).

Accreditation Commission meetings), topic-related staff trainings and systematic familia-risation of new staff in the head office also help to safeguard consistency and reliability of the procedural processes. In future, procedure-related outcomes of these discussions aiming for a consensus on content-related criteria as well on procedural rules, are to be collected[8] systematically. Together with relevant fundamental decisions by the Accreditation Commissions, these are to strengthen the "collective memory" of ASIIN as well as its potential as a learning organisation (cf. information on criterion 3.6 regarding internal quality management).

Internal electronic documentation of all *procedural steps* discussed in this section, means that reliable observation of procedural requirements can be verified (internally and externally) at any time. The Accreditation Council (GAC) has repeatedly emphasised the reliability of this electronic procedural documentation positively within the scope of its monitoring activities (e.g. in the so-called programme accreditation). In return, the various *external* tools[9] used by the GAC for verification of procedures for awarding its own seal have contributed to the differentiation of the procedure-related internal quality management described above.

Procedures: ASIIN's quality assurance procedures are principally conducted on the basis of a self-assessment by the institution making an application. A "guideline" with central criteria-related questions assists the higher education institutions in the creation of the self-assessment report, but above all aims to strengthen the *self-evaluation* component of the self-assessment and hence its added value for the internal quality assurance of the institution.[10] Based on this, an onsite visit (one or more depending on the form of procedure) constitutes a regular procedural component. Experts from the higher education institutions, the student body and industry collaborate pari passu in the Peer Panels. This ensures that the different perspectives of the significant stakeholders with regard to content-related criteria are taken into consideration in the review process (cf. information on criterion 2.4 regarding peer review).

The procedures are generally completed with a review report, containing the collected peer analysis of the level of attainment of the requirements of relevant criteria as well as recommendations for decision regarding quality assurance and enhancement. The review report usually forms the basis of the procedural decision by the responsible (Accredita-

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[8] This outcomes list replaces the "watch list" kept as an appendix to the minutes of the regular meetings until 2012, however with a specific focus on all topics with relevance to content and procedures and any agreements reached in this regard.

[9] For example, random inspection, feedback talks.

[10] Such a guideline is currently available for the different forms of programme accreditation; it is to be developed for institutional and system accreditation procedures as well.

tion or Certification) Commission. It is moreover – specifically in its sections relating to decision and justification – an important basis of an orderly follow-up procedure (fulfil-ment of requirements, reaccreditation or recertification). Mandatory publication of re-view reports on ASIIN's website, in combination with the requirements that content should be complete, justified and consistent, constitutes a sound foundation for QM-related follow-up procedures, irrespective of whether these are conducted by ASIIN again or by another quality assurance institution.

The latter generally also applies to *evaluation procedures*, which are however concluded with the transmission of the review report and the recommendation for quality assurance and enhancement made by the peers. The fact that the decision regarding publication of the assessment report as well as the type and time frame of an orderly follow-up of this form of quality assurance is naturally entirely at the discretion of the higher education institution, is unaffected thereby.

With regard to content-related aspects of this section, please compare information on criteria 2.5 and 2.6.

Product-specific approach

Principles and tools beyond those represented above are not implemented with regard to this criterion in the relevant service areas. Product-specific procedural flows for the dif-ferent procedural types can be found in the evidence specified below.

Evidence

- Annex 1 - 0._Accreditation_with_ASIIN_-_Degree Pro-grammes_Institutions_and_Systems_2015-06-26

- Annex 2 - 0.1_Kriterien_fuer_die_Programmakkreditierung_2014-12-04 (Criteria for programme accreditation, seal of the German Accreditation Council, in Ger-man)

- Annex 3 - 0.2_Kriterien_fuer_die_Systemakkreditierung_2015-12-03 (Criteria for system accreditation, seal of the German Accreditation Council, in German)

- Annex 4 - 0.3_Criteria_for_the_Accrediation_of_Degree_Programmes_2015-12-10

- Annex 5 - 0.4_Institutional_Accreditation_Evaluation_Criteria_for_the_ASIIN_System_Seal_ 2016-06-20

- Annex 6 - Stand-ards_for_the_Certification_of_Further_Education_and_Training_2015-12-02

- Annex 7 - Sample Agenda Onsite Visit HS Programme jjjj

- Annex 12 - 01 GAC programme seal report template 2016-02-05 ENG

- Annex 13 - 03 ASIIN programme seal report template 2016-02-05 ENG

- Annex 14 - ASIIN Vorlage Bericht Systemakkreditierung AR 2014-12-10 (template report GAC system accreditation, in German)

- Annex 15 - EN ASIIN certification report HS Studiengang 2014-05-19

- Annex 47 - Gutachterschulung_Ablauf_AT_2015-10-02 (agenda peer template, in German)

- Annex 48 - Gutachterschulung_Konzept_und_Zeitplan_2012-11-26 (concept peer training and timeplan, in German)

- Annex 49 - Gutachter-Schulungen_ASIIN_Terminliste_2011-2015 (list of dates of peer trainings 2011-2015, in German)

- Annex 55 - Leitfaden_AR-Siegel_Programme_Selbstbewertung_2014-12-04 (temp-late for SAR programme accreditation GAC seal, in German)

- Annex 56 - ASIIN Template for Self-Assessment Report System-Seal 2013-09-30

- Annex 57 - ASIIN Template for Self-Assessment Report 2015-06-26

- Annex 58 - ASIIN Template for Self-Assessment Report Certification 2013-12-18

- Annex 65 - QM_06QMV Vorlage_Ergebnisvermerk Jour Fix_201x-xx-xx (template results Jour Fix, in German)

- ASIIN homepage: http://www.asiin.de

- ASIIN newsletter: http://www.asiin-ev.de/pages/de/asiin-e.-v/aktuelles/asiin-newsletter.php

- ASIIN Consult news: http://www.asiin-consult.de/pages/de/asiin-consult-gmbh/asiin-consult-nachrichten.php

- ASIIN accredited degree programme database: http://www.asiin-ev.de/pages/de/asiin-e.-v/programmakkreditierung/akkreditierte-studiengaenge.php

Criterion 2.4: Peer-review experts

External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).

Principles and tools of ASIIN approach

The basis for every accreditation/certification decision as well as for recommended actions within the scope of evaluation procedures for quality assurance, is assessment of the respective subject of the procedure by a demonstrably qualified Peer Panel, which uses the criteria, procedural principles and aids developed by the permanent committees of ASIIN e.V. on the basis of ESG and the requirements of the Accreditation Council for its review work. Irrespective of the various procedural types, the Peer Panels are composed of representatives of higher education institutions (both higher education institution types predominant in German), business/industry and the student body.

Special familiarisation and training offers have been developed by ASIIN for preparation of peers and committee members for participation in reviews. The concept is composed of two parts and includes

- an offer of specific, periodically repeated trainings for review activities, as well as

- informal mentoring, in which inexperienced and experienced peers cooperate in concrete procedures.

Product-specific approach

Accreditation/Certification Degree Programmes (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)
In programme accreditation, the Technical Committees involved specify how many peers from which field and with which professional profile are to be involved in a procedure already at the stage of preparation of a proposal. This is particularly important with regard to expertise, especially for interdisciplinary and/or cluster procedures, to ensure that the Peer Panel does in fact possess the necessary specialist competences for the subsequent review. In the course of preparation for the onsite visit, the Technical Committees are asked for concrete proposals of persons to fill the peer positions.

In addition to suitability in terms of expertise, the Peer Panel should

- have a composition permitting a review of the issues of the stakeholders affected by a specific educational offer and integration in the assessment,

- if possible, be composed of a mixture of new peers and peers with experience in accreditation.

As far as procedures in Germany are concerned, a student organisation active in accreditation procedures, the Studentischer Akkreditierungspool, is normally included for nomination of peers from the student body. Exclusion criteria for peer nomination include possible bias (e.g. committee membership in/professional dependency on the institution to be reviewed, or similar).

Before commencement of work, all peers must commit themselves to treat procedure-related information as confidential and agree not to pass such information on to third parties. Apart from the submitted application documents, the non-disclosure agreement also applies to all information collected in the course of the accreditation procedure (cf. information on criterion 3.3 in this regard).

ASIIN uses its pool of peers for the selection of peers. This includes potential peers on the basis of defined criteria and generally by recommendation of member organisations or other subject-relevant institutions, irrespective of a concrete procedure. This pool of peers is represented in the form of a list of peers, which is available to the proposing Technical Committees. The list of peers also makes it easier to invite peers to training sessions and to inform them about current developments, independently of a concrete procedure (e.g. at information events held by ASIIN or via the ASIIN newsletter). After nomination of the peers by the respective Technical Committees, the next quality control step involves review of the composition of the Peer Panel, such as by the Executive Board of the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes, and official appointment of the Peer Panel.

In the case of external quality assurance procedures conducted outside Germany, it is additionally ensured that at least one of the peers making up the Peer Panel has knowledge of the national language. If possible, the peer is recruited from industry in the target country, ideally from a European company operating there. Selection of the student representative also aims to opt for one from the target country, ideally able to demonstrate experience in German higher education.

Accreditation/Certification Quality Management Systems (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)
Based on its composition, the Peer Panel should be able to review matters relating to higher education steering and quality management in the field of teaching and learning as well as methods and design of learning processes (degree programmes); it should be able to estimate the issues of the stakeholders affected by a specific educational offer and integrate this in the assessment.

In addition, the expertise of suitable international peers familiar with foreign educational systems and/or international or European standards, should be gained if possible. A corresponding passage regarding the composition of the Peer Panel has been supplemented during revision of the system criteria. This also represents an implementation by ASIIN of a recommendation made in the reaccreditation procedure 2011. ASIIN's list of peers for system accreditation, currently encompassing about 70 peers, includes six working outside Germany and ten with extensive experience in non-German general and higher education systems. It has always been possible to gain a peer resident abroad for the system accreditation procedures conducted so far.

In system accreditation procedures, peers are suggested by the so-called "Permanent Working Group" of the Accreditation Commission for Quality Management Systems. The "Permanent Working Group" consists of three elected members of the Commission and is not identical to the Executive Board of the Commission. The Executive Board of the Commission is responsible for appointment of the Peer Panel in the final instance.

As far as the service/product area of system procedures is concerned, peers are specifically prepared for the task in the course of the procedure, in addition to the above-mentioned training activities. ASIIN's concept for system procedures (own and third party seals) includes a so-called peer briefing, in which relevant criteria, procedural flow, clarification of roles, team formation, onsite visit details and other special framework conditions of the procedure are combined. This briefing takes place before any work on the application and client documents.

Certification of Modules and Courses

The Peer Panel is generally composed of full-time lecturers (at higher education institutions or an institution similar to that of the applying higher education provider), representatives of industry and a student representative. Based on its composition, the Peer Panel should be in a position to review the courses/modules to be assessed within a procedure in terms of subject content and didactics, recognise the issues of the stakeholders affected by a specific educational offer and integrate this accordingly in the assessment in all cases. If possible, the Peer Panel should be composed of a mixture of new peers and peers with experience in certification. Peers from the area of education should have subject-specific expertise, demonstrable activity in the particular discipline, certification experience and international experience.

Evaluations for Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Principles and tools beyond those represented are not implemented with regard to this criterion here.

Evidence

- Annex 1 - 0._Accreditation_with_ASIIN_-_Degree Pro-grammes_Institutions_and_Systems_2015-06-26

- Annex 6 - Stand-ards_for_the_Certification_of_Further_Education_and_Training_2015-12-02

- Annex 38 - Geschaeftsordnung_ASIIN_AK_Programme_2009-12-15 (by-laws Ac-creditation Commission for Programmes, in German)

- Annex 39 - Geschaeftsordnung_ASIIN_AK_Systeme_2014-03-20 (by-laws Accredi-tation Commission for Quality Management Systems, in German)

- Annex 40 - Geschaeftsordnung_ASIIN_Fachausschuesse_2010-12-01 (by-laws Technical Committees, in German)

- Annex 41 - Geschaeftsordnung_ASIIN_Zertifizierungsausschuss_2011-07-27_2011-07-27 (by-laws Certification Committee, in German)

- Annex 47 - Gutachterschulung_Ablauf_AT_2015-10-02 (agenda peer template, in German)

- Annex 48 - Gutachterschulung_Konzept_und_Zeitplan_2012-11-26 (concept peer training and timeplan, in German)

- Annex 49 - Gutachter-Schulungen_ASIIN_Terminliste_2011-2015 (list of dates of peer trainings 2011-2015, in German)

- Annex 50 - Agreement for Peers 2014-12-09

Criterion 2.5: Criteria for outcomes

Any outcomes or judgements made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.

Principles and tools of ASIIN approach

All ASIIN's criteria and procedural principles applied in the various procedures are – as mentioned – published on the ASIIN website and hence accessible to all stakeholders at all times. All documents and information are generally provided in German and English.

Accreditation/certification criteria are applied irrespective of the country in which a pro-cedure is conducted. These are always based on – as anchored in the criteria documents –

ESG . This is generally elucidated through the synoptic criteria presentation (cf. information on criterion 2.1).

Every single procedural decision is based on the binding basis of respectively applicable criteria and procedural principles. Possible outcomes in the sense of procedural decisions concerning the requested seals/certificates are also anchored in the criteria documents.[11]

In addition to transparency of criteria and procedural flows, the principle of objectivity is done justice to insofar as the award of seals/certificates is bound to fulfilment of quality requirements (criteria) defined by each higher education institution independently and in advance. The checks and balances system is moreover implemented in all procedures to compensate possible subjective positions of participants in the procedure (peers, members of Decision-Making Committees). This means that the procedural flow includes mechanisms to support consistent application of accreditation requirements and procedural principles by reciprocal control. The Decision-Making Committees always reach decisions in meetings through a multi-stage procedure involving several procedures carried out previously.

All procedures are supervised by a member of staff (Project Manager) who assists the client as well as the peers, and when applicable, the committees. Information about the decision-making principles and interpretation practice of the responsible committee making the decision, which is relevant to handling the criteria, is communicated to all the other parties involved in the procedure via the Project Manager. Corresponding documents are supplied to all clients and peers; Technical Committees, the respective decision-making commission and Board of ASIIN are informed of new resolutions by the legislator.

The previously mentioned peer trainings are another element that serve to ensure consistent application of criteria (cf. information on criterion 2.4). A significant regular aspect of peer training is therefore explanation and interpretation of the criteria. All the documents necessary for a procedure are moreover supplied to the peers by the Project Manager. These documents always include a check list containing analytical questions on each criterion. These analytical questions also function as an interpretation aid for the peers.

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[11] Regarding the special case of evaluation, please compare the explanations on the particular product-specific approach in this section.

Product-specific approach

Accreditation/Certification Degree Programmes (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)

The checks and balances system is anchored for accreditation and certification of degree programmes in the Statutes. Hence the particular Peer Panels carrying out the assessment of degree programme(s) constitute the first stage of review. They carry out the assessment using defined criteria as well as supplementary aids provided by the office (cf. information on criterion 2.4 with regard to peers). Suggestions to the Accreditation Commission regarding which peers should be appointed for specific procedures, are exclusively made by the Technical Committees. This is checked by appointment of individual Peer Panels by the Appointing Commission, which simultaneously forms the Executive Board of the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes.

In a second stage, the respectively responsible Technical Committees inspect the peer reports for all the procedures in their field before passing them on to the responsible Accreditation Commission, to ensure comparability of accreditation recommendations from a subject-specific aspect.

This additional level – compared to the products specified below – of Technical Committees is included in the case of accreditation/certification of degree programmes in order to allow for the breadth of objects to be reviewed. The diversity of subjects of the degree programmes reviewed as well as the number of procedures are particularly large in this category, so that the Technical Committees guarantee an additional check of consistency before decisions are made by the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes.

The Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes makes the final decision regarding accreditation/certification of degree programmes. This occurs on the basis of an onsite visit report by the peers and the recommendation of the responsible Technical Committee(s) depending on the subject area of the degree programmes. The Accreditation Commission also controls the type and scope of the proposed requirements and recommendations and compares these to its previous decisions and any principles for application of relevant criteria that may have been established in the course of time. This ensures uniformity in the application of benchmarks across all individual subject areas.

The chairpersons of the Technical Committee(s) and the members of the Accreditation Commission moreover meet once a year. This meeting serves to promote an exchange and mutual understanding of a common interpretation of criteria.

Authoritative decisions by the Accreditation Commission on frequent subject areas of criteria application can be found in a so-called fundamental decisions list. Since this list is

used by Project Managers in individual procedures, it directly facilitates consistent application and interpretation of the criteria.

For the seal of the German Accreditation Council within the scope of programme accreditations, consistency across agencies is safeguarded by the Accreditation Council itself. Criteria interpretations are supplied to the agencies in writing for this purpose.

Accreditation/Certification Quality Management Systems (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)

As far as accreditation and certification of QM systems are concerned, the first and third stage described in the section above are both applicable, while the level comprising the Technical Committees is not included. The Accreditation Commission for Quality Management Systems is the Decision-Making Committee in this regard.

Analogous to peer training, a so-called briefing module is integrated in each procedure. Peers are trained in interpretation and implementation of criteria and procedural rules by the Project Managers within the scope of this module.

As far as accreditation and certification of QM systems are concerned, two Project Managers are moreover normally implemented. In view of the smaller number of procedures compared to programme-related reviews, this measure is mainly intended to broaden the knowledge and experience of all full-time staff (Project Managers) in this product area.

In the last reaccreditation of ASIN, it was recommended to exclude members of the commission to participate in the adoption of the decision on a procedure, if they were active as peers in the same procedure. This was responded to by a corresponding amendment in the Bye-Laws of the Systems Commission in March 2014, and hence before the first decision on a system accreditation. This issue was already taken up in the Interim Report for ENQA dated April 2014.

Certification of Modules and Courses

As far as accreditation and certification of modules and courses are concerned, the first and third stage described in the section above are both applicable, while the level comprising the Technical Committees is not included. The Certification Committee is the Decision-Making Committee in this case.

Evaluations for Quality Assurance and Enhancement

As far as evaluations for teaching and learning (via degree programmes, course and modules or institutions) are concerned, the applying higher education institution can choose which externally predefined criteria catalogue is used in the evaluation. This is e.g. the case when criteria for accreditation of degree programmes or the "maturity level model" of ASIIN are to be used as assessment benchmarks in an evaluation, and only an assess-

ment report is requested without application for the award of a seal. In principle, all criteria catalogues from accreditation/certification are available for this, as well as previously defined criteria catalogues from other organisations. This evaluation approach is led by predefined criteria and falls under quality assurance and enhancement in teaching and learning. While the applying institution is free to select the criteria catalogue, it cannot influence its content.

Such evaluation procedures for quality assurance and enhancement (type 1 see above) utilise the criteria relevant for a particular evaluation object. Hence transparency and objectivity requirements are applicable just as in accreditation/certification procedures, although the final step of the procedure, namely the decision by a responsible committee, is not included. The evaluation procedures end with transfer of the review report to the applying institution and – since submission of the interpretation of ESG dated May 2015 by EQAR – with the publication on the ASIIN website.

As explained at the beginning of this report, the above-mentioned differ from more advisory evaluations of type 2 on quality/organisation development, impact analysis. The former involve a higher education institution – or other educational organisations, public institutions, ministries, foundations, organisations based on international or European collaboration – requesting an evaluation project, in which the assessment benchmarks and analysis questions are worked out in a first step. This is performed together with the client and to suit the latter's individual concerns. These are essentially advisory and organisation development projects, often of strategic significance to the client, which utilise evaluation tools, but are not classified as external quality assurance procedures for teaching and learning in the sense of ESG. No predefined criteria catalogues are provided by ASIIN for this area.

Evidence

- Annex 1 - 0._Accreditation_with_ASIIN_-_Degree Pro-grammes_Institutions_and_Systems_2015-06-26

- Annex 2 - 0.1_Kriterien_fuer_die_Programmakkreditierung_2014-12-04 (Criteria for programme accreditation, seal of the German Accreditation Council, in German)

- Annex 3 - 0.2_Kriterien_fuer_die_Systemakkreditierung_2015-12-03 (Criteria for system accreditation, seal of the German Accreditation Council, in German)

- Annex 4 - 0.3_Criteria_for_the_Accrediation_of_Degree_Programmes_2015-12-10

- Annex 5 -
  0.4_Institutional_Accreditation_Evaluation_Criteria_for_the_ASIIN_System_Seal_
  2016-06-20

- Annex 6 - Stand-
  ards_for_the_Certification_of_Further_Education_and_Training_2015-12-02

- Annex 17 - ASIIN Checklist programmes english 20150310

- Annex 18 - Checklis-
  te_Siegel_des_Akkreditierungsrates_Programmakkreditierung_2014-12-04
  (checklist GAC seal programme accreditation, in German)

- Annex 19 - Checklis-
  te_Siegel_des_Akkreditierungsrates_Systemakkreditierung_2014-01-27 (checklist
  GAC system accreditation, in German)

- Annex 67 - ASIIN_By-laws_2012-08-06

- ASIIN homepage: http://www.asiin.de/

Criterion 2.6: Reporting

Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.

Principles and tools of ASIIN approach

All expert reports, which are created within the scope of accreditation/certification pro-cedures as well as evaluations for quality assurance and enhancement in teaching and learning within the scope of ESG in alignment with external predefined quality criteria, are generally published on ASIIN's website after conclusion of the respective procedure. No differentiation of the state in which the procedure took place is made. The terminol-ogy used by ASIIN in this regard is "Accreditation Reports", "Certification Reports" or "Evaluation Reports".

The respective reports are additionally published in special registers and/or the web pages of the particular owner of a seal, insofar as a third-party quality seal is awarded by an organisation that has authorised ASIIN. The various owners of a seal specify specific publication processes for this which have to be adhered to by ASIIN. The Foundation for

Accreditation of Degree Programmes in Germany (Accreditation Council) for example has a notification system which is followed during the award of its seals. This takes place by creation of specific datasets (including Accreditation Reports) by the agency which are then released by the Accreditation Council in a verification step on a separate web page.

The practice of publishing complete reports was introduced in the reporting period 2011–2015 and replaced the publication of summaries of outcomes of procedures that was customary until then. To keep internal organisation as lean and efficient as possible, all ASIIN's procedures inside and outside Germany are oriented on the method specified by the German Accreditation Council for procedures with its seals. The publication of any decisions and/or associated expert reports also takes place according to the practice prescribed by the Accreditation Council for its seals. The Accreditation Council made a decision concerning the award of its seals on 30.9.2015 which stated that negative decisions would also have to be published for any procedures started after 1.1.2016. ASIIN in turn implements this specification for all its national and international procedures. A new version of the General Terms and Conditions of Business (Allgemeine Geschäftsbedingungen – AGB) is implemented for all ASIIN's national and international procedures on 1.1.2016. These also regulate the publication of negative decisions in the agreements with clients.

Reporting in all standardised procedures of ASIIN – i.e. in all external quality assurance procedures utilising predefined criteria sets – is carried out using internal templates of the agency. These templates are regularly adapted to new findings, in order to improve their logic and comprehensibility.

At ASIIN, the responsibility for the first draft and updates of accreditation, certification or evaluation reports lies with the respective full-time (and in isolated cases freelance) Project Managers involved. The Project Managers process and document the respective input from peers and committees in the reports. Peers and committees hence receive drafts. The sections of these allocated to them can be amended or supplemented by providing the corresponding feedback to the Project Managers. The Project Managers therefore function like "editors" of the reports. Further course of the procedure includes that all peers give one – generally written – feedback on the draft report at a date previously agreed between the Project Managers and peers. This is followed by release of any amendments and supplementations of the report, before the report is sent for comment to the higher education institution concerned.

The logic of the report templates is as follows:

- Structured according to the applied criteria in the part of the report which contains the expert report with the assessments of the peers.

- In the experts part of the report, a differentiation is made between analysis by the peers, their conclusions with regard to fulfilment of a criterion and the evidence presented for the review object.

- Report templates also require entry of outline data regarding the reviewed object, the procedure as well as the peers involved.

- If statements of opinion and decisions of downstream committees, e.g about the award of a seal, are associated with the procedure, these steps are attached to the expert report in further chapters and hence documented and included in the publication. There is also a standard section in which a summary of the statement of opinion by the respective higher education institution is documented. In the procedural flow, this takes place before the final decision on the award of a seal or certificate. Supplemented by any retrospective submissions, the statement of opinion by the higher education institution is integrated in the respective criteria-related final peer assessment. This means that all assessments and decisions to-gether with the respective justification of the decision relating to the award of a seal/certification are components of the report publication by ASIIN.

- Typical for accreditations/certifications are on the one hand requirements. These can be imposed with the award of a seal or certificate and generally have to be fulfilled within one year to keep the seal or certificate for the entire period of time. On other hand, ASIIN works with recommendations in all accredita-tions/certifications and quality assurance evaluations within the scope of ESG. These are not binding, but indicate improvements and developments of the re-viewed object that are considered recommendable by the peers and committees. The ASIIN approach is such that if renewal of a seal/certificate is requested, such recommendations are passed on to relevant peers in the next procedure. At the same time, the higher education institution is asked in the new procedure how it handled the previous recommendations in the past accreditation/certification pe-riod.

In the reporting period 2011–2015, the German Accreditation Council intensified the monitoring activities of the agencies, with regular inspection and written commenting on random samples of ASIIN Accreditation Reports. This feedback was and is always pre-sented at a so-called regular QM meeting held at the head office, in which all Project Managers are represented. It is also submitted to the respective Decision-Making Com-mittee responsible for the reviewed procedure. This feedback was also used as a basis for revision of the report templates a number of times during the reporting period, following detailed discussion by the Project Managers. This served e.g. to ensure an adequately detailed consideration of all criteria or to differentiate more clearly between the descrip-

tion of facts and framework conditions and assessments by peers. The typical challenge of reporting repeatedly focussed on by the Project Managers and deliberated in the regular meeting, is to find the balance between depth of – possibly unreadable – detail and succinct presentation of central peer assessments. Another typical reporting-related subject of discussion in the regular QM meeting of the Project Managers between 2011 and 2015, was the degree of justification of final decisions by the committees in the report. This aimed on the one hand to present the development of a decision – particularly in the case of deviations from peers and Technical Committees – in a comprehensible manner for third party readers, while keeping the scope of the reports reasonable.

Beyond the specified internal measures, ASIIN furthermore contributed to the creation of a joint document on standards for reports by the accreditation agencies operating in Germany. This took place in March 2013. ASIIN also committed itself to comply with this agreement.

Product-specific approach

Accreditation/Certification Degree Programmes (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)
In the reporting period 2011–2015, the majority of expert reports and decisions made by committees were for the award of the Seal of the German Accreditation Council by way of programme accreditation and for the award of the ASIIN Seal for degree programmes. About 612 reports, to all of which the above statements apply, were created in the specified period.

Accreditation/Certification Quality Management Systems (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)
In the reporting period 2011–2015, a total of two expert reports were made on the basis of either the criteria for system accreditation of the German Accreditation Council or for institutional certification/system seals according to ASIIN criteria (international/ European procedures). The above statements are also applicable to these reports. Completion of the first procedures is expected in December 2015 at the earliest. These reports can only be published after that.

Certification of Modules and Courses
In this area, nine certification reports were produced in a national and international context during the reporting period 2011–2015. The statements on report writing/logic and publication made above are also applicable here.

Evaluations for Quality Assurance and Enhancement

In this area, a total of 13 evaluation reports (eight at degree programme level and five at institutional level) within the scope of ESG (type 1) were issued during the reporting period 2011–2015. These include five reports at degree programme level as well as two reports at institutional level, which were utilised by the higher education institution as a basis for application for an ASIIN seal/certificate after the evaluation. Such an application – according to the principle of combinable procedures – is only possible if all of the criteria for the particular seal are documented in the report and the procedure was conducted according to the applicable rules. An evaluation report used in this manner is then verified by the responsible committees of the agency for the award of a seal/certificate and published accordingly like an accreditation/certification report.

The statements on report writing/logic and publications made above apply to external quality assurance evaluation reports falling within the scope of ESG. It must however be taken into account that since the new interpretation of ESG in May 2015, the obligation to publish evaluation reports on teaching and learning with focus on external quality assurance also exists for voluntary applications. Contracts concluded for the remaining six cases (degree programmes/institution) of evaluations within the scope of ESG, which did not result in an accreditation/certification and hence publication, were prior to the publication of the new ESG in 2015 and its interpretation. As far as these old cases are concerned, ASIIN is still bound to the contracts that give the client the sole right of decision regarding publication of an ordered evaluation report. From mid-2015 onwards, contracts on evaluations falling within the scope of ESG (external quality assurance in teaching and learning by higher education providers), are revised accordingly and ASIIN's publication right stipulated therein.

In the reporting period 2011–2015, full-time or voluntary members of ASIIN staff were furthermore involved as peers and in the reporting work of individual external quality assurance procedures and/or evaluations by other agencies in an international/European context. In ASIIN's business structure, these activities are also allocated to the service area of evaluation. Reports from such activities are however not part of ASIIN's reporting system, since the agency does not itself function as certifier or author of the evaluation, but only sends its experts. In these cases, report handling is responsibility of the agency conducting the procedure.

Evidence

- Annex 1 - 0._Accreditation_with_ASIIN_-_Degree Pro-grammes_Institutions_and_Systems_2015-06-26

- Annex 2 - 0.1_Kriterien_fuer_die_Programmakkreditierung_2014-12-04 (Criteria for programme accreditation, seal of the German Accreditation Council, in German)

- Annex 3 - 0.2_Kriterien_fuer_die_Systemakkreditierung_2015-12-03 (Criteria for system accreditation, seal of the German Accreditation Council, in German)

- Annex 4 - 0.3_Criteria_for_the_Accrediation_of_Degree_Programmes_2015-12-10

- Annex 5 - 0.4_Institutional_Accreditation_Evaluation_Criteria_for_the_ASIIN_System_Seal_ 2016-06-20

- Annex 6 - Standards_for_the_Certification_of_Further_Education_and_Training_2015-12-02

- Annex 12 - 01 GAC programme seal report template 2016-02-05 ENG

- Annex 13 - 03 ASIIN programme seal report template 2016-02-05 ENG

- Annex 14 - ASIIN Vorlage Bericht Systemakkreditierung AR 2014-12-10 (template report GAC system accreditation, in German)

- Annex 15 - EN ASIIN certification report HS Studiengang 2014-05-19

- Annex 56 - ASIIN Template for Self-Assessment Report System-Seal 2013-09-30

- Annex 61 - QM_03QMPol-gutachtenstandards_agenturen_130312 (report standards agreed by GAC accredited agencies, in German)

- Annex 78 - Vorlage_Zeitplan+Nachbereitung_AK_(Monat)_(Jahr)_201x-xx-xx_AB DEZ-AK 2015 (template for postprocessing of AC meeting, in German)

- Web page: Database of ASIIN-certified (accredited) degree programmes – http://www.asiin-ev.de/pages/de/asiin-e.-v/programmakkreditierung/akkreditierte-studiengaenge.php

- Web page: Database of ASIIN-certified modules and courses – http://www.asiin-consult.de/pages/de/asiin-consult-gmbh/zertifizierung/abgeschlossene-zertifizierungen.php

Criterion 2.7: Complaints and appeals

Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.

Principles and tools of ASIIN approach

ASIIN ensures fulfilment of this criterion by establishment of a Complaints Committee for complaints by higher education institutions concerning decisions of the responsible Accreditation Commissions of ASIIN in accreditation/certification procedures. The Complaints Committee is anchored as an organ of the association and the subject of the complaints procedure is defined in the Statutes of ASIIN (§ 11). In harmony with the Statutes, the Complaints Committee has set up Bye-Laws that regulate the complaints procedure in detail. According to these Bye-Laws, the members of the Complaints Committee are "independent in the field and not bound by instructions" (§ 2 (2)). This is safeguarded by the composition of the committee, which comprises

- one member from each Accreditation Commission, as suggested thereby;
- a representative of a member organisation of ASIIN, as suggested thereby, who is not a member of another organ of the association;
- a member of the German Accreditation Council, on invitation by ASIIN and as suggested by the Accreditation Council, alternatively a representative of an organisation concerned with quality assurance in higher education in Germany, on invitation by ASIIN and as suggested thereby;
- a representative of another accreditation agency in or outside Germany; as well as
- a representative of the student body

according to the Statutes (§ 11 (1)). An overview of the current composition of the committee as well as the complaints procedure is published on ASIIN's web pages for higher education institutions and stakeholders (http://www.asiin-ev.de/pages/de/asiin-e.-v/programmakkreditierung/beschwerden.php and http://www.asiin-ev.de/pages/de/asiin-e.-v/systemakkreditierung/beschwerden.php).

Higher education institutions and stakeholders are informed of the option to file a complain about a decision by the responsible Accreditation Commission in the relevant criteria catalogues, which are also publicly accessible on ASIIN's web pages.

Notices of any decision by the respective Accreditation Commission addressed to a higher education institution include advice on legal remedies explaining the possibility of filing a complaint against the decision as well as the associated deadlines.

Product-specific approach

Accreditation/Certification Quality Management Systems (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)

If a higher education institution or an affected stakeholder files a complaint against the decision of the responsible Accreditation Commission at ASIIN, which concerns the accreditation/certification of degree programmes, the objections including a corresponding justification must be presented to the head office in writing within a the period of one month. The complaint is first passed on to the responsible Accreditation Commission to allow it to offer remediation. The Complaints Committee is appealed to only if the Accreditation Commission does not remedy the complaint. The documents are transferred to the members of the Complaints Committee with the request to verify the arguments of the higher education institution formally, objectively and in terms of content. Before this, the higher education institution, a member of the Peer Panel as well as a member of the commission making the decision are given an opportunity to make a statement of opinion. The members of the Complaints Committee meet as required under supervision of the head office and deliberate on the particular complaints procedure. Formal and content-related aspects are verified in the process and a possible solution is formulated. The Complaints Committee itself cannot make a decision with regard to the accreditation. It has the option to confirm the decision of the Accreditation Commission or to refer the procedure back to the same with instructions. In case of referral back to the Accreditation Commission, the latter cannot make the same decision again with the identical grounds. If a complaint is considered justified, decisions may be revoked or modified by the Accreditation Commission. If a complaint is rejected as unjustified, the decisions made remain in force. All applicable deadlines are suspended in the course of an ongoing complaints procedure. The higher education institution is informed of the decision in the form of a notice, which also includes the new deadlines.

After completion of the internal complaints procedure, the higher education institution can file a complaint to the Accreditation Council and/or resort to legal recourse.

Experience report

After establishment of the Complaints Committee, the complaint tool was initially made use of relatively often in the scope of programme accreditation/certification (one to three complaints per meeting). Complaints are currently filed much less frequently (max. one complaint after a meeting). In almost all cases in the last two years, it was possible to remedy the complaint during the following meeting of the Accreditation Commission. This trend was already observed at the end of the last reporting period and has been con-

firmed in the further course. This is presumably closely related to further development of reports, which primarily aimed to communicate the decisions by the Accreditation Commission to the higher education institutions in a more comprehensible manner (cf. information on criterion 2.6 in this regard).

[...]

No complaints regarding a decision have yet been made to the Accreditation Commission for Quality Management Systems.

Certification of Modules and Courses
Certification criteria also allow for objection to a decision by the Certification Committee. Clients are informed in the letter that the complaint, together with a justification, must be submitted to the head office within one month.

Evaluations for Quality Assurance and Enhancement
Since no decisions requiring action or refrain on the part of the higher education institutions are made for evaluations of both types, the complaints procedure is not intended for this area.

Evidence

- Annex 8 - AGB-GTC ASIIN e V english as of 2015-10-01 - Kopie

- Annex 67 - ASIIN_By-laws_2012-08-06

- Annex 43 - Geschäftsordnung_Beschwerdeausschuss_2007-06-06 (By-laws Appeals Committee, in German)

- Annex 75 - Vorlage_Beschluss_AR_Akkreditierung_Programme (template AC decision programmes for GAC seal, in German)

- Annex 76 - Vorlage_Beschluss_ASIIN_Akkreditierung_Programme (templace AC decision for ASIIN seal, in German)

- ASIIN homepage: http://www.asiin.de

Criterion 3.1: Activities, policies and processes for quality assurance

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities as defined in Part 2 of the ESG on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work.

Principles and tools of ASIIN approach

By order of the Board, ASIIN conducted an internal strategy development process in 2012–2013 which steers the work of the agency for the period 2012–2020. The outcome of this process is a strategy paper that encompasses the complete organisation (e.V. and Consult GmbH). Starting point was ASIIN's product and service portfolio that was adapted in the course of the strategy process.

Part 1–3 of the strategy paper formulating a mission statement can be found as an annex. Using ASIIN's vocabulary, a "conviction" shared within the organisation was translated as objectives for the complete organisation and strategic guidelines (cf. the following extract from the strategy paper).

Conviction	The representatives of higher education, industry and administration active in ASIIN share the conviction that good academic education is the basis of a sustainable development of modern societies.
	ASIIN considers "education" to be a process of development and learning for gaining many different types of competences and the outcome of this process. The educational outcome supports achievement of a successful personal, social and professional life.
Objectives	For this reason, ASIIN pursues its objectives nationally and internationally,
	→ to safeguard and strengthen the quality of academic education
	→ to create a transparency of achieved quality of academic education and further education, to promote academic and professional mobility
	We do this for the member companies of ASIIN in the non-profit associa-

	tion, higher education institutions, teachers and students, industry, politics and interested third parties.
Method	ASIIN reaches its objectives as → service provider for education providers and/or systems in academic education and further education nationally and internationally → especially through accreditation and certification, evaluation, consulting in system and organisation development as well as training → through (honorary) participation of external experts from academia and industry

The conviction and formulation of targets derived in the strategy process supplement and interpret the purpose of the association defined in the Statutes since establishment in 1999. The Statutes are published on the website of the association as amended. The above-cited formulations from the (internal) strategy paper are furthermore adopted in the various – and also published on the ASIIN website – guidance and criteria documents for the service area accreditation/certification. In the course of the ongoing website restructuring project, such text modules from the strategy document are also directly included in the website texts.

ASIIN's product and service portfolio already presented in section A shows the implementation of these strategic requirements on an operative level:

	Certification	*Academy*	*Quality development*
e. V.	Accreditation/Certification Degree Programmes (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)	ASIIN Dialogue Forums	Third Party Funded/EU Projects
	Accreditation/Certification Quality Management Systems (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)		

	Certification	*Academy*	*Quality development*
Consult	Certification of Modules and Courses	Workshops & Trainings In-House	Evaluations for Quality Assurance in Teaching and Learning (within scope of ESG)

Certification	Academy	Quality development
		Evaluations for Quality Development and Organisation Development/Impact Analysis
Processing of Certification Procedures for Third Parties	ASIIN Dialogue Forums	Consulting on Quality Management and Organisation Development
Processing of Professional Cards (not effective after 1.1.2016)		Third Party Funded/EU Projects

In the reporting period 2011–2015, most of the activities of ASIIN again included accreditation/certification of degree programmes with a total of 1914 degree programmes accredited inside and outside Germany (counting all seals), i.e. in the area of external quality assurance procedures for teaching and learning.

External quality assurance in teaching and learning encompasses the product and service fields Accreditation/Certification Quality Management Systems (ASIIN and Third Party Seals), Certification of Modules and Courses as well as – partly – evaluations. This constituted approximately 80–85% of ASIIN's total turnover in 2014.

All criteria, which are used for certification/accreditation or evaluation in teaching and learning at degree programme level, institutional level or module/course level, are in line with ESG (cf. information on criterion 2.1). Compliance with ESG 2.1 to 2.7 is furthermore illustrated in the corresponding sections of this report.

Involvement of the various stakeholders is a structural principle of ASIIN, which is already recognisable in the Statutes of the association set down in 1999 (cf. for instance also information on criterion 2.2). ASIIN Consult is in turn owned 100% by the association. The Chairmen of the Board appointed in rotation from the various member groups of by the member organisations, also function as the Advisory Committee of this subsidiary. In view of this, the Strategy Process 2012–2013 was designed to involve the committees of the complete ASIIN organisation and within these the stakeholders from higher education institutions, the student body and industry in numerous feedback loops (cf. overview of strategy process steering within scope of evidence specified below).

Inclusion of teachers and students as well as industry representatives in the procedures for external quality assurance in teaching and learning is also ensured by the organisational structure of the agency. According to the Statutes, all committees of the agency

involved in procedures and establishment of criteria, are composed of members from these three groups and partly supplementary further profiles. Criteria-related documents regulating the respective procedures moreover specify the ESG-compliant composition of Peer Panels and participants in meetings relating to onsite visits. The participation of relevant stakeholders in the structures and work of the agency is furthermore illustrated in the information on the procedures and structural organisation in sections 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.2 and 3.3 of this self-assessment.

Representation of all relevant stakeholders in the committees of ASIIN is a fundamental principle of its organisational structure. By strict differentiation between the two areas "business of the association" and "accreditation" in conjunction with the composition of the committees concerned with accreditation issues and their reciprocal control,

- this ensures that the respective relevant interest groups participate in procedural design, while

- preventing any one-sided or inappropriate influence on a particular accreditation decision by individuals or interest groups.

Decision-making in all accreditation/certification procedures as well as the decision on the applicable criteria for this (if these are the responsibility of ASIIN itself) is therefore exclusively carried out by the commission deemed responsible by the Statutes and with freedom from instructions. Neither members of the association, the Board or office nor other committees have any right of co-determination in this regard. The office is entitled to speak at the meetings of the various committees.

More information on independence of the decision-making process and the peers and committee members in the procedures of external quality assurance in teaching and learning at programme or system level can be found in sections 2.4, 2.5 and 3.3 of this report.

The product and service portfolio shown above prescribes the separation between the activities of ASIIN in the area of external quality assurance in teaching and learning within the scope of ESG and other activities such as e.g. participations in EU projects or consulting activities in the field of education. It concentrates the consulting activities in ASIIN Consult and accreditation/certification of degree programmes and institutions/QM systems in the association. This division between company and association means that bookkeeping for these activities is also separate.

The Board of ASIIN e.V. already deliberated on the fundamental separation of consulting and accreditation on an operative level as well during its meetings on 29.10.2008, 2.2.2009 and 26.5.2009 and corresponding decisions were made. In the course of Strat-

egy Process 2012–2013 referred to above, the delimitation of the fields of activity of the agency were reconsidered also with regard to prevention of conflicts of interests. This resulted in a policy paper – produced as part of the quality management system of ASIIN in 2011 and also presented to the Accreditation Council in fulfilment of requirements regarding separation of consulting and accreditation at the time – which can moreover be considered as a guideline for practical definition of this separation and is used accordingly.

Product-specific approach

Principles and tools beyond those represented above are not implemented with regard to the specified criterion in all relevant service areas.

Evidence

- Annex 1 - 0._Accreditation_with_ASIIN_-_Degree Programmes_Institutions_and_Systems_2015-06-26

- Annex 2 - 0.1_Kriterien_fuer_die_Programmakkreditierung_2014-12-04 (Criteria for programme accreditation, seal of the German Accreditation Council, in German)

- Annex 3 - 0.2_Kriterien_fuer_die_Systemakkreditierung_2015-12-03 (Criteria for system accreditation, seal of the German Accreditation Council, in German)

- Annex 4 - 0.3_Criteria_for_the_Accrediation_of_Degree_Programmes_2015-12-10

- Annex 5 - 0.4_Institutional_Accreditation_Evaluation_Criteria_for_the_ASIIN_System_Seal_2016-06-20

- Annex 6 - Standards_for_the_Certification_of_Further_Education_and_Training_2015-12-02

- Annex 11 - Anpassung_Weiterentwicklung_Portfolio_2013-04-25 (further development portfolio, in German

- Annex 59 - QM_01QMÜber-Auszug_Strategiepapier_Überzeugung_2014-04-29 (extract strategy paper quality understanding, in German)

- Annex 62 - QM_03QMPol-PUBLIC_Grundsatzpapier_BeratungAkkreditierung_2015-11-20 (policy paper separation consulting accreditation, in German)

- Annex 67 - ASIIN_By-laws_2012-08-06

- Annex 72 - Strategieprozess_ASIIN_Übersicht_2013-05-16 (overview strategy process, in German)

- ASIIN homepage: http://www.asiin.de

Criterion 3.2: Official status

Agencies should have an established legal basis and should be formally recognised as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities.

Principles and tools of ASIIN approach

The complete ASIIN organisation consists of two entities: ASIIN e. V., the non-profit association and parent company, and ASIIN Consult GmbH, the subsidiary offering part of the service portfolio.

The parent company ASIIN is sustained by the four groups of institutional members referred to earlier numerously:

- Technical and scientific associations as well as professional organisations

- Trade associations and central associations of social partners

- Coordination group of universities organised by the Akkreditierungsverbund für Ingenieurstudiengänge e.V. – AVI; (Accreditation Alliance for Engineering Degree Programmes); Fakultätentage der Ingenieurwissenschaften und der Informatik an Universitäten e.V. (Faculty Association of Engineering Sciences and Informatics at Universities (4ING)

- Coordination group of the universities of applied sciences within Germany's universities of applied sciences

ASIIN e.V. is entered in the Register of Associations in Germany (entry 8814 in the Register of Associations at Amtsgericht (local court) Düsseldorf). The legal representatives of the association – the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Board – are also recorded in the Register of Associations. ASIIN e.V. is recognised as a non-profit association by the responsible Revenue Authority. The association is therefore exempt (last notice dated 23.7.2015) from payment of corporate and trade tax and is required to pay a reduced value added tax of currently 7%. This exemption is only granted for non-profit-oriented associations, which simultaneously confirms that ASIIN e.V. does not operate for profit. In order to safeguard correct utilisation of funds received in compliance with the purpose of

the association as well as with relevant tax legislation, accounts are checked annually both by controllers specified by the association and by external financial auditors who certify the annual accounts. In the reporting period 2011–2015, all annual accounts were approved by the General Assembly with an exonerating effect and certified by the financial auditors. The amounts charged to the higher education institutions are regularly inspected with regard to coverage of the costs incurred by ASIIN and adapted if necessary.

ASIIN Consult GmbH is owned 100% by the association. ASIIN Consult is integrated in the complete ASIIN organisation and profits from its experience and expertise. ASIIN Consult GmbH is registered in the Handelsregister (Commercial Register) Düsseldorf under the number HRB 58050 since 21.1.2008.

Books are kept separately for the two organisations. The experts required for specific tasks are available to both organisations under the ASIIN umbrella. Work carried out by full-time employees of the association for the subsidiary Consult and vice versa is invoiced within the scope of provision of staff according to actual costs pursuant to the rules applicable for such (tax) groups. A board decision further stipulates that common values and objectives as well as claims to their realisation are equally applicable to both organisational entities.

Seals developed by ASIIN itself (with involvement of external stakeholders) for degree programmes, modules, courses and systems are property of the association. If ASIIN applies for authorisation of accreditation activities in a specific state and this state does not prescribe any own criteria/seals for these (e.g. Austria, Kazakhstan), the associated criteria and procedural specifications are used on a case-to-case basis.

Product-specific approach

Accreditation/Certification Degree Programmes (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)
Accreditations/certifications of degree programmes are conducted by ASIIN e.V. The latter has been authorised for the award of the Seal of the German Accreditation Council within the scope of programme accreditations since 2002. With regard to the award of the Seal of the German Accreditation Council, it is subject to the rules for accreditation of degree programmes and for system accreditation dated 8.12.2009 as amended on 20.2.2013 (Drs. AR (GAC) 20/2013). The last reaccreditation took place in 2011.

The Accreditation Council assumes external quality control for its seals within the scope of its supervisory activities according to the Foundation's Charter as well as the procedure of the Accreditation Council for review of accreditations conducted by agencies dated 21.9.2006 as amended on 25.2.2014 (Drs. AR (GAC) 35/2014). The Accreditation Council is

itself a full member of the *European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (ENQA), which in turn verifies observation of ESG by the Accreditation Council.

Since 27.6.2012, ASIIN is also authorised for programme accreditation in Kazakhstan by its admission to the so-called National Register of Accreditation Bodies of the Ministry of Education and Science in Kazakhstan.

ASIIN is authorised to award three European labels within the scope of programme accreditation/certification with the ASIIN Seal: The *European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education* (ENAEE) has authorised ASIIN to award the so-called EUR-ACE® Label for Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes in the engineering sciences. Together with 12 other authorised agencies, ASIIN signed a Mutual Recognition Agreement on 15.11.2014. In the field of informatics, ASIIN is authorised by the *European Network for Quality Assurance in Informatics Education* (EQANIE) to award the Euro-Inf® Label for Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes in informatics. Authorisation by the *European Chemistry Thematic Network Association* (ECTNA), entitles ASIIN to award the Eurobachelor® Label for Bachelor's degree programmes in chemistry as well as the Euromaster® Label for Master's degree programmes in chemistry.

Accreditation/Certification Quality Management Systems (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)

ASIIN e.V. is authorised to conduct system accreditation procedures in Germany by the Accreditation Council since 2008. The above applies analogously to quality control of system accreditation of higher education institutions with the Seal of the German Accreditation Council.

Since 1.4.2015, the Regulation of Higher Education Quality Assurance Agencies by the Austrian Federal Minister of Science, Research and Economy, authorises ASIIN to conduct institutional onsite visits at universities and universities of applied sciences in Austria pursuant to § 22 (2) of the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education. This authorisation is based on the criteria and procedural requirements of the ASIIN System Seal which were assigned to the requirements of the Austrian law in a synopsis.

Certification of Modules and Courses

Principles and tools beyond those represented above are not implemented with regard to this criterion.

Evaluations for Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Principles and tools beyond those represented above are not implemented with regard to this criterion.

Evidence

- Annex 9 - Amtlicher_Handelsregisterauszug_der_ASIIN_GmbH_2014-05-12 (registration certificate GmbH, in German)

- Annex 10 - Amtlicher_Vereinsregisterauszug_der_ASIIN_2015-02-20 (registration certificate e.V., in German)

- Annex 37 - Freistellung_Finanzamt-DUS_2015-07.23 (note of tax exemption, in German)

- Annex 80 - Zulassung_ASIIN_AR_2012-11-29 (ASIIN accreditation by GAC, in German)

- Annex 81 - Authorization_ASIIN_ENAEE_2015-06-23

- Annex 82 - Authorization_ASIIN_ENAEE_mutual_recognition_EUC-ACE_2014-11-19

- Annex 83 - Admission_ASIIN_ENQA_2012-02-24

- Annex 84 - Admission_ASIIN_ENQA_2014-07-09

- Annex 85 - Admission_ASIIN_ENQA-Interim-Report-membership_2014-04-15

- Annex 86 - Authorization_ASIIN_EQANIE_2011-04-13

- Annex 87 - Authorization_ASIIN_EQANIE_Standards_and_Guidelines_for_Authorisation_of_Agencie_2013-05-24

- Annex 88 - Authorization_ASIIN_Eurobachelor_Euromaster_Contract_04-26-2015

- Annex 89 - Admission_ASIIN_Kazakhstan_2012-07-05

- Annex 90 - Admission_ASIIN_prolongation_EQAR_2011-11-25

- Annex 91 - Zulassung_ASIIN_Oesterreich_BGBLA_2015_II_47 (admission in Austria, in German)

Criterion 3.3: Independence

Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.

Principles and tools of ASIIN approach

Representation of all relevant stakeholders in the committees of ASIIN, is – as numerously stated – a fundamental principle of its organisational structure. Integration of all relevant interest groups as well as balanced and unbiased procedural decision-making is safe-guarded by a number of features. These include strict separation of the areas "business of the association" and "accreditation" or "company management of the GmbH" and "certi-fication" as well a through the composition of the committees concerned with accredita-tion and certification matters and their mutual control.

Decision-making in all issues relating to accreditation and certification procedures is ex-clusively the responsibility of the competent Accreditation Commission (according to the Statutes) or the Certification Committee (according to the Bye-Laws). With regard to the decision-making procedure and the organisationally relevant checks and balances princi-ple, please also compare information on criterion 2.5.

As shown in the following illustration of the organisational structure of ASIIN, the inde-pendence of the accrediting organs and their members is based on the clear separation between (a) the committees deciding on the work of the association (left column) and (b) the committees concerned with conduction and decision of accreditation procedures (right columns).
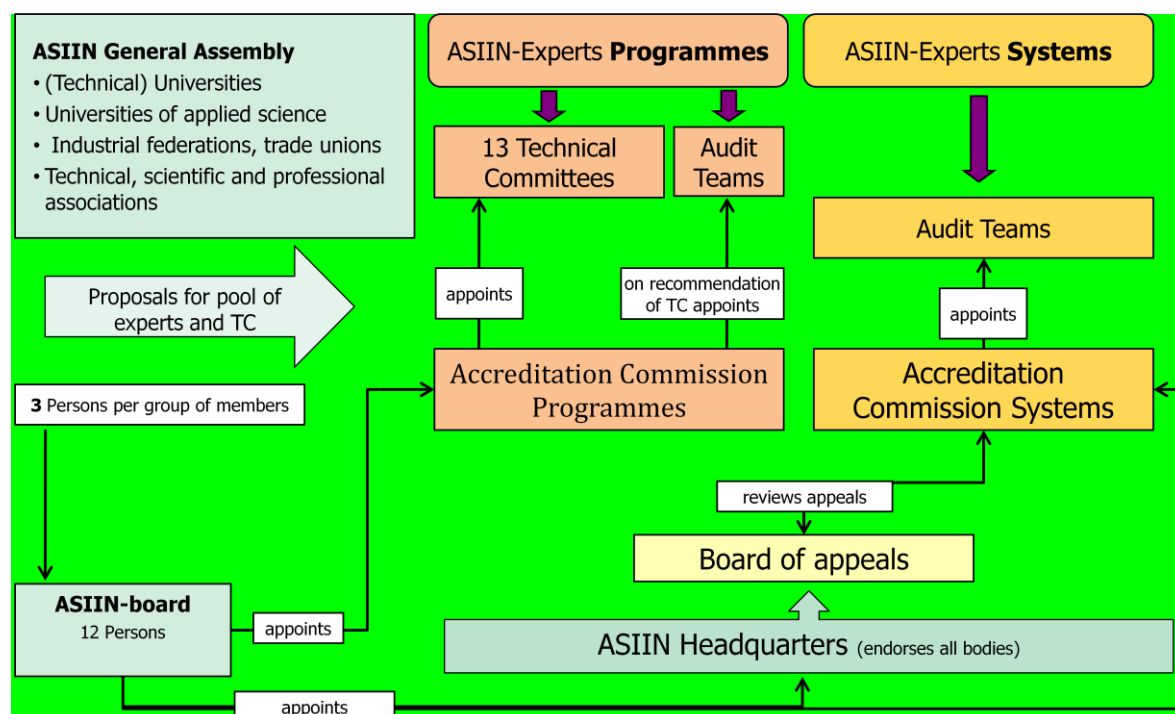
The illustration particularly demonstrates that although there is an appointing relationship between the committees responsible for the activities of the association in a broad sense and the accrediting committees of ASIIN, no instructional power is given in accreditation matters.

This strict separation between management of business and procedural decisions was adopted by ASIIN Consult. Members of the company or the management have no influence on the decisions of the Certification Committee, which conversely is also not concerned with the commercial aspects of the company (GmbH).

Independence and impartiality of persons working for ASIIN
According to their self-conception – and anchored in the Statutes – ASIIN committees concerned with accreditation and certification are independent. Committee members are appointed as independent experts in particular subjects rather than as representatives of specific interest groups. Members of committees that were active as peers in a procedure for deliberation, do not take part in the vote on this procedure. This is similarly anchored in the Bye-Laws of the various committees.

Before starting to work, all peers are required to sign an agreement in which they confirm that they are not biased and that they will treat all information obtained in connection with the respective procedure as confidential. At the same time, they agree to the publication of their names and confirm acknowledgement of the current publication practice of ASIIN.

Committee members are selected by the respectively superior committee. This means that the members of the Technical Committees in programme accreditation are appointed by the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes, the members of both Accreditation Commissions for Degree Programmes and for Quality Management Systems as well as the Complaints Committee by the Board, and the Members of the Board by the General Assembly. Members of the Certification Committee

Independence from governments
There is no direct relationship between ASIIN e.V. or ASIIN Consult GmbH and national governments, institutions of the European Union or other state institutions. ASIIN is not financed by public funding, but by contributions of the members of the association and the costs of accreditation and certification procedures born by clients.

The influence of third parties – including that of member organisations in the association of sponsors of ASIIN – in ongoing accreditation procedures is excluded pursuant to the Statutes. The accreditation and certification process of ASIIN and the work of the peers

and committees involved in this process therefore takes place independent of state authorities, societies, professional associations, faculty or departmental associations.

ASIIN committees are however in continuous dialogue with higher education institutions, faculty and departmental associations, societies and professional associations, because these stakeholders possess knowledge and experience in higher education and its impact in a realistic social and commercial setting. The committees of ASIIN consider this knowledge and experience to be highly relevant for the development of criteria and the design of procedural flows.

Product-specific approach

Accreditation/Certification Degree Programmes (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)

As far as the award of the European seals (EUR-ACE® Label, Euro-Inf® Label, Eurobachelor® and Euromaster®) is concerned, decisions by ASIIN committees are also made independent from respective owners of a seal (ENAEE, EQANIE, ECTNA). As far as the award of European seals is concerned, agencies are accredited for a specific period of time. The owner of a seal cannot influence the decisions of the authorised agencies during the accreditation period.

In the German accreditation system, the Accreditation Council also reserves the right to correct decisions made in procedures for the award of its seal in line with the Council's supervisory mandate from the state. This is correspondingly defined in the contract between the Accreditation Council and the agencies. Influence on individual decisions on procedures however neither takes place in this case.

If additional national requirements have to be observed in procedures, the decision whether these can be taken into consideration with regard to ESG is always incumbent on the responsible ASIIN Decision-Making Committee. In case of contradictions between national requirements and ESG, the latter always takes precedence in accreditation or certification decisions.

Accreditation/Certification Quality Management Systems (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)

In the German accreditation system, the Accreditation Council also reserves the right to correct decisions made in procedures for the award of its seal in line with the Council's supervisory mandate from the state. This is correspondingly defined in the contract between the Accreditation Council and the agencies. Influence on individual decisions on procedures however neither takes place in this case.

Certification of Modules and Courses

Principles and tools beyond those represented above are not implemented with regard to this criterion.

Evaluations for Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Principles and tools beyond those represented above are not implemented with regard to this criterion.

Evidence

- Annex 67 - ASIIN_By-laws_2012-08-06

- Annex 38 - Geschaeftsordnung_ASIIN_AK_Programme_2009-12-15 (by-laws Accreditation Commission for Programmes, in German)

- Annex 39 - Geschaeftsordnung_ASIIN_AK_Systeme_2014-03-20 (by-laws Accreditation Commission for Quality Management Systems, in German)

- Annex 40 - Geschaeftsordnung_ASIIN_Fachausschuesse_2010-12-01 (by-laws Technical Committees, in German)

- Annex 41 - Geschaeftsordnung_ASIIN_Zertifizierungsausschuss_2011-07-27_2011-07-27 (by-laws Certification Committee, in German)

Criterion 3.4: Thematic analysis

Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.

Principles and tools of ASIIN approach

The two central tools with which typical questions and challenges encountered in external quality assurance procedures of ASIIN are considered by full-time and honorary employees, and partly published, include:

- ASIIN newsletter
- annual and committee meetings of ASIIN

Possible key topics for both formats are determined in an annual planning convention of the office. This generally takes place in January every year with participation of all full-time employees. The following are taken into account: experience of employees in im-

plementing procedures, points of discussion from past committee meetings, information gained from peer and client surveys or individual talks with higher education institutions and peers during procedures.

The ASIIN newsletter is published once to twice a year and generally dedicated to a key subject concerning quality assurance and development in academic education.

The following newsletters are available for the reporting period 2011–2015:

No. 13/December 2014	Focus: International study – Joint/Double degree programmes
No. 12/July 2014	Focus: Internationalisation (in external quality assurance)
No. 11/December 2013	Focus: Learning outcome orientation Expertise in accreditation
No. 10/December 2012	Focus: ASIIN System Seal, system accreditation and ISO certification, ASIIN Dialogue Forum: Transfer from school to higher education institution
No. 9/May 2012	Focus: Review of the current situation of the German accreditation system
No. 8/December 2011	Focus: Separate seal award by ASIIN; Recognition of academic achievements according to the Lisbon Convention
No. 7/Ma 2011	Focus: New criteria of ASIIN; reaccreditation of ASIIN; accreditation system before the Federal Constitutional Court

The newsletter archive is accessible on the ASIIN website. Persons included in the ASIIN peer pool also receive an e-mail with an electronic version of the newsletter. Paper versions of the newsletters are additionally sent to about 1,000 addressees (higher education institutions, agencies, societies and associations from academia and industry as well as public administrations).

The editorial concept of the newsletters is to stimulate a broad discussion of the focal topics. For this purpose, experiences and observations on challenges, advantages and disadvantages associated with the respective subject as found within ASIIN and contributed by guest authors are edited accordingly. The "editorship" of the newsletter is assigned to a specific person with experience in supervision of procedures and committees at ASIIN.

ASIIN conferences generally take place once a year. In alternation, these are intended as internal committee meetings for an exchange between full-time and honorary staff, or as

public events with representatives from interested higher education institutions, authorities, agencies and peers from inside and outside Germany. The presentations and policies discussed at these conferences are published on the ASIIN website afterwards and sometimes reviewed again in the ASIIN newsletter. Here the concept also focuses on the reflection of recurrent observations, structural characteristics and (future) challenges of the external quality assurance procedures conducted. Another aim is to use this as a platform to communicate discovered solution approaches (good practice).

In the reporting period 2011–2015, the following conferences were conducted and the outcomes published:

November 2014	Committee and Member Conference: "Contributions to 'Good' Teaching at Higher Education Institutions"
December 2013	ASIIN Annual Conference (public): "QM Reloaded: Interlinking Internal and External Quality Assurance at Higher Education Institutions"
November 2012	ASIIN Annual Conference (public): "Higher Education Institution and the Working World – The Benefit of Accreditation for Professional Practice"
November 2011	Committee Conference: "The first ever Committee Conference is intended to be an internal forum for an exchange on all necessary and upcoming issues for ASIIN as an accreditation agency, whether these concern the quality of our work or the mutual understanding and interpretation of the criteria that we apply." (Translation of a quotation from the announcement.)

Based on the experience of ASIIN, the described activities suffice for regular presentation of findings and observations gained through the work of the agency to interested experts in the field. The ASIIN member organisations, representing social and academic bodies interested in the quality of higher education, are integrated in this communication process. This results in a regular flow of information on findings gained in daily external quality assurance work in this area to relevant interest groups in the entire (German) system.

In view of the continuation of these self-reflective activities in the activity spectrum of the agencies indicated in criterion 3.4, it is noted that a corresponding further development specifically of the newsletter concept presented is intended. On the one hand, editorial planning is to be formalised to a greater extent. Regularly held Editorial Conferences are to allow continuous advance specification of future focal topics. This will permit earlier integration of authors, better preparation of topics over a longer period of time and a

more effective combination of the contributed articles. On the other hand, a kind of "ana-lytical summary" is to be introduced. This is planned in the form of a contribution reflecting on the various other contributions on a focal topic, however on a meta level and from an ASIIN perspective.

In addition, there are activities/projects concerned with reflection on experiences gained from accreditation/certification practice coordinated by other organisations. ASIIN staff contribute to these at regular intervals, with outcomes reflected back to ASIIN and its committees. In this context, the Accreditation Council conducts thematic and cross-sectional inspections at the monitored agencies in Germany. This commenced with a trial run in 2012 and the first two runs in 2014 and 2015. These use questionnaires to collect experiences, observations and practices from programme or system accreditation across several agencies. In this way, they can present a system-wide illustration of specific subject areas. "Joint Programmes" as well as the ratio of reaccreditations and first accreditations were chosen as subjects for a first random test. The second random test was dedicated to "Franchise Degree Programmes".

The Project Managers at the head office furthermore participate in third party funded projects with their experience and the organisational competence of ASIIN. Participations in these projects serve for personal further development on the one hand and the propagation of expertise and experience in external quality assurance of higher education on the other. An example of this is the involvement of ASIIN in the TEMPUS project PICQA, in which the respective accreditation systems in Armenia and Georgia were further developed together with numerous higher education institutions as well as the central agencies in these countries under consortium leadership of ASIIN. We believe that a utilisation of information and experience gained from the daily practice of the agency beyond the individual process occurs here. Hence we also consider such project activities as a form of implementation of criterion 3.4. with its aim of supporting further development of external quality assurance in higher education beyond an individual agency.

Further examples in this context include the collaboration of ASIIN staff in projects and workshops within the network of central and eastern European agencies (CEENQA), the project management of which is carried out by an ASIIN employee since 2014. Before its Annual General Assembly, CEENQA regularly holds a workshop on a subject that is topical for the particular member agencies. The presentations are published on the CEENQA website and summarised in the CEENQA newsletter, which is also accessible through the website. Subjects in the past years included *Impact of quality assurance* (2015) or *Benchmarking* (2013). Through the project management by an ASIIN employee, experience and information from ASIIN are also included in the TEMPUS projects in which CEENQA is involved. These are concerned with the subject of benchmarking as well reconciliation of

degree programme learning outcomes with national qualifications frameworks. CEEENQA provides information about all projects in its newsletter.

Product-specific approach

Principles and tools beyond those represented above are not implemented with regard to this criterion in all the relevant service areas.

Evidence

- http://www.asiin-ev.de/pages/de/asiin-e.-v/aktuelles/veranstaltungen.php
- http://www.asiin-ev.de/pages/de/asiin-e.-v/aktuelles/asiin-newsletter.php
- http://www.picqa.org
- http://www.ceenetwork.hu

Criterion 3.5: Resources

Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.

Principles and tools of ASIIN approach

ASIIN e.V. is an honorary organisation, with a relatively small group of full-time staff assisting a comparatively significant number of persons working on a voluntary basis in the performance of their work. Apart from the head office, all functions are filled in an honorary capacity. Currently (as in November 2015) working in the permanent committees in the area of programme accreditation are approximately 170 persons from higher education institutions, societies and firms (Technical Committees and Accreditation Commission), while approximately 1,800 persons are available as peers in programme accreditation procedures. In the area of system accreditation, 15 persons are active in the permanent Accreditation Commission for Quality Management Systems at the moment and around 70 persons can function as peers in system accreditation procedures.

The composition of the **General Assembly** as the organ of the association issuing the Statutes, is determined by the delegation of individual representatives by each member, who are in turn integrated in the management committees of the respective organisations. Member (groups) delegate a total of 12 persons to the **Board** of the association,

with half of these representing higher education (universities and universities of applied sciences) and the other half representing trade associations and/or professional associations. As far as the Board is concerned, occupancy is on a basis of parity of the member groups. The **Advisory Committee** of ASIIN Consult consists of members of the Board of the association as sole proprietor.

The **head office** is managed by a full-time Managing Director and a full-time Deputy Managing Director. In addition, working for the association in the head office are

- 4.5 active full-time employees and 1 employee on parental leave in a so-called "Orga Team" (responsible for office management, logistics related to procedures, projects and committees, bookkeeping and invoicing, IT). 3 of the 5.5 positions are for an unlimited period.

- 6.5 active full-time Project Managers and 2 Project Managers on parental leave. 6 of the 8.5 positions are for an unlimited period.

The management referred to above fulfils a double function and works for ASIIN Consult as well, with registration as Managing Director and as Officer with Statutory Authority (Prokurist) in the Commercial Register (Handelsregister). ASIIN Consult moreover has 1.5 positions at Project Manager level. An ASIIN Consult employee is responsible for management of the International Office for the complete ASIIN organisation.

A legal advisor [...] is furthermore active for ASIIN (e.V. and Consult).

As described above, provision of personnel is common practice between ASIIN e.V. and Consult and correspondingly mutually charged in line with the stipulations governing the group and the applicable actual average costs per employee.

As of December 2015, the head office is accommodated on a rented area of 400 m² with additional archiving space. An external service provider – THOLD-IT GmbH – looks after the IT infrastructure. IT and communication equipment is state-of-the art with regard to performance, availability and security of data and business processes. Every member of staff has a (mobile) computer workplace with internet connection as well as VPN access to the agency server and an electronic mailbox. All core processes of ASIIN are handled electronically, including archiving. Applicable regulations and adequate technical equipment are available for monitoring of procedures as well as for data storage and archiving. The office areas include a meeting and conference room with appropriate technical equipment offering space for up to 20 persons. In addition, meeting and conference rooms for committee meetings, workshops or trainings are rented flexibly all over Germany flexibly as required.

In February 2016, the head office will move to new premises in Duesseldorf. The new office has an area of 346 m² plus storage space and is equipped with generally comparable/modern building technology. A separate meeting room designated to ASIIN alone is not available in the new premises. There is however a whole storey of meeting rooms which can be used by the tenants of the office building. These can be booked flexibly. The existing IT infrastructure and services will be also be relocated.

ASIIN e.V. is recognised as a non-profit association by the competent Revenue Office (cf. pertinent information on criterion 3.2). The benefit to the public of ASIIN e.V. results from the purposes of the association anchored in the Statutes which are binding for all organs of ASIIN. Accordingly, the association exclusively and directly pursues public-benefit purposes in the sense of the section "Tax-privilege purposes" of the Fiscal Code (Abgabenordnung). Resources of the association are only used for tasks in compliance with the Statutes. Members receive no benefits from the resources of the association. No person may be advantaged through external (outside the association) expenditures or through disproportionately high emoluments. The Board of ASIIN e.V. correspondingly also works on an honorary basis. This also applies to the concomitant activity of the Board as the Advisory Committee of the GmbH.

ASIIN GmbH is registered in the Commercial Register (Handelsregister). Any profits are reinvested in development of activity fields and product areas pursuant to the strategy paper, or are for the owner ASIIN e.V.

Costs of ASIIN e.V. procedures are covered by reimbursement of costs by the higher education institutions. The flat rates for the various items of expenditure in a procedure (e.g. personnel costs, allowance for overhead costs, committee costs, travel expenses, expense allowance for voluntary work, risk/foreign country supplements) on which the cost calculation is based are verified on the grounds of the actual cost development and adapted if necessary.

Calculations by ASIIN Consult GmbH utilise a basic calculation which varies depending on the services provided. The calculations are also principally based on the cost pools specified above.

Product-specific approach

Accreditation/Certification Degree Programmes (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)
For the various engineering and natural science areas as well as for informatics and mathematics, the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes is composed of a third each of representatives of universities/technical higher education institutions, uni-

versities of applied sciences and business/industry. It is supplemented by student representatives of the universities/universities of applied sciences (on the rationality of an organisational structure on the basis of parity cf. information on criteria 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 3.1). Three representatives of universities, universities of applied sciences and industry each are appointed to the Technical Committees as well at least one student. In order to be able to ensure consistent interpretation of the accreditation criteria *within a subject area*, the members of the Technical Committees cover the subject areas of the respective disciplines in terms of their expertise. At the same time, they are able to provide proof of current or earlier experience in higher education committees or have connections to higher education institutions in their professional capacity as industry representatives, such as through R&D projects. As far as the composition of the Peer Panels is concerned, ASIIN has access to a large number of persons listed in its peer pool (cf. in particular information on criteria 2.4 and 3.3 in this regard).

Accreditation/Certification Quality Management Systems (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)
The provisions of the Statutes with regard to composition of the Accreditation Commission for Quality Management System safeguard that the required expertise in the area of quality management/quality assurance is provided in this organ in addition to an interdisciplinary composition in terms of subjects. Also, as far as Peer Panels for concrete procedures are concerned, a balanced line-up with regard to expertise in the subject and experience in quality management is ensured (cf. relevant information on criterion 2.4).

Certification of Modules and Courses
This task area is exclusively allocated to AIIN Consult. The Certification Committee as the Decision-Making Committee consists of five members and includes equal proportions of representatives of universities, universities of applied sciences and industry. Its tasks include the definition of procedural principles and standards for certification of courses and modules, appointment of Peer Panels for further education offers requiring certification, and decision on certification of courses and modules taking into consideration peer reports (cf. supplementary information on criterion 2.4 with regard to Peer Panels).

Evaluations for Quality Assurance and Enhancement
This task area is exclusively allocated to AIIN Consult. Evaluations are conducted on the basis of the criteria of the agency for program and system accreditation/certification as well as international standards. Due to its integration in a broad network of national and international quality assurance organisations and alliances, ASIIN also has access to a further group of peers in addition to its own peer pool if required.

Evidence

- Annex 1 - 0._Accreditation_with_ASIIN_-_Degree Programmes_Institutions_and_Systems_2015-06-26

- Annex 6 - Standards_for_the_Certification_of_Further_Education_and_Training_2015-12-02

- Annex 16 - Bilanz_ASIIN_2014 (balance sheet ASIIN 2014, in German)

- Annex 37 - Freistellung_Finanzamt-DUS_2015-07.23 (note of tax exemption, in German)

- Annex 38 - Geschaeftsordnung_ASIIN_AK_Programme_2009-12-15 (by-laws Accreditation Commission for Programmes, in German)

- Annex 39 - Geschaeftsordnung_ASIIN_AK_Systeme_2014-03-20 (by-laws Accreditation Commission for Quality Management Systems, in German)

- Annex 51 - Kalkulation_ASIIN_Programmverfahren_2015-12-07 (calculation programme accreditation, in German)

- Annex 52 - Kalkulation_ASIIN_Systemverfahren_2014-07-14 (calculation system accreditation, in German)

- Annex 53 - Kalkulation_ASIIN_Zertifizierung_2013-08-07 (calculation certification, in Gemran)

- Annex 67 - ASIIN_By-laws_2012-08-06

Criterion 3.6: Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities.

Principles and tools of ASIIN approach

Internal quality work at ASIIN follows a so-called TQM approach (Total Quality Management). This specifies that quality is not the goal, but an integral component of each action, each process and each activity of an organisation and its individual members. Accordingly, the cyclic concept of the so-called Deming cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle) is to be integrated in everyday processes as well as in organisation and product development projects. The quality management system of ASIIN is therefore not intended function as a

"secondary bureaucracy" that constantly reconstructs the daily processes from a bird's eye view. Instead, quality tools should be simple and directly available to staff in their respective tasks and functions, i.e. work flow and tools used should be such that they support integrated quality work – to set and realise objectives, verify outcomes and deduce improvements – within the scope of execution of a task.

After completion of the Strategy Process 2013 with clarification of the aspired development lines for the entire product and service portfolio of ASIIN by 2020, the existing Quality Management Manual and the appendix of process descriptions was initially continued, but was found to be too narrow and difficult to handle.

In 2015, the office started to expand and restructure the QM documentation and – where necessary – the tools in line with the strategy paper and the daily work experience of the staff. The "old" QM Manual turned out to be too complicated for everyday work. When in doubt, the full-time employees therefore looked for the information required in daily practice in other places or possibly even acted without the parameters, process steps, aids etc. specified in the QM Manual, which in turn resulted in the structural risk of quality losses. This was particularly a problem in the familiarisation of new staff, who were not involved in the original formulation of the internal quality expectations and the assignment of tools and processes, and who had not acquired this as inherent "organisation knowledge".

Restructuring of the QM documentation is intended to simplify access to the information regarding what is quality relevant and therefore requires attention, as well as where this is the case in the daily processes of the head office. The restructuring process will continue beyond 2015.

The logic of the QM system of ASIIN is now based on six levels and illustrated in the following overview.

Level 01	**Conviction**	
	Source: Strategy paper of ASIIN, 2013-04-29	*Denomination docs:*
	Link: H:\QMS Prozesse IT\QM-System u Prozesse\01_Überzeugung u Leitbild	*01QMÜber-[xxx]-jjjj-mm-tt*
Level 02	**Objectives and strategy**	
	Source: Strategy paper of ASIIN, 2013-04-29	*Denomination docs:*
	Link: H:\QMS Prozesse IT\QM-System u Prozesse\02_Ziele und Strategie	*02QMStrat-[xxx]-jjjj-mm-tt*

Level 03	**Policies** **(incl. QM policy = manual)**	
	Source: cf. respective document	*Denomination docs:*
	Link: H:\QMS Prozesse IT\QM-System u Prozesse\03_QM Handbuch und Policies	*03QMPol-[xxx]-jjjj-mm-tt*
Level 04	**Processes**	
	Source: n.a.	*Denomination docs:*
	Link: H:\QMS Prozesse IT\QM-System u Prozesse\04_Prozesse	*04QMProz-[xxx]-jjjj-mm-tt*
Level 05	**Job instructions**	
	Source: cf. respective document	*Denomination docs:*
	Link: H:\QMS Prozesse IT\QM-System u Prozesse\05_Arbeitsanweisungen	*05QMAA-[xxx]-yyyy-mm-dd*
Level 06	**QM templates**	
	Source: cf. respective document	*Denomination docs:*
	Link: H:\QMS Prozesse IT\QM-System u Prozesse\06_Arbeitsanweisungen	*[Level no.]QM[Level desig.]-[xxx]-yyyy-mm-dd*

The QMS folder structure on the common drive, to which all full-time employees of ASIIN have access, also follows this logic. Individual documents/elements of the QM systems can now be exchanged, modified or supplemented at every level without changing the basic logic.

Level 01, 02 and 03 documents are generally published on the ASIIN website – possibly as extracts or summaries e.g. in the respective criteria documents (cf. information on criteria 2.3 and 2.5 in this regard). Due to ongoing restructuring of ASIIN's QMS documentation, specific updated documents and information may also be replaced successively on the ASIIN website.

Level 04, 05 and 06 documents fall within the internal documentation system and are not intended for publication. An exception to these are flow schedules and templates for conduction of accreditation/certification procedures which are specifically designed for the use and information of applying higher education institutions, peers and committee members.

Level 01 and 02 documents are results of the already mentioned strategy process of ASIIN and an updating of the purpose of ASIIN set by the Statutes on foundation of the association in 1999. Conviction, objectives and strategic guidelines are considered in greater detail in section 3.1 of this report.

The following policies, which (should) have a quality relevant and promoting effect, currently exist at level 03:"):

- QM Manual/QM policy of ASIIN
- Standards for reports of the agencies
- Consulting and accreditation policy
- Ethical questions policy

The former QM Manual is therefore divided into level 03 with the quality expectations and allocated parameters and tools as a policy on the quality of ASIIN activities, and level 04 for documentation of relevant target processes.

The QM Manual of ASIIN furthermore defines activity fields, to which the quality assurance tools of the agency in the main area of activity – the accreditation and certification of educational offers and institutions/systems – relate. We expect our accreditation/certification approach and our procedures to meet the principles of objectivity, validity, confidentiality and transparency.

Review and development tools are geared towards the four following activity fields:

Field 1 – Peers and committee members: Quality of the pool of peers and experts

Field 2 – Criteria of accreditation/certification: Quality of criteria and procedural principles

Field 3 – Procedural conduction: Quality in application of the criteria and procedural principles

Field 4 – Recognition: Recognition of procedural outcomes by third parties

Concrete internal quality expectations are therefore established for every activity field. These quality expectations are at the same time outcome expectations from ASIIN's processes of external quality assurance in teaching and learning and the associated procedures conducted in this regard. Measures and tools are systematically allocated to each activity field which are also intended to provide transparency regarding whether and how outcome expectations are fulfilled (quality inspection).

In the reporting period 2011–2015, the majority of the daily activities of the agency were the management of accreditation and certification procedures and further development

of required aids (criteria, databases, templates and similar) as well as voluntary persons working in committees and Peer Panels. Hence these service areas and activities are naturally at the focus of the QM system and the QM Manual. The manual moreover serves as a reference for other quality and service areas of external quality assurance in teaching and learning (Certification of Modules and Courses; Evaluations for External Quality Assurance). The procedures (processes) for this are – insofar as applicable – characterised and controlled by the same quality expectations, parameters and tools. A differentiation of the QM instrumentation specifically for these relatively young service/product areas will only take place stepwise if required. Separate standardisation and formalisation of the processes and tools for these areas is to be avoided as far as possible and only take place if necessitated by the volume or concrete experiences in the procedures in future.

The standards for reports are described in section 2.6 of this report. The way these are integrated in the QMS logic of ASIIN is demonstrated in this section. The same applies to the policy on the separation of consulting and accreditation, which has already been dealt with in section 3.1 of this self-assessment.

The latest policy from 2015 considers ethical questions and is the result of an intensive internal discussion within ASIIN, which is associated with the increasing volume of certification and accreditation procedures abroad since 2014. Frequent questions in this regard were related to the application and interpretation of the respective certification and accreditation criteria outside the socio-cultural context in which they were created. An obvious example of this complex discussion is e.g. the classification of modules in degree programmes with the aim of political education, physical training, national or religious education in non-democratic systems. In the dialogue with the ASIIN office, peers, Technical Committees and Decision-Making Committees determined a need for clarification, with direct impact on consistent application of the criteria worldwide as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of the certification/accreditation procedures. ASIIN's two Accreditation Commissions (for degree programmes and QM systems) therefore set up a permanent Ethics Advisory Committee in 2014. The Ethics Advisory Committee is a consulting working group on the basis of the stipulations of the Bye-Laws of the two Accreditation Commissions, but supported and heard by all ASIIN committees. Conversely, all ASIIN committees and the office can call upon the Advisory Committee. The Ethics Advisory Committee initially discussed and assessed questions and experiences arising in relation to procedures abroad in terms of subject area. The previously mentioned policy on ethical questions was subsequently issued by the Advisory Committee. This was adopted by the Accreditation Commissions in December 2015 and integrated in ASIIN's QMS documentation.

Lists and flow diagrams of relevant processes are collected at level 04 of the QMS documentation. These are designed as target specifications and are – insofar as procedures and supporting processes for external quality assurance in teaching and learning are affected – regularly deliberated in the so-called regular QM meeting of the office and adapted if required (cf. information on criterion 2.6 and the following with regard to the regular QM meeting). The core processes of the agency also include accreditation/certification procedures by order of the higher education institutions themselves. A description of the course of procedures in accreditation/certification is, as mentioned numerously, contained in each of the published criteria documents and serves both as specification for internal workflows in the implementation of procedures as well as for committee members, peers and higher education institutions. A description of a target workflow for familiarisation of new staff is e.g. also part of the level 04 document collection.

Level 05 encompasses so-called work instructions, which are distributed within the head office by e-mail and stored in a sub-folder of the QMS documentation with specification of a keyword in the file name and a date. These work instructions are concerned with details of application of policies, tools, templates and similar, or the interpretation and common understanding, or specific problem situations that may occur in daily practice and which require joint action.

Finally included in level 06 QMS documentation are all types of guiding templates (letter and e-mail templates, report templates, agendas and guidelines for committees, check lists, accreditation/certification procedure guidelines for committees and similar). They support consistent, comparable and hence efficient execution of individual work steps. Most of them are also regularly deliberated in the office's regular QM meeting; any changes are decided and implemented there. A variety of these templates is enclosed with this self-assessment as evidence (cf. for instance evidence on criteria 2.2, 2.3, 2.6).

The explanations clearly show that the regular QM meeting of the head office is one of the most important recurrent tools in quality work. This meeting of all full-time staff takes place once a month. Dates are fixed for the whole calendar year. The regular meeting is obligatory for all full-time staff. A fixed agenda always includes the following points, which can be supplemented by special topics:

1. Matters from committees and working groups (e.g. AC follow-up, TC, current working groups)

2. Experience from procedures (e.g. sequence, reports, peers, usability specifications)

3. Experience with accreditation criteria (criteria application and further development)

4. Input from owners of seals

5. Miscellaneous/dates

6. To-do list status check

Minutes of each regular QM meeting are taken and an outcome remark is made (cf. exemplary outcome remark for the regular meeting in July 2015 provided in the evidence).

The office's regular QM meeting is considered important and very effective by all participants. It was also confirmed in the reporting period 2011–2015, that this regular meeting is central for the functioning of ASIIN's QM. It is an opportunity to bring together all relevant outcomes gained from quality review activities and the implementation of procedures on the one hand, and the personal experience level of Project and Committee Managers on the other. Issues can be deliberated by all the Project and Committee Managers, allowing progress of agreed amendments and further developments of processes and aids to be followed.

An example of a further development in procedural design organised via the regular QM meeting of the office is the introduction of so-called Cluster Managers in degree programme accreditation during the reporting period 2011–2015. This is based on feedback and enquiries by higher education institutions to the agency using a coordinating element between several clusters of programmes involved in a procedure at a higher education institution – possibly in different faculties/departments – either at more or less the same time or slightly staggered. Both the higher education institutions and the Project Managers found that early reconciliation of the assessments made by each Peer Panel on comparable or equivalent issues across a higher education institution, is favourable for consistent application of criteria as well as acceptance of accreditation decisions. In such cases, responsibility for clusters is assigned to a Project Manager of the office, who then acts as the central point of contact for the higher education institution. Further activities include an exchange with the various Project Managers of individual clusters of programmes, ensuring a mutual exchange of relevant assessments by the Peer Panels, verification and designation of decision-making templates for the committees with regard to identification of comparable issues.

Another example of improvements achieved through the regular QM meeting are the guidelines for self-assessment of higher education institutions in degree programme accreditation. These contain central questions relating to every criterion applicable for a seal, which the higher education institution can use for its self-assessment. The central questions are worked out by a working group of Project Managers appointed by the regu-

lar QM meeting. A working group is typically established by the regular QM meeting for larger further development projects. This group then works on the respective project, reflecting back to the regular QM meeting before outcomes are passed on to any responsible committees. The guideline project is based on observations mentioned in Technical Committees, Peer Panels, Committee Conferences, by members of higher education institutions and Project Managers themselves, regarding the fact that the reports by higher education institutions are mainly descriptive in nature even in reaccreditation. They are hardly used as an internal reflection process with regard to accreditation criteria and for internal quality work on degree programmes. This means that an essential fundamental idea of ASIIN (and ESG) – that creation of a self-assessment should be less of a formal bureaucratic exercise than an internal reflection process as a component of internal quality assurance and enhancement in higher education institutions – is not fulfilled in many accreditation procedures. The purpose of the presented guidelines for higher education institutions is to reduce pure description in the self-assessments and encourage reflection and discussion on the basis of the criteria through a series of central prompting questions.

In addition to the formalised and standardised flow of ASIIN's quality work, the informal, personal exchange between full-time and voluntary staff in the committees – as well as during discussions with peers or applying higher education institutions about and during procedures – represents a very valuable source of indication for possible improvement of the activities of ASIIN. The intention of the standard agenda item "Experience from procedures" in the regular QM meeting is to give full-time employees an opportunity and space to communicate individually collected, informal feedback and observations as well as personal experiences. These can be discussed among colleagues. Common positions to any recurrent challenging issues can be agreed and possible actions determined.

With regard to systematic internal and external feedback processes (cf. for instance criterion 2.5 of the regulations of the German Accreditation Council for the accreditation of agencies), the regular QM meeting of the office can therefore be classified as a central internal feedback element.

An extended internal feedback tool is the so-called ASIIN Committee Conference already mentioned under criterion 3.4.

Beyond the large circle of honorary committee members and in addition to the informal exchange, external feedback also takes place formalised via a survey of peers and applicants/higher education institutions after completion of accreditation/certification procedures.

The questionnaires available for this purpose were further developed and/or newly established in two steps during the reporting period 2011–2015. These revisions take into ac-

count the differentiation of the service offerings in accreditation/certification. The questionnaires were furthermore integrated in a new online survey tool, intending to facilitate online response to the questions based on the current web development status, as well as permitting automatic reminding of survey participants. An increase to approximately 48% of the previously dwindling and unsatisfactory feedback rates was observed for the first three quarters of 2015 at least after the change in content of the questionnaires and utilisation of the new online survey tool.

With regard to timing, client and peer surveying is oriented on the meeting cycles of the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes. The web link and request for participation are sent to all peers and contacts at higher education institutions for which a procedure was concluded after a meeting of this Accreditation Commission (four times a year; cf. questionnaires and workflow of surveys and analyses in the evidence provided below).

Due to the poor feedback rates prior to the change in 2015, feedback to regular peer and client surveys was bundled for analysis in the period from 2011–2014. The following analyses are available for the reporting period:

- 2010–2011 Analysis as input for the Committee Conference of ASIIN in November 2011 (Data of the recurrent client survey and peer survey was supplemented with a preparatory survey of committee members and results were included in the analysis.)
- 2012–2014 Analysis of recurrent client survey and peer survey

These analyses did not show any significant fluctuations in the generic – consistently relative high – satisfaction values. All free text responses and individualised notes represent a valuable source for further development of criteria and procedures.

For the work of the above-mentioned Ethics Advisory Committee, a special survey of peers on selected aspects of the implementation of procedures abroad was conducted in August 2015. This was designed to obtain an empirical basis for classification of individual feedback and experience (cf. the relevant questionnaire in the evidence provided below).

One of the tasks of the constant working groups, such as the mentioned Ethics Advisory Committee or the Criteria Development Working Group implemented at regular intervals, is to work out further developments on the basis of the findings from the quality assurance activities described above. A Criteria Development Working Group is always composed of members of one of the two Accreditation Commissions as well as members of the head office (Project Managers). External experts are consulted if required. Criteria development is concerned with the quality seals/certificates accounted for by ASIIN itself.

Inspection and revision of criteria sets is carried out at regular intervals at ASIIN, on average every two to three years. A revision and update of the criteria for the award of ASIIN Seals for degree programmes was also carried out in the reporting period 2011–2015. Parallel to this, the Technical Committees started (and partly already finished) a revision of the SSC for the various disciplines in subject-specific accreditation with the ASIIN degree programme seal. As far as institutional accreditation is concerned, a first version of the criteria for the ASIIN System Seal including an underlying maturity level model for educational institutions, was submitted by a Criteria Development Working Group of the Accreditation Commission for QM Systems.

In addition to permanent working groups, project-related working groups are created on a case-to-case basis. These work on development mandates in all product and service areas as well as on the basis of observations and experiences in quality assurance. Such working groups may be composed of only members of the office or a committee or mixed from various committees and the office as well as external experts. In the years 2013 and 2014, working groups of the office were created for the following topics: optimisation of the sequence of the appointment of peers in programme accreditation, the role of the office/implementation of procedures, procedure/process optimisation, further development of templates for onsite visit reports, guidelines for applicants and the so-called separation of seals. The results of these working groups were included in the respectively applicable documentations, i.e. in fundamental decisions of an Accreditation Commission, in criteria documents, in templates for Project Managers or applicants or in process descriptions and work instructions.

The portfolio structure of ASIIN permits a clear internal and external delimitation of activities, each carried out under the purview of ESG and EQAR. The structuring of criteria documents for accreditation/certification in teaching and learning moreover clearly differentiates between the different criteria of the various owners of seals, the award of which is carried out by ASIIN. In daily practice, references to ESG and EQAR are therefore only used for activities in the following fields:

- Accreditation/Certification Degree Programmes (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)

- Accreditation/Certification Quality Management Systems (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)

- Certification of Modules and Courses

- Evaluations for Quality Assurance in Teaching and Learning within scope of ESG

Product-specific approach

Principles and tools beyond those represented above are not implemented with regard to this criterion for the relevant service areas.

Evidence

- Annex 1 - 0._Accreditation_with_ASIIN_-_Degree Programmes_Institutions_and_Systems_2015-06-26

- Annex 2 - 0.1_Kriterien_fuer_die_Programmakkreditierung_2014-12-04 (Criteria for programme accreditation, seal of the German Accreditation Council, in German)[12]

- Annex 3 - 0.2_Kriterien_fuer_die_Systemakkreditierung_2015-12-03 (Criteria for system accreditation, seal of the German Accreditation Council, in German)

- Annex 4 - 0.3_Criteria_for_the_Accrediation_of_Degree_Programmes_2015-12-10

- Annex 5 - 0.4_Institutional_Accreditation_Evaluation_Criteria_for_the_ASIIN_System_Seal_ 2016-06-20

- Annex 6 - Standards_for_the_Certification_of_Further_Education_and_Training_2015-12-02

- Annex 44 - Gremientagung_ASIIN_Programm_2011-11-18 (Conference for committee members, in German)

- Annex 45 - Gremien-und_Mitgliedertagung_ASIIN_Programm_2014-11-13+14 (Conference for committee members and members, in German)

- Annex 46 - 03QMPol-[xxx]-jjjj-mm-tt Policy-VORLAGE (QA template policies, in German)

- Annex 54 - Kunden-und_Gutachterumfrage_ASIIN_Ergebnisse_2012-2014 (results customer and experts surveys 2011-2014, in German)

- Annex 59 - QM_01QMÜber-Auszug_Strategiepapier_Überzeugung_2014-04-29 (extract strategy paper quality understanding, in German)

- Annex 60 - QM_03_Grundsatzpapier_Ethische_Fragen_2015-11-25 (policy pater ethical questions, in German)

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[12] Note for the English translation of the Self-Evaluation Report and Evidence: a number of annexes are available in German only where they are not normally used and/or needed for international activities, or are legal or formal documents from German (public) authorities or are for internal use.

- Annex 61 - QM_03QMPol-gutachtenstandards_agenturen_130312 (report standards agreed by GAC accredited agencies, in German)

- Annex 62 - QM_03QMPol-PUBLIC_Grundsatzpapier_BeratungAkkreditierung_2015-11-20 (policy paper separation consulting accreditation, in German)

- Annex 63 - QM_04QMProz 2.6.1_Durchf_u_Auswertung_Kunden-und_Gutachterumfrage (process surveys, in German)

- Annex 64 - QM_05QMProz_EinführungswocheEinarbeitung_neue_Mitarbeiter_2015-09-10 (introductory week new staff, in German)

- Annex 65 - QM_06QMV Vorlage_Ergebnisvermerk Jour Fix_201x-xx-xx (template results Jour Fix, in German)

- Annex 66 - QM_03QMPol-QM-Handbuch_ASIIN_eV_2011-10-27_FORTSCHREIBUNG_2015-11-21 (quality management handbook, in German)

- Annex 73 - Umfrage_ASIIN_Gutachter_ab_2015 (peer survey, in German)

- Annex 74 - Umfrage_ASIIN_Kunden_ab_2015 (customer survey, in German)

- http://www.asiin-ev.de/pages/de/asiin/ueber-die-asiin/qualitaetspolitik.php

Criterion 3.7: Cyclical external review of agencies

Agencies should undergo an external review at least once every five years in order to demonstrate their compliance with the ESG.

Principles and tools of ASIIN approach

The accreditation of ASIIN granted by the Accreditation Council is valid for five years each time. ASIIN is currently in the process of the third reaccreditation procedure. Activities of ASIIN are moreover also verified in procedures for authorisation for work outside Germany.

As explained in detail in the previous sections, all external quality assurance activities and accreditation/certification procedures of ASIIN are subject to the same canon of targets and principally the same criteria. They are also accounted for by the same committees. The internal quality management therefore encompasses all the core processes in a particular service area.

Product-specific approach

Accreditation/Certification Degree Programmes (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)

Monitoring by the Accreditation Council takes place regularly. Cause-related inspections may be conducted on the basis of files in the event of a special cause. Regular random inspections on the basis of files take place further. The possible outcomes of these are differentiated as follows: conclusion without objections, conclusion with mere deficiencies in the documentation or other minor deficiencies, conclusion with obligations for remedy or conclusion with obligation for withdrawal of the accreditation. Hospitations by persons from the Accreditation Council are also conducted occasionally during onsite visits of the higher education institutions, in the scope of which an assessment of the concrete form of the procedure and the composition of the peers can be made.

The Ministry of Education and Science in Kazakhstan, by which ASIIN is authorised (cf. information on criterion 3.2) expects an annual report in order to review the activities of ASIIN. The authorisation in Kazakhstan is moreover limited to five years and has to be renewed after that.

The authorisation of the European label owners (ENAEE, EQANIE, ECTNA, cf. information on criterion 3.2) is similarly restricted to five years and requires renewal after that period. Observation of ESG is anchored in the standards for authorisation of ENAEE and EQANIE agencies which is verified by the Peer Panels of the networks.

Accreditation/Certification Quality Management Systems (ASIIN and Third Party Seals)

ASIIN has not completed a system accreditation procedure so far, so that an inspection in this regard has not yet taken place. The applicable principles and tools however correspond to those named above.

The authorisation in Austria (cf. information on criterion 3.2 in this regard) is also limited to five years.

Certification of Modules and Courses

Principles and tools beyond those represented above are not implemented with regard to this criterion.

Evaluations for Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Principles and tools beyond those represented above are not implemented with regard to this criterion.

Evidence

- Annex 21 - Erfahrungsbericht_ASIIN_Vorstand_AR_Zeitraum_16.02.2011–31.03.2016 (GAC Board experience report, in German)

- Annex 79 - Authorization_ASIIN_ENAEE_Standards_and_Guidelines_for_Accreditation_Agencies_2008-02-25

- Annex 84 - Admission_ASIIN_ENQA_2014-07-09

- Annex 87 - Authorization_ASIIN_EQANIE_Standards_and_Guidelines_for_Authorisation_of_Agencie_2013-05-24

- Annex 90 - Admission_ASIIN_prolongation_EQAR_2011-11-25

C Self-assessment with regard to observation of supplementary ENQA criteria of the Accreditation Council

C.1 Criteria of the Accreditation Council

The self-assessment is based on the rules for accreditation of agencies (decision by the Accreditation Council dated 8.12.2009 as amended on 10.12.2010). The following overview shows which criteria have already been dealt with in the previous chapters. The overview is oriented on the ESG synopsis created by the Accreditation Council (Drs AR (GAC) 10/2015). Supplementary information – insofar as necessary – is provided afterwards.

Criteria of the GAC	Reference to explanation in section B
2.1. Self-conception and understanding of the accreditation task	
2.1.1 The agency possesses a publicly documented understanding of quality from which it deduces the fundamentals of its accreditation activity. It orients its activity on the objective of increasing quality, while regarding the main responsibility of the higher education institutions for profile and quality of teaching and learning as a basis.	2.2 2.5 3.1 3.7
2.1.2 The agency gives accreditations across higher education institution types and as far as authorisation for programme accreditations is concerned, also across disciplines.	Explanations below
2.1 Structures and procedures	
2.2.1 For authorisation of programme accreditation and/or system accreditation, the agency provides evidence of binding internal structures and procedures, which ensure correct and consistent application of the "Rules of the Accreditation Council for Accreditation of Degree Programmes and for System Accreditation" as amended. Tasks and responsibilities of the organs as well as the allocated personnel are regulated in	2.2 (according to Drs AR (GAC) 10/2015) 2.3 (according to Drs AR (GAC) 10/2015) 2.5 (according to Drs AR

an expedient and legally compliant manner.	(GAC) 10/2015)
2.2.2 The agency involves stakeholders (academia, student body and industry) relevant for task fulfilment.	2.4 (according to Drs AR (GAC) 10/2015)
2.2.3 Competence of all participants involved in procedures with regard to all relevant areas for review procedures of programme accreditation or system accreditation is safeguarded by suitable selection procedures and preparation.	2.4 (according to Drs AR (GAC) 10/2015)
2.2.4 If the agency commissions other organisations with execution of parts of the procedure, it ensures correct performance through reliable regulations and procedures.	See below
2.3 Independence	
2.3.1 The agency has a legal identity of its own.	3.2
2.3.2 It does not operate for profit and conducts accreditation procedures based on full costing.	3.2 3.5
2.3.3 The agency ensures freedom from instruction of the organs on a case-to-case basis and independence and impartiality of persons acting on its behalf.	2.4 2.5 3.3
2.4 Equipment	
As far as staff and facilities are concerned, the agency is equipped in a sustainable and functionally adequate manner.	3.5
2.5 Internal quality management	
The agency uses a continuous formalised internal quality management system which is suitable for evaluation of the effectiveness of internal steering processes and ensures safeguarding and continuous improvement of the quality of the activity. It is publicly accessible and encompasses systematic internal and external feedback processes.	2.6 3.6
2.6. Internal complaints procedure	
The agency possesses a publicly accessible, formalised internal	2.7 (according to Drs AR

procedure for review of accreditation decisions on application by a higher education institution.	(GAC) 10/2015)
2.7 Reporting	
The agency describes its procedures and assessment criteria in adequate detail and publishes them. It publishes the names of the peers, the reports and the decisions of the accreditation procedures conducted by it.	2.5 (according to Drs AR (GAC) 10/2015)

On 2.1.2

According to § 2 of the Statutes of ASIIN, the purpose of the association is formulated as follows:

"(1) Taking into account superordinate requirements of the European Qualifications Framework, the federal legislator, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Accreditation Council, the accreditation agency

a)   defines procedures and criteria for assessment of degree programmes in the engineering sciences, informatics, the natural sciences and mathematics at German higher education institutions. For degree programmes at higher education institutions abroad, the respective nationally applicable, superordinate requirements are taken into account in addition to the European Qualifications Framework.

b)   defines procedures and criteria for assessment of quality management systems at German higher education institutions. For assessment of higher education institutions abroad, the respective nationally applicable, superordinate requirements are taken into account in addition to the European Qualifications Framework.

c)   concludes agreements with other national and international accreditation institutions on collaboration and mutual recognition of accreditation procedures and criteria as well as accredited degree programmes.

All activities of the accreditation agency serve to safeguard and further develop the standards and quality of education. ASIIN accredits degree programmes and quality management systems for this purpose and awards a certificate after successful completion of a procedure."

Evidence

- Annex 67 - ASIIN_By-laws_2012-08-06

On 2.2.4

ASIIN generally conducts accreditation procedures without commissioning other organisations for parts of the procedure. In all cases where ASIIN receives support from other organisations – e.g. within the scope of procurement of specialised peers – the agency assumes responsibility for the entire procedure towards the clients and the German Accreditation Council. Peers obtained by ASIIN through other organisations are appointed as ASIIN peers and are subject to the relevant regulations of the agency considered in the previous sections.

C.2 Procedural rules of the Accreditation Council – experience report

Independent of the criteria for accreditation by agencies, the procedural rules of the Accreditation Council (criterion 1.2) stipulate "additional submission of an experience report on the activity during the expiring accreditation period [...] for a renewed accreditation".

The Accreditation Council first submitted its own experience report on ASIIN for the reporting period 2011–2015.[13] In this, the following points are noted for special attention in the particular reaccreditation procedure:

1. "… will in particular have to consider the question of how the agency implements separation of procedures in practice."
   Status as in December 2015:
   All measures for separation of procedures as of 1.10.2015 presented to the Accreditation Council in August 2015 have been taken. The first step involved the amendment of the standard agenda of the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes for the meeting in December 2015. Since 1.10.2015, other parallel seals are no longer offered in available procedures with the aim of seal award of the Accreditation Council. A number of old contracts have to be processed between 1.10.2015 and (presumably) October 2016. Seal award takes place separately in these, but according to a pattern that was developed before the latest decisions by the Accreditation Council in 2015. The more far-reaching separation is applicable for offers since 1.10.2015. Any subsequent complementary proce-

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[13] Drs. V 40/2015 Accreditation of ASIIN e.V. in 2015–2016, Report on experience in the accreditation period 16.2.2011–31.3.2016, 10.7.2015

dures for other seals can only be offered after publication and registration of out-comes of current GAC Seal procedures. The head office hence expects first com-plementary offers in the new model no earlier than from October 2016 onwards. Practical experience with concrete procedures with regard to the latest separation of seals measures of 2015 is therefore very limited. All in all, the biggest challenge of the head office lies in the future maintenance and handling of the internal da-tabase, with which the various issued seals are managed.

2. "Conclusion drawn by ASIIN from the additional recommendations"

Status as in December 2015:

On Recommendation 1: "The document 'Information for higher education institu-tions – requirements and procedural principles for system accreditation' should specify that a peer from abroad should be included in every system accreditation procedure (criterion 2.2.1)."

→ Processing of this recommendation has taken place. Further information on the status of all criteria documents is provided in section 2.1 of this report.

On Recommendation 2: "ASIIN should include more students in the AC pro-grammes (criterion 2.2.2)."

→ ASIIN continues to cooperate with the Studentischer Akkreditierungspool (Stu-dent Accreditation Pool) to consistently fill committee positions with representa-tives of all status groups. Open positions for students in the former accreditation procedure have been filled in the reporting period. More details on the current status of committee appointments and status group representation in the proce-dures are provided in section 3.5. Appointment of students to permanent posi-tions – similar to other status groups – is generally increasingly difficult, not least because of the relatively large amount of time required for voluntary work on av-erage.

On Recommendation 3: "The agency should check which suitable procedures could be used to improve diversity (experience background, discipline, age, origin and gender). This concerns peers, Technical Committees, committees and em-ployees of the agency itself (criteria 2.2.2)."

→ Details on the current status of development with regard to Recommendation No. 3 can be found in sections 2.4, 3.5 and 3.6 of this report. The subject was also discussed in the course of Strategy Process 2012–2013 in connection with the question regarding special characteristics of a voluntary organisation. ASIIN hence does not understand variety or diversity in the sense of a construct that could be "improved", but as a given complex reality that may be represented in an organi-

sation for better achievement of its objectives. In this context, we understand the above recommendation as a question regarding how the representation of a given diversity can be improved within the work of ASIIN. ASIIN e.V. generally seeks to – a corresponding committee appointment procedure is already demonstrated in the Statutes set down at the foundation of the association – integrate the respective diversity of experiences, interests, subject-specific perspectives of the protagonists acting on its behalf of the quality of academic education in its structures and procedures. For instance, the repeated but never proven accusation made by the ranks of the Accreditation Council, that the subject-specific standards submitted by ASIIN were not based on an adequately broad alliance of relevant national stakeholders, also hit the numerous volunteers from academia, industry and society hard in the reporting period 2011–2015, and gave rise to incomprehension in many internal discussions within the scope of committee meetings and conferences. As explicitly established in Strategy Process 2012–2013, the members of the association and many of the honorary staff consider ASIIN to function primarily as an operative unit in quality assurance and enhancement of academic education. Its membership structure and the linkage of members to other organisations beyond the circle of ASIIN members furthermore offers an virtually unique opportunity to discuss positions, interests, opinions, expectations of the future quality of academic education and the criteria to be developed for this purpose. Diversity or variety is also perceived by ASIIN in this sense, as prescribed by Statutes and strategy and moderated by office and Board.

With regard to diversity of experience background and discipline, procedures and rules for appointment of committee members (documented in the respective public criteria documents) and peers also applied during the reporting period 2011–2015, are considered suitable (by internal assessment) for ensuring a procedural and decision-making practice in the agency supported by relevant expertise and experience. A special challenge in programme accreditation, frequently discussed by ASIIN staff, members of the Technical Committees and the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes between 2011 and 2015, concerned verification of the suitability of Peer Panels (in terms of subject and experience profile) in the course of appointment of a panel by the Commission's Working Group for the appointment of panel members. This takes place relatively late during the procedure process. If only this last check point leads to a change in a Peer Panel, this may mean postponement of an already scheduled onsite visits, which only comes into question as a last resort. At the same time, the Accreditation Commission does not wish to do away with its last control mechanism of the peer appointment,

which cannot however takes place earlier in the procedure. In the reporting period 2011–2015, the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes regularly communicated to the Technical Committees proposing the Peer Panels points that were noticed during final appointment of the Peer Panel and which could be improved. This took place through the respective persons at the commission looking after the Technical Committees and the staff members of the ASIIN office responsible for management of Technical Committees. It generally involved the instruction to a) also keep in mind the intended differentiated subject profile in clusters of programmes even when many peers have to be addressed in order to create a panel at all and that this can result in unintentional "last minute" profile changes in the panel, and b) ensure a good mixture regarding the ages of the peers – with suitability of the discipline taking precedence. In the years 2014–2015 it was repeatedly discussed in the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes how the wealth of experience of retired experts from academia and industry could be obtained in targeted manner to secure the honorary basis of peer and committee work, while at the same time keeping up with the latest developments in the disciplines and higher education. The Accreditation Commission formulated first orientation points for this. The appointment of committee members for instance, not only takes into account the professional situation of a candidate, but also the additional activity profile as well as the network with industry and academia through further positions, publication activities and the like.

ASIIN at the same time has to report that – as also clearly shown in the Strategy Process 2012–2013 especially in the discussion with the member organisations – recruitment difficulties are also getting more pronounced for accreditation activities, having made the work of voluntary organisations in Germany more and more difficult for some years now. Even the founding organisations of ASIIN with many members state that their own traditionally voluntary boards and committees are only very difficult to staff in view of the increasingly intensive involvement of individuals in their full-time time occupations. ASIIN makes every effort to meet this trend with regular invitations to the group of member organisations in faculty and departmental associations. To this end, full-time employees also participate in their meetings, working groups and events in order to acquire new potential voluntary staff, to explain the significance and function of higher education accreditation to mediators and to personally encourage collaboration.

Safeguarding the voluntary basis of ASIIN always includes making the work of this staff as efficient as possible. A license for professional web meetings was for example purchased in the reporting period 2011–2015, which permits virtual meet-

ings of (established) committees and reduces the travelling time of the honorary members.

ASIIN's gender distribution continues to reflects the reality of its academic and professional environment. The typically low proportion of women in technology and the natural sciences can also be observed in the gender-specific committee and peer distribution especially in the area of programme accreditation, where ASIIN is limited to these subjects and its interdisciplinary combinations. A uniform gender distribution is generally taken into account in the employment policy of new full-time ASIIN employees, although professional suitability and experience are primary criteria governing the decision whether a person is employed or not. It was nevertheless possible to increase the percentage of women on ASIIN committees to about 20% on average during the reporting period 2011–2015.

On Recommendation 4: "It should, as announced in the application documents of the agency, also be binding for the Accreditation Commission for Quality Management Systems that members of the Accreditation Commission who were active as peers in a procedure are excluded from the vote on this procedure (criterion 2.3.3)."

→ The recommendation was implemented. Details on the current status of development can be found in section 2.3 and 2.5.

On Recommendation 5: "In the next assessment of effectiveness of the internal quality management system, the relationship of all individual quality assurance measures and the consequences resulting from the outcome should be checked (criterion 2.5)."

→ The current state of development of the quality management system of ASIIN is evident from the explanations in section 3.6. Further developments implemented or initiated in the reporting period 2011–2015 should also increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the tools implemented. This implies that quality should be achieved and promoted with the least possible expenditure. Further development of quality management at ASIIN does not however primarily require a system – separated from daily work processes – to make a "good" impression. Instead, the various tools used every day and in the agency's processes should be effective, ensuring and enhancing quality wherever necessary.

On Recommendation 6: "It is recommended to jointly discuss the evaluation outcomes with peers, Technical Committees and staff in order to initiate a quality management process."

→ Handling of peer and client surveys in the reporting period 2011–2015 is explained in detail in section 3.6.

3. "Follow-up of ENQA and EQAR decisions"

   Status as in December 2015:

   ENQA: As requested in the reporting period 2011–2015, ASIIN submitted an in-terim report on 4 recommendations with regard to independence of peers, mem-bership of students in all Technical Committees, deletion of curricular overviews in the Subject-Specific Criteria, deletion of the obligation to clarify deviations of the higher education institutions, voting modalities for members of the Accreditation Commission for Quality Management Systems). This report was accepted by ENQA.

   EQAR: The decision by EQAR regarding the registration of ASIIN was made without so-called flagged issues for the reporting period 2011–2015. A special follow-up of the decision was not required.

4. "Outcomes of the agency-internal complaints procedure"

   Status as in December 2015:

   Status of development of the agency-internal complaints procedure and its out-comes are reflected in section 2.7 of this report.

5. "Balance between efficiency and case-specific assessment of degree programmes"

   Status as in December 2015:

   In section 2.6 of this report, developments with regard to reporting and the asso-ciated templates are stated as a basis for assessment in programme accreditation for the reporting period 2011–2015. Section 2.2 and 2.3 provide information about the way the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes works and the aids used for this purpose. It can be recognised in the quality management approach of ASIIN (section 3.6) that aspired internal quality parameters include an appropriate and always criteria-based decision on the award of a seal as well as high procedural efficiency and comparability of decisions. The comments with re-gard to a certain degree of standardisation of reporting at ASIIN in programme ac-creditation resulting from the random monitoring samples of the Accreditation Commission was repeatedly deliberated in the regular QM meeting of the full-time Project Managers as well as in the preparative meetings of the Executive Board of the Accreditation Commission and in the meetings of the entire commis-sion. It became clear in the process that a certain degree of standardisation in the sense of procedural efficiency and comparability of decisions is a desirable out-come. From an internal point of view, the concern about a resulting structural

weakness with regard to an adequate appraisal of each individual case cannot be confirmed. Measures in particular for identification of special features in individual programme accreditation procedures and decision cases in the reporting period 2011–2015 were nevertheless increased. Since 2011, a special internal preparative meeting of the Project Managers takes place on a regular basis before dispatching the documents relating to a meeting of the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes. In this, the entire guideline for the imminent commission is worked through and cases with special features are discussed/acknowledged by all full-time employees so that every full-time employee is able (if necessary) to report the special aspects of an individual case and to point these out to the commission in the course of later meetings.

6. "Processes for registration in the database of accredited degree programme"
    Status as in December 2015:
    After completion by the respective Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes (by quarter), the responsible full-time employee commences with administration of the outcome, which is steered by a so-called follow-up list. The accredited degree programmes are first entered in a internal ASIIN database, from which a data sheet for the HRK database (= accredited degree programme database) is generated. Data are then transferred to the HRK database by copying them manually (manual due to the nature of the target database). The ASIIN database is harmonised with the HRK database for this purpose. This ensures unproblematic entry of data sets in the HRK database as well as offering an opportunity to assign the HRK and ASIIN data sets to each other. In line with internal requirements, all accredited degree programmes are registered in the ASIIN and HRK databases within three months (of the next meeting of the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes). Experience has shown that a period of three months is required on account of the large number of cases in this service area, particularly since registrations are not made within the first six weeks after the meeting of the commission. The office requires a period of about two to three weeks for creation and approval of the minutes as well the documents for the applicant (final reports, notices of decision, certificates) until they are ready for dispatch. The four-week period during which higher education institutions can file a complaint commences after receipt of these documents. It would not be legitimate to publish not yet definitive decisions before the end of this period. The internal processes for registration of data could be accelerated by provision of an ID-based search and filter option in the HRK database to allow unambiguous allo-

cation of datasets without time losses on account of erroneous degree programme name searches.

Further ASIIN experience regarding individual criteria for (re(accreditation) of agencies (decision by the Accreditation Council dated 8.12.2009 as amended on 10.12.2010) in the reporting period 2011–2015 is largely contained in the preceding section B. Allocation of the criteria of the Accreditation Council relating to the chapters of section B is shown in the table above.

Evidence

- Annex 20 - Datenbank_Studiengänge_Schnittstelle_ASIIN-HRK_2015-12 (interface database, in German)
- Annex 66 - QM_03QMPol-QM-Handbuch_ASIIN_eV_2011-10-27_FORTSCHREIBUNG_2015-11-21 (quality management handbook, in German)
- Annex 67 - ASIIN_By-laws_2012-08-06
- Annex 68 - Siegelbeschluss_ASIIN_Entscheidung_AK_2015-06-25+26 (decision AC separation of seals, in German)
- Annex 69 - Siegeltrennung_ASIIN_Übersicht_2015-06-03 (overview separation of seals, in German)
- Annex 78 - Vorlage_Zeitplan+Nachbereitung_AK_(Monat)_(Jahr)_201x-xx-xx_AB DEZ-AK 2015 (template for postprocessing of AC meeting, in German)
- Annex 84 - Admission_ASIIN_ENQA_2014-07-09

D Self-assessment with regard to observation of supplementary ENQA criteria

ENQA criterion 8 - Consistency of judgements, appeals system and contribution to ENQA

i. The agency pays careful attention to its declared principles at all times, and ensures both that its requirements and processes are managed professionally and that its judgements and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even if the judgements are formed by different groups.

ii. If the agency makes formal quality assurance decisions, or conclusions which have formal consequences, it should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of the agency.

iii. The agency is willing to contribute actively to the aims of ENQA.

Principles and tools of ASIIN approach

On i. Detailed explanations with regard to ensuring consistency of decisions and observation of all procedural principles as well as the self-formulated quality expectations can be found in the section on criterion 2.5.

On ii. The complaints procedure is explained under criterion 2.7.

On iii. Members of the head office have participated in the ENQA Working Group *Quality Assurance in Lifelong Learning* and the *IQA Steering Group,* as well as run for a membership on the ENQA Board and submitted proposals for workshops within the scope of EQAF. Numerous members of the office also took part in ENQA peer training sessions and/or participated as peers in ENQA review procedures. There is a continuous willingness to support and actively participate in ENQA-coordinated activities.

Product-specific approach

Principles and tools beyond those represented above are not implemented for this criterion.

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Annex 1 - 0._Accreditation_with_ASIIN_-_Degree Pro-
gramme s_Institutions_and_Systems_2015-06-26

Annex 2 - 0.1_Kriterien_fuer_die_Programmakkreditierung_2014-12-04, in German

Annex 3 - 0.2_Kriterien_fuer_die_Systemakkreditierung_2015-12-03, in German

Annex 4 - 0.3_Criteria_for_the_Accrediation_of_Degree_Programmes_2015-12-10

Annex 5 -
0.4_Institutional_Accreditation_Evaluation_Criteria_for_the_ASIIN_System_Seal_2016-
06-20

Annex 6 - Standards_for_the_Certification_of_Further_Education_and_Training_2015-12-
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Annex 7 - Sample Agenda Onsite Visit HS Programme jjjj

Annex 8 - AGB-GTC ASIIN e V english as of 2015-10-01 - Kopie

Annex 9 - Amtlicher_Handelsregisterauszug_der_ASIIN_GmbH_2014-05-12, in German

Annex 10 - Amtlicher_Vereinsregisterauszug_der_ASIIN_2015-02-20, in German

Annex 11 - Anpassung_Weiterentwicklung_Portfolio_2013-04-25, in German

Annex 12 - 01 GAC programme seal report template 2016-02-05 ENG

Annex 13 - 03 ASIIN programme seal report template 2016-02-05 ENG

Annex 14 - ASIIN Vorlage Bericht Systemakkreditierung AR 2014-12-10, in German

Annex 15 - EN ASIIN certification report HS Studiengang 2014-05-19

Annex 16 - Bilanz_ASIIN_2014, in German

Annex 17 - ASIIN Checklist programmes english 20150310

Annex 18 - Checkliste_Siegel_des_Akkreditierungsrates_Programmakkreditierung_2014-
12-04, in German

Annex 19 - Checkliste_Siegel_des_Akkreditierungsrates_Systemakkreditierung_2014-01-
27, in German

Annex 20 - Datenbank_Studiengänge_Schnittstelle_ASIIN-HRK_2015-12, in German

Annex 21 - Erfahrungsbericht_ASIIN_Vorstand_AR_Zeitraum_16.02.2011–31.03.2016, in German

Annex 22 - ESG_ASIIN_Aequivalenz_zu_Kriterien_zur_Akkreditierung_von_Agenturen_2015, in German

Annex 23 - ASIIN_TC_01_Mechanical_Engineering_and_Process_Engineering_2011-12-09

Annex 24 - ASIIN_TC_02_Electrical_Engineering_and_Information_Technology_2011-12-09

Annex 25 - ASIIN_TC_03_Civil_Engineering_Surveying_and_Architecture_2012-09-28

Annex 26 - ASIIN_TC_04_Informatics_2011-12-09

Annex 27 - ASIIN_TC_05_Physical_Technologies_Materials_and_Processes_2011-12-09

Annex 28 - ASIIN_TC_06_Industrial_Engineering_2011-12-09

Annex 29 - FEH_ASIIN_07_Wirtschaftsinformatik_2011-12-09, in German

Annex 30 - ASIIN_TC_08_Agronomy_Nutrition_Science_Landscape_Architecture_2015-03-27

Annex 31 - ASIIN_TC_09_Chemistry_2011-12-09

Annex 32 - ASIIN_TC_10_Life_Sciences_2011-12-09

Annex 33 - ASIIN_TC_11_Geosciences_2011-12-09

Annex 34 - ASIIN_TC_12_Mathematics_2011-12-09

Annex 35 - ASIIN_TC_13_Physics_2011-12-09

Annex 36 - FEH_ASIIN_Lehramt_2011-12-09, in German

Annex 37 - Freistellung_Finanzamt-DUS_2015-07.23, in German

Annex 38 - Geschaeftsordnung_ASIIN_AK_Programme_2009-12-15, in German

Annex 39 - Geschaeftsordnung_ASIIN_AK_Systeme_2014-03-20, in German

Annex 40 - Geschaeftsordnung_ASIIN_Fachausschuesse_2010-12-01, in German

Annex 41 - Geschaeftsordnung_ASIIN_Zertifizierungsausschuss_2011-07-27, in German

Annex 42 - Geschäftsordnung_ASIIN_AK-Systeme_2014-03-20, in German

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Annex 44 - Gremientagung_ASIIN_Programm_2011-11-18, in German

Annex 45 - Gremien-und_Mitgliedertagung_ASIIN_Programm_2014-11-13+14, in German

Annex 46 - 03QMPol-[xxx]-jjjj-mm-tt Policy-VORLAGE, in German

Annex 47 - Gutachterschulung_Ablauf_AT_2015-10-02, in German

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Annex 49 - Gutachter-Schulungen_ASIIN_Terminliste_2011-2015, in German

Annex 50 - Agreement for Peers 2014-12-09, in German

Annex 51 - Kalkulation_ASIIN_Programmverfahren_2015-12-07, in German

Annex 52 - Kalkulation_ASIIN_Systemverfahren_2014-07-14, in German

Annex 53 - Kalkulation_ASIIN_Zertifizierung_2013-08-07, in German

Annex 54 - Kunden-und_Gutachterumfrage_ASIIN_Ergebnisse_2012-2014, in German

Annex 55 - Leitfaden_AR-Siegel_Programme_Selbstbewertung_2014-12-04, in German

Annex 56 - ASIIN Template for Self-Assessment Report System-Seal 2013-09-30

Annex 57 - ASIIN Template for Self-Assessment Report 2015-06-26

Annex 58 - ASIIN Template for Self-Assessment Report Certification 2013-12-18

Annex 59 - QM_01QMÜber-Auszug_Strategiepapier_Überzeugung_2014-04-29, in German

Annex 60 - QM_03_Grundsatzpapier_Ethische_Fragen_2015-11-25, in German

Annex 61 - QM_03QMPol-gutachtenstandards_agenturen_130312, in German

Annex 62 - QM_03QMPol-PUBLIC_Grundsatzpapier_BeratungAkkreditierung_2015-11-20, in German

Annex 63 - QM_04QMProz 2.6.1_Durchf_u_Auswertung_Kunden-und_Gutachterumfrage, in German

Annex 64 - QM_05QMProz_EinführungswocheEinarbeitung_neue_Mitarbeiter_2015-09-10, in German

Annex 65 - QM_06QMV Vorlage_Ergebnisvermerk Jour Fix_201x-xx-xx, in German

Annex 66 - QM_03QMPol-QM-Handbuch_ASIIN_eV_2011-10-27_FORTSCHREIBUNG_2015-11-21, in German

Annex 67 - ASIIN_By-laws_2012-08-06

Annex 68 - Siegelbeschluss_ASIIN_Entscheidung_AK_2015-06-25+26, in German

Annex 69 - Siegeltrennung_ASIIN_Übersicht_2015-06-03

Annex 70 - Standards_fuer_Gutachten_in_Akkreditierungsverfahren_Agenturen_2013-03-13, in German

Annex 71 - Steuer_ASIIN_Finanzamt_2015-07-23, in German

Annex 72 - Strategieprozess_ASIIN_Übersicht_2013-05-16, in German

Annex 73 - Umfrage_ASIIN_Gutachter_ab_2015, in German

Annex 74 - Umfrage_ASIIN_Kunden_ab_2015, in German

Annex 75 - Vorlage_Beschluss_AR_Akkreditierung_Programme , in German

Annex 76 - Vorlage_Beschluss_ASIIN_Akkreditierung_Programme , in German

Annex 77 - Vorlage_Ergebnisvermerk_2015-12-02, in German

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Annex 79 - Authorization_ASIIN_ENAEE_Standards_and_Guidelines_for_Accreditation_Agencies_2008-02-25

Annex 80 - Zulassung_ASIIN_AR_2012-11-29, in German

Annex 81 - Authorization_ASIIN_ENAEE_2015-06-23

Annex 82 - Authorization_ASIIN_ENAEE_mutual_recognition_EUC-ACE_2014-11-19

Annex 83 - Admission_ASIIN_ENQA_2012-02-24

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Annex 85 - Admission_ASIIN_ENQA-Interim-Report-membership_2014-04-15

Annex 86 - Authorization_ASIIN_EQANIE_2011-04-13

Annex 87 - Authorization_ASIIN_EQANIE_Standards_and_Guidelines_for_Authorisation_of_Agencie_2013-05-24

Annex 88 - Authorization_ASIIN_Eurobachelor_Euromaster_Contract_04-26-2015

Annex 89 - Admission_ASIIN_Kazakhstan_2012-07-05

Annex 90 - Admission_ASIIN_prolongation_EQAR_2011-11-25

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F List of abbreviations

CEENQA Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

ECTNA European Chemistry Thematic Network Association

ENAEE European Network for the Accreditation of Engineering Education

ENQA European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

EQANIE European Quality Assurance Network for Informatics Education e.V.

EQAR European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education

ESG Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

SSC Subject-Specific Criteria

PICQA Promoting Internationalisation and Comparability of Quality Assurance in Higher Education [TEMPUS Project]