

Substantive Change Report
by Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study
Programmes (AQAS)

Register Committee

Ref. RC30/C62

Ver. 1.0

Date 02/07/2021

Page 1 / 2

Decision of:	02/07/2021
Report received on:	07/06/2021
Agency registered since:	25/05/2010
Last external review report:	January 2017
Registration until:	31/01/2022
Absented themselves from decision-making:	n/a
Attachments:	1. Substantive Change Report 2. Clarification response of 18/06/2021

1. The Register Committee considered the Substantive Change Report of 07/06/2021. The Register Committee sought and received clarification from AQAS on certain matters on 18/06/2021.
2. The Register Committee took note of the introduction of PhD accreditation in Germany. This is a voluntary accreditation offered to PhD programmes since 2014, as their accreditation is not mandatory and not within the scope of applicability of the Interstate Study Accreditation Treaty and its subsidiary Specimen Decree (MRVO).
3. The report was not fully clear as to the procedures and criteria AQAS employs, as it stated that these procedures either “follow the procedures implemented for international programme accreditation or – if requested – the MRVO”.
4. AQAS clarified that the procedures for international programme accreditation were used in Germany *previously*, together with a specific set of criteria. *Currently*, AQAS offered PhD programme accreditation in Germany only based on the MRVO procedures and criteria.
5. Based on the information provided, the Register Committee had no major concerns that the ESG are complied overall, but made the following observations:

ESG 2.1 – Consideration of internal quality assurance

6. AQAS stated that all its criteria referred to the ESG.
7. The specific criteria for PhD programmes, which were used previously, were available in German only. The alignment with ESG Part 1 could

thus not be assessed, but the Committee concluded this was no longer of major relevance as these criteria are no longer used.

8. The MRVO criteria are generally aligned with the ESG, as established through various Substantive Change Reports (including by AQAS) when the Interstate Treaty and MRVO entered into force.

Register Committee

Ref. RC30/C62

Ver. 1.0

Date 02/07/2021

Page 2 / 2

ESG 2.2 – Designing methodologies fit for purpose

9. The MRVO was initially developed for Bachelor and Master programmes, and is formally applicable only to those. It also contains various specific regulations for Bachelor and Master programmes and was not specifically meant to be used for PhD programmes.
10. The Register Committee wondered whether it was fit for purpose to use the MRVO criteria for PhD programmes. Assessing this would, however, be beyond the scope of the Substantive Change Report process.
11. The Register Committee therefore expects that the ongoing external review of AQAS give attention to that matter.

ESG 2.4 – Peer-review experts

12. A student expert was part of the panel in 4 out of 5 procedures carried out previously. These were combined accreditations of a PhD programme together with some Bachelor or Master programmes.
13. As the panel of the only separate PhD programme accreditation¹ did not include a student member, the Register Committee underlined the ESG requirement that all review panels must include a student member.

ESG 3.4 – Thematic analysis

ESG 3.6 – Internal quality assurance and professional conduct

14. The report contained no specific information on these matters. The Register Committee underlined that the upcoming external review should also bear in mind PhD accreditations in Germany under these two standards.
15. Further to these remarks, the Register Committee expects that the activity will be analysed in full as part of AQAS' ongoing review for renewal of registration.

¹ https://www.aqas.de/downloads/Gutachten/Sonstige/29_324_Dr_Diak.pdf

EQAR Substantive Change Report

Agency #1	Agentur für Qualitätssicherung durch Akkreditierung von Studiengängen e.V.
Agency acronym	AQAS
Expiry date #1	31/01/2022
Contact #1	Doris Herrmann
Other organisations?	No
A. Has the organisational identity of the registered agency changed?	No
B. Has the organisational structure changed?	No
Changes in EQA activities	1. One or several new external QA activities were introduced
Description new/changed	<p>AQAS offers accreditation procedures for PhD study programmes at German Universities since 2014.</p> <p>Either these procedures follow the procedures implemented for international programme accreditation or - if requested - the MRVO (Musterrechtsverordnung - Interstate Study Accreditation Treaty).</p> <p>AQAS offered accreditation procedures for five PhD study programmes in Germany so far. All reports are published on the AQAS' website (see below).</p>
1. New EQA activity:	
1	PhD accreditation in Germany
Focus	study programmes or higher education institutions

ESG 2.1		All criteria used by AQAS – the criteria developed to assess PhD-programmes on a national or international level – refer to the ESG. If a university requests to be assessed on the basis of the Musterrechtsverordnung (MRVO) the same is applicable because the MRVO is interlinked with the ESG.
ESG 2.2		The assessment procedure follows the same process like the national/international programme accreditations. Some specific criteria for PhD-programmes, focussing on research, resources and consultancy have been added which is the only difference. Stakeholders are involved because the AQAS criteria have been discussed with our commission and with the different panels of experts which provided feedback.
ESG 2.3		
1		The procedure is specified in the MRVO (https://www.akkreditierungsrat.de/sites/default/files/downloads/2021/161208_Studienakkreditierungsstaatsvertrag_mit%20Begrueundung_Englisch.pdf)
ESG 2.3		Site visits are part of all assessments of PhD programmes.
ESG 2.4		The composition, selection, appointment and training of reviewers follows the same procedures and principles like a national/international programme accreditation.
ESG 2.5		The procedures follow the same principles and procedures like a national/international programme accreditation (MRVO). In former times the AQAS-criteria used for PhD followed the ESG plus some criteria on research, staffing, resources, consultancy (see published reports).
ESG 2.6		
1		https://www.aqas.de/downloads/Gutachten/Sonstige/57_337_LA.pdf

2	https://www.aqas.de/downloads/Gutachten/Sonstige/56_339_LA.pdf
3	https://www.aqas.de/downloads/Gutachten/Sonstige/55_336_Pol.pdf
4	https://www.aqas.de/downloads/Gutachten/Sonstige/57_339_Psy.pdf
5	https://www.aqas.de/downloads/Gutachten/Sonstige/29_324_Dr_Diak.pdf
ESG 2.7	The procedures follow the same principles and procedures like a national/international programme accreditation.
ESG 3.4/ESG 3.6	The procedures follow the same principles and procedures like a national/international programme accreditation.
D. Activity outside the scope of the ESG	No
File #1	161208_Studienakkreditierungsstaatsvertrag_mit_Begrueundung_Englisch.pdf (206k)

Substantive Change Report by Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes (AQAS)

Minutes of Telephone Conversation

Register Committee

Ref. C62
Date 2021-06-25
Page 1 / 1

Date of the conversation:	18/06/2021
Representative of AQAS:	Doris Herrmann
Representative of EQAR:	Colin Tück

1. AQAS has made a Substantive Change Report on 07/06/2021. In order to prepare the deliberations of the Register Committee on the report, EQAR contacted AQAS via telephone to clarify the matter(s) below.
2. AQAS agreed to clarify the matter(s) by means of a telephone conversation.
3. The Substantive Change Report suggested that in former times the AQAS' PhD reviews in Germany were based on the same procedures like for regular programme accreditation. Since its introduction they follow the MRVO (Musterrechtsverordnung¹).
4. In the past, AQAS used an own and specific set of criteria for PhD programmes. This is no longer published as its use is no longer offered, but it is attached to the present notes.
5. Currently, AQAS only offers PhD programme accreditation based on the MRVO procedure.
6. The MRVO generally covers study programmes at Bachelor and Master level. Due to the fact that there are no national criteria for PhD programmes in Germany, AQAS decided to use the MRVO procedure and criteria – on a voluntary basis – for these assessments.
7. The aim of using the MRVO is to increase comparability with AQAS' assessments of Bachelor/Master programmes. This was a response to expectations raised by higher education institutions, who wished that the assessments of their PhD programmes are accepted on the national level.
8. AQAS uses the general criteria for study programmes defined in the MRVO directly; there are no additions or specifications for PhD programmes.

¹ See <https://www.akkreditierungsrat.de/de/media/152>, also available from AQAS website