

**Approval of the Application
by Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance
Institute (ACQUIN)
for Renewal of Inclusion on the Register**

Register Committee
22 September 2026

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Application of:	2025-03-14		
Agency registered since:	2008-03-04		
Type of review:	Targeted	Site visit:	2025-12-05
External review report of:	2026-06-26	Submitted:	2026-07-06
Review coordinated by:	European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ENQA)		
Review panel members:	Achim Hopbach, Eva Fernández de Labastida, Krzysztof Kozłowski, Topias Tolonen.		
Decision of:	2026-09-22		
Registration until:	2026-06-30		
Absented themselves from decision-making:	Liv Teresa Muth		
Attachments:	1. External Review Report, 2026-06-26		

1. The application of 2025-03-14 adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee confirmed eligibility of the application on 2025-05-08.
3. The Register Committee considered the targeted external review report of 2026-06-26 on the compliance of ACQUIN with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015 version).

Analysis:

4. In considering ACQUIN's compliance with the ESG, the Register Committee took into account the following activities:
 - Programme accreditation in Germany
 - System accreditation in Germany
 - Joint programme accreditation
 - Programme accreditation abroad
 - Institutional accreditation abroad

- Certification procedures in Germany and abroad
- Certification of further education offers that are part of higher education

5. The following activities are not within the scope of the ESG and, thus, not pertinent to the application for inclusion on the Register:

- Consulting and Services
- Participation in EU Erasmus+ projects

6. The Register Committee found that the report provides sufficient evidence and analysis on ACQUIN's level of compliance with the ESG.

7. With regard to the specific European Standards, the Register Committee considered the following:

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ESG 2.4 – Peer-review experts

8. In its last decision for renewal of registration on EQAR (of 2021-12-13), the Register Committee found the agency partially compliant with the standard due to insufficient mechanisms for ensuring the competence of review panel members.

9. The Register Committee noted that since the last review the agency has introduced a general voluntary online training seminar and continues to organise briefing activities for experts involved in reviews outside Germany. The Committee, however, also learned from the report that no mandatory or procedure-specific training had been introduced for procedures in Germany, and that the agency continues to significantly rely on previously accumulated experience of experts, self-study of review materials, and preparatory briefings.

10. Considering that the agency has made tangible progress in expanding its expert training procedures, **the Register Committee was able to concur with the panel's conclusion and found that the agency complies with ESG 2.4.** The Committee nevertheless shared the panel's concerns regarding the limited and voluntary nature of the agency's training of experts, particularly for procedures conducted in Germany, and underlined the panel's recommendation to introduce more systematic and procedure-specific training for experts and clarify the principles for selection of experts.

ESG 3.1 – Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

11. In its last decision for renewal of registration on EQAR (of 2021-12-13), the Register Committee found the agency partially compliant with the standard due to concerns regarding stakeholder involvement in the agency's governance and the necessity for better defined goals and objectives that will effectively translate into the work plans of the agency.

12. The Register Committee learned from the review report that, since the previous review, the agency has addressed the need to better define goals and objectives by strengthening its strategic planning framework. In panel's view,

the Strategic Plan defines the agency's mission, vision and strategic objectives and provides a clearer framework for the agency's activities and development.

13. The Register Committee noted that stakeholders continue to be involved in the agency's activities, as well as technical and expert bodies such as the Complaints and Appeals Commission and the Accreditation Commission. At the same time, the Committee understood that with regards to governance bodies such as the General Assembly and the Executive Board, not all relevant stakeholders are involved. For example, students are not members of these governance bodies.

14. The Register Committee further learned from the review report that the agency has established principles intended to ensure a separation between external quality assurance activities and consultancy services, but that the practical operation and public communication of this separation is not fully transparent.

15. Considering the continuing lack of student representation in the agency's governance bodies and the limited transparency regarding the separation between consultancy and external quality assurance activities, **the Register Committee was unable to concur with the panel's conclusion and found that the agency complies only partially with ESG 3.1.**

ESG 3.4 – Thematic analysis

16. In its last decision for renewal of registration on EQAR (of 2021-12-13), the Register Committee found the agency partially compliant with the standard due to the limited development of thematic analyses and the lack of evidence demonstrating that such analyses were systematically produced on the basis of the agency's external quality assurance activities.

17. The Register Committee learned from the review report that thematic analysis has been incorporated into the agency's Strategic Plan 2024-2029 and that organisational changes have been introduced to support this area of work. The Committee further learned that several thematic analysis projects are currently under development.

18. The Register Committee welcomed the agency's efforts to strengthen its approach to thematic analysis and noted evidence of growing activity in this area. At the same time, the Committee learned that, since the previous review, the agency has published only one thematic analysis making it impossible to verify that the thematic analysis is being conducted regularly, i.e. on a cyclical basis.

19. While acknowledging the agency's commitment to developing its thematic analysis function, due to limited evidence of thematic analyses being conducted and published on a regular basis, **the Register Committee was unable to concur with the panel's conclusion and found that the agency complies only partially with ESG 3.4.**

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ESG 3.6 – Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

20. In its last decision for renewal of registration on EQAR (of 2021-12-13), the Register Committee found the agency partially compliant with the standard due to the need for a more structured management of the professional development of the staff and the lack of a comprehensive response to the issues raised in the previous external reviews.

21. Since the last review, the agency has introduced organisational changes, such as establishing an Internal Quality Development (IQD) organisational area, that strengthened its internal quality assurance arrangements. The Register Committee, however, learned that the agency has not yet established a formal staff development policy and that professional development continues to rely largely on demand-driven initiatives.

22. The Register Committee considered that the agency has managed to address a number of recommendations of the last review, indicating a strengthened PDCA loop employed by the internal quality assurance of the agency.

23. Considering that the agency has made tangible progress in strengthening its internal quality assurance arrangements, **the Register Committee was able to concur with the panel's conclusion and found that the agency complies with ESG 3.6.** The Committee nevertheless highlighted the panel's recommendation to further formalise and systematise its approach to staff development and emphasised that the remaining shortcomings identified in external reviews of the agency should be addressed.

24. For the remaining standard included in the review (ESG 2.1), the Register Committee noted that no substantial changes had been introduced to the agency's methodologies since the previous review and was therefore able to concur with the review panel's analysis and conclusion without further comments.

Conclusion:

25. Based on the external review report and the considerations above, the Register Committee concluded that ACQUIN demonstrated compliance with the ESG (Parts 2 and 3) as follows:

Standard	Previous decision (2021-12-13)	Review panel conclusion	Register Committee conclusion
2.1	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.2	Compliance	<i>Inherited</i>	<i>Inherited</i>
2.3	Compliance	<i>Inherited</i>	Compliance
2.4	Partial compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.5	Compliance	<i>Inherited</i>	<i>Inherited</i>
2.6	Compliance	<i>Inherited</i>	<i>Inherited</i>
2.7	Compliance	<i>Inherited</i>	<i>Inherited</i>

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3.1	Partial compliance	Compliance	Partial compliance
3.2	Compliance	<i>Inherited</i>	<i>Inherited</i>
3.3	Compliance	<i>Inherited</i>	<i>Inherited</i>
3.4	Partial compliance	Compliance	Partial compliance
3.5	Compliance	<i>Inherited</i>	<i>Inherited</i>
3.6	Partial compliance	Compliance	Compliance
3.7	Compliance	(not expected)	Compliance (by virtue of applying)

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26. The Register Committee considered that ACQUIN only achieved partial compliance with some standards. In its holistic judgement, the Register Committee concluded that these are specific and limited issues, but that ACQUIN continues to comply substantially with the ESG as a whole.

27. The Register Committee therefore renewed ACQUIN's inclusion on the Register. ACQUIN's renewed inclusion shall be valid until 2031-06-30.

28. The Register Committee further underlined that ACQUIN is expected to address the issues mentioned appropriately and to resolve them at the earliest opportunity.