

Substantive Change Report
by Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute
(ACQUIN)

Register Committee

Ref. RC24/C40

Ver. 1.0

Date 3/7/2019

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| Decision of: | 19/06/2019 |
| Report received on: | 23/05/2019 |
| Agency registered since: | 08/04/2009 |
| Last external review report: | 02/06/2016 |
| Registration until: | 30/06/2021 |
| Absented themselves from decision-making: | n/a |
| Attachments: | 1. Substantive Change Report 2. Request of 29/04/2019 |

1. The Register Committee considered the Substantive Change Report of 23/05/2019 in response to its request of 29/4/2019 and thanked ACQUIN for responding to the specific questions raised in its request.
2. The Register Committee took note of the changes brought about by the [Interstate Treaty](#) between the German federal states, which entered into force in 2018, and the related [Specimen Decree](#). The main change lies in the fact that – for accreditation in Germany – ACQUIN no longer takes accreditation decisions itself, but prepares an assessment report on the basis of which the German Accreditation Council (GAC) takes a decision; the way in which ACQUIN carries out these assessments remains largely similar to the pre-2018 system.
3. The Register Committee underlined that agencies themselves remain responsible for the alignment of their activities with the ESG, even if they work based on third-party processes and criteria. As an EQAR-registered agency it is ACQUIN's responsibility to assure itself that the frameworks under which it decides to operate are compatible with the ESG.
4. The Register Committee took note of the fact that ACQUIN applies the criteria as set out in the Specimen Decree, which replace the accreditation criteria previously set by GAC.
5. The Committee thanked ACQUIN for enclosing the mapping table elaborated by the GAC, which illustrates how the criteria correspond to Part 1 of the ESG.
6. The Register Committee noted that ACQUIN did not change its practice as regards site visits.

7. The Register Committee noted that no final details on follow-up processes could be provided to date, but understood that the GAC is likely to have a role in the follow-up processes. The Committee underlined that ACQUIN retains responsibility for follow-up to take place, even if GAC makes accreditation decisions. This does not exclude that GAC actually implements the follow-up processes, as long as ACQUIN has assured itself that this indeed happens.
8. The Register Committee expects that the interaction between GAC and ACQUIN, and their respective roles in the follow-up process, will be analysed in the next external review of ACQUIN.
9. The Register Committee noted that ACQUIN did not change the composition, selection and appointment of review panels, as its established practice is in line with the nomination procedure adopted by the German Rectors' Conference (HRK).
10. The Register Committee noted that ACQUIN did not change the way in which it assures consistency of reports and continues to rely on the existing committees/working structures in that regard.
11. The Committee nevertheless underlined that the next external review of ACQUIN should analyse whether the new arrangements had any impact on the consistency of applying the accreditation criteria.
12. The Register Committee noted that ACQUIN continues to publish the full expert reports on its own website, in addition to the report being published by GAC together with its eventual decision. ACQUIN thus discharges its responsibility to ensure that all its reports are published and the Committee welcomed that commitment to transparency.
13. The Register Committee noted that ACQUIN's appeals procedures were not changed. The Committee understood that institutions thus retain the possibility to both complain about procedural errors, etc., or to appeal the report, i.e. specific statements or conclusions in the report.

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Betreff: Substantive Change Report: ACQUIN

Von: "handke at acquin.org" <form_engine@fs22.formsite.com>

Datum: 23.05.19, 15:19

An: substantive-changes@eqar.eu

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| Reference # | 15757435 |
| Status | Complete |
| Login Username | ACQUIN |
| Login Email | handke@acquin.org |
| Agency #1 | ACQUIN |
| Expiry date #1 | 30/06/2021 |
| Contact #1 | Stefan Handke |
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| Email #1 | handke@acquin.org |
| Other organisations? | No |
| A. Has the organisational identity of the registered agency changed? | No |
| B. Has the organisational structure changed? | No |
| C.i. Are there new types of activities? | No |
| C.ii. Are there changes in existing activities? | Yes |
| C.iii. Have some or all existing activities been discontinued? | No |
| Description new/changed | <p>1. Changes in the accreditation criteria and refelction of ESG 1.1 –1.10 in the new criteria:</p> <p>The new German regulations fully incorporate the ESG. Therefore, all kinds of assessment procedures in Germany, which follow the regulations of Interstate Treaty and Specimen Decree, are in compliance with ESG 1.1 –1.10. (see Interstate Treaty: I. General; see also Annex II: Comparison of the GAC). ACQUIN's procedure abroad directly apply the ESG 1.1 –1.10 as assessment criteria, see as example Annex I: Guidelines Institutional Accreditation.</p> |

2. Did ACQUIN change its approach to ensuring consistency (ESG 2.5)?:
ACQUIN did not change its approach to ensure consistency, even if, due to the legal changes in the German accreditation system, the agency does not take any final accreditation decision in procedures under German law.

3. Changes of composition, selection and appointment of review panels?_
ACQUIN did not change the procedure of composition, selection and appointment of review panels. The established procedure of nomination of peers by the nine standing expert committees of the agency remained. The new guidelines of the German Rectors' Conference (based on Art 3 (3) of the Treaty and § 25 (4) of the Specimen Decree are fully in line with ACQUINs established procedures.

4. Does the new legal framework lead to any changes as regards the use of site visits (ESG 2.3), the publication of reports (ESG 2.6) and follow-up processes (ESG 2.3)?

The new framework leads to changes in regard to the follow-up processes (ESG 2.3).

The Interstate Treaty and the specimen decree do not provide any information about the follow-up process. Since agencies are not allowed to deviate with their procedures from these regulations, it depends on the further development of the new accreditation system and the dialogue between the GAC and the agencies how the follow-up process will be designed and implemented.

The publication of reports (ESG 2.6) still takes place. ACQUIN publishes all reports within the scope of the ESG in full, including those that resulted in a negative decision. The reports are available on the website of the agency. As soon as the publication platforms of GAC and DEQAR are fully connected, ACQUIN will use these platforms and provide a link on its own website.

Concerning the use of site visits (ESG 2.3) no changes took place. Site visits with peer review teams are still the standard procedure.

5. Did ACQUIN change its appeal process (ESG 2.7)?

No, the procedure remained unchanged. Reports of assessment procedures are still discussed and commented by ACQUINs Accreditation Commission before being forwarded to the HEI. Therefore, the complaints procedure was not changed, since HEIs could appeal against statements in final reports of the agency – even if a final decision is just taken later by the GAC.

6. Did ACQUIN change its organisational structure?

No, the organisational structure remained unchanged. The agency is still carrying out procedures involving peer review teams, standing expert committees, accreditation commission and secretariat. Decisions are still taken by members (general assembly) and board.

File #1 [Annex 1 ACQUIN Guidelines Institutional Accreditation.pdf \(1770k\)](#)

File #2 [Annex 2 Comparison ESG Part 1 Rules German Accreditation System 2018.pdf \(221k\)](#)

Last Update 2019-05-23 15:19:01

Comparison between ESG 2015 and rules and criteria of German Accreditation System

July 2018

Comparison between part 1 of ESG 2015 and the German accreditation rules and criteria, mainly determined in parts 2 and 3 of the specimen decree pursuant to Article 4, paragraphs 1 – 4 of the interstate study accreditation treaty

| ESG 2015 | Programme accreditation | System accreditation |
|---|--|---|
| 1.1 Policy for quality assurance | § 14 Academic success | § 17 Concept of the quality management system (goals, processes, instruments) |
| 1.2 Design and approval of programmes | § 11 Qualification goals and qualification level; § 12 Coherent study programme concept and adequate implementation; § 13 Subject-content organisation of the study programmes | § 17 Concept of the quality management system (goals, processes, instruments) |
| 1.3 Student-centered learning, teaching and assessment | § 12 Coherent study programme concept and adequate implementation (paragraph 1); § 15 Gender equality and compensation of disadvantages | § 17 Concept of the quality management system (goals, processes, instruments) |
| 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification | § 5 Admission requirements and transitions between different courses; § 6 Qualifications and qualification designations; § 12 Coherent study programme concept and adequate implementation (paragraph 1); § 14 Academic success | § 17 Concept of the quality management system (goals, processes, instruments) |

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| 1.5 Teaching staff | § 12 Coherent study programme concept and adequate implementation (paragraph 2) | § 17 Concept of the quality management system (goals, processes, instruments) |
| 1.6 Learning resources and student support | § 12 Coherent study programme concept and adequate implementation (paragraph 3) | § 17 Concept of the quality management system (goals, processes, instruments) |
| 1.7 Information management | § 14 Academic success | § 18 Measures to implement the quality management concept, see paragraph 3 |
| 1.8 Public information | Publication of examination regulations which contain information on study programmes is obligatory according to the higher education acts of the German states | § 18 (paragraph 4); Publication of examination regulations which contain information on study programmes is obligatory according to the higher education acts of the German states |
| 1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programme | § 14 Academic success | § 18 Measures to implement the quality management concept |
| 1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance | § 26 Period of validity for the accreditation; extension | § 26 Period of validity for the accreditation; extension |

Brussels, 29 April 2019

Substantive Change Report on New Legal Framework in Germany

Dear Stefan,

On 1 January 2018, a new legal framework for accreditation entered into force in Germany, i.e. the [Interstate Treaty](#) between the German federal states accompanied by the related [Specimen Decree](#). As ACQUIN operates as part of the official accreditation system in Germany we understand that your agency is directly affected by those changes.

As a registered agency you are required to notify EQAR about substantial changes to your process or methodology (see §6.1 of the [EQAR Procedures for Applications](#)).

According to the EQAR Guide for Applicants, “changes should be reported as soon as the changes are sufficiently clearly defined to allow providing comprehensive information on their nature and impact” and we are confident that this is the case by now.

We therefore kindly request that you **make a Substantive Change Report, using the official [reporting form](#)**.

In order to streamline your report and ensure comparability with other agencies' reports, we kindly ask you to address the following questions (instead of the aspects i. to viii. as listed on the form):

1. Please explain the changes in the accreditation criteria and how ESG 1.1 – 1.10 are reflected in the new criteria (ESG 2.1).
2. Did ACQUIN change its approach to ensuring consistency (ESG 2.5)?
3. Please explain if and how the composition, selection and appointment of review panels (ESG 2.4) changed, in particular with reference to the new nomination procedure for external experts according to Article 3 (3) of the Treaty / §25 (4) of the Specimen Decree.

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EQAR Founding Members:

4. Does the new legal framework lead to any changes as regards the use of site visits (ESG 2.3), the publication of reports (ESG 2.6) or follow-up processes (ESG 2.3)?
5. Did ACQUIN change its appeals process (ESG 2.7) in light of the fact that the agency does not make final accreditation decisions, but reports forwarded to the German Accreditation Council (GAC)?
6. Did ACQUIN change its organisational structure in relation to the new legal framework?

I wish to draw to your attention that we have addressed identical questions to all EQAR-registered agencies operating within the official accreditation system in Germany, i.e. AAQ, ACQUIN, AHPGS, ASIIN, AQAS, AQ Austria, evalag, FIBAA and ZEvA. It is at your discretion whether to coordinate your response with some or all other agencies.

If there are **other changes** to your organisational structure or external quality assurance activities, i.e. not related to the new legal framework in Germany, please kindly include them in the same report. For those activities please follow the usual questions and instructions.

We kindly ask you to make your report **by 29 May 2019**.

Please also note that this request will be published together with the final decision on your Report.

I shall be at your disposal if you have any further questions or inquiries.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Tück'.

Colin Tück
(Director)