



Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany

Decision of the Accreditation Council, of 22.06.2006, on the application of the Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute (reg ass) Bayreuth (ACQUIN) for re-accreditation, of 27.01.2006

I.

The¹ Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany (“Foundation“) accredits, in accordance with section 2 para. 1 no. 1 of the “Act on the Creation of a Foundation ‘Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany’ “, the Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute (reg ass) Bayreuth (ACQUIN) pursuant to the following provisions, thus granting it the authority to accredit study programmes by awarding the seal of the foundation.

II.

The decision in accordance with the above Item I. takes effect on 1 July 2006, but subject to the resolving, yet non-reactive condition that an agreement with the foundation pursuant to section 3 of the act for creation of a foundation „Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany“ be signed by 30 September 2006. In addition, the decision is subject to a resolving condition in the event of the invalidity of the above-mentioned agreement as a whole or of specific provisions thereof, with the resolving effect taking place for the period commencing on the day of any such judgement becoming incontestable.

III.

The accreditation and the authority pursuant to the above Item I. are granted for a term of five years, with the right of revocation according to Item V. reserved. According to section 1 para. 1 clause 2 of the resolution „Decisions of the Accreditation Council: Types and Impacts“ of 15.12.2005, the accreditation expires on 30 September 2011. Should ENQA decide by 31.12.2009 that, according to general European standards, accreditation with a longer term than five years is admissible, the accreditation term will then automatically extend to the maximum term admissible according to general European standards, but no longer than by another three years.

¹ In the present text, gender-specific terms apply equally to women and men.

IV.

The Accreditation Council notes that the ACQUIN does not meet some quality requirements. These quality deficiencies are not fundamental pursuant to § 1 Abs. 3 of the resolution „Decisions of the Accreditation Council: Types and Impacts“ of 15.12.2005. Accreditation is thus granted, yet under the following conditions:

1. ACQUIN proves by 30.06.2007 the introduction of a formalised internal quality management in accordance with criterion 6 of the "Criteria for the Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies" of 15.12.2005. *
2. ACQUIN proves by 30.06.2007 a change of its charter to the following effect: According to Criterion 2.11 of the "Criteria for the Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies" of 15.12.2005, the members of the specialist committees are appointed for a limited time by resolution on the basis of a written description of the task-specific qualification, the admissibility of reappointments notwithstanding. **
3. The ACQUIN proves by 31.12.2006 the setting up of a formalised complaints procedure for universities/colleges in accordance with criteria 19.1 to 19.3 of the "Criteria for the Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies" of 15.12.2005. *

* condition fulfilled

** condition retracted by decision of the Accreditation Council (30./31.08.2006)

V.

Should ACQUIN not prove compliance with these conditions within the respective term or should such conditions not prove satisfied on expiry of the respective term, the Foundation may revoke the accreditation according to § 7 Abs. 2 of the resolution „Decisions of the Accreditation Council: Types and Impacts“, of 15.12.2005.

VI.

Statement of Reasons

In General

The Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute (ACQUIN) has shown, in the course of an accreditation procedure, its general institutional operability and suitability for a purpose regarding the task of study programme accreditation. The procedures for the accreditation of study programmes follow both the *content-related* quality standards (check-fields 7 to 14) and the *procedure-related* quality standards (check-fields 15 to 20) of the "Criteria for the Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies" specified by the Accreditation Council.

With minor reservations mentioned further down, ACQUIN thus meets the quality requirements in accordance with the "Criteria for the Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies", passed by the Accreditation Council on 15.12.2005 and taken as a basis for the accreditation of ACQUIN.

The Accreditation Council follows the impression of the experts that ACQUIN, in the past five years since its first accreditation, has developed well both in a quantitative and qualitative respect and has, by its clear-cut and well identifiable profile, provided an important contribution to the accreditation system in Germany, also from a regulative point of view. ACQUIN has an outwardly well documented quality understanding, from which the fundamentals of the review approach can be derived transparently and plausibly.

The material means and resources available to ACQUIN form a solid foundation as a prerequisite for a successful organisation and implementation of the procedures as intended by the Accreditation Council. The same applies – not only qualitatively but also quantitatively – to the human resources of the agency.

To be positively emphasised is furthermore the broad national and international support by ACQUIN of universities/colleges in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Hungary and the USA, as well as scientific specialist societies and professional organisations, which precludes the risk of pure self-examination and favours the integration of varied perspectives and subject/content assessments.

Within the framework of the procedure for the reaccreditation of ACQUIN, also defects were, nevertheless, identified suggesting that non-essential quality requirements have not been satisfied, inducing the Accreditation Council to link the accreditation of ACQUIN with the above conditions.

Attention is invited to the fact that conditions 3, 4 and 5 relate largely to defects which are not to be ascribed to the procedures employed so far, but result from the „Criteria for the Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies“, decided on December 15, 2005, which, in part, make an adjustment of the institutional, content and procedural foundations and rules of the accreditation agencies imperative.

Concerning Condition 1

The quality management of ACQUIN currently limits itself to confidence in the quality-oriented motivation and communication of the staff as well as to confidence in the near-time and consistent accommodation of feedbacks and suggestions from the persons or groups of persons involved in the procedures. However, the continuity and reliability of a highly person-centred quality culture, particularly given a further personnel increase of the Agency, cannot be permanently ensured, in contrast to a formalised internal function-adequate quality

management system, which is called in according to Criterion 6 of the "Criteria for the Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies" of 15.12.2005.

Concerning Condition 2

Criterion 2.11 of the "Criteria for the Accreditation of Accreditation Agencies" of 15.12.2005 stipulates that the technical competence of participants in the procedures is ensured by suitable selection, preparation or other means, and continually reviewed in an adequate way. The members of the specialist committees are involved in the procedures according to section 10 para. 2 of the ACQUIN charter in line with the intention of the above criterion by, i.a., appointing expert groups and ensuring, for their specialist field, the uniformity of execution of the procedures and of the application of the assessment criteria and stating their position on the reports and resolution proposals of the expert groups. Accordingly, the technical competence of the members of the specialist committees must be ensured by a suitable procedure which permits, due to a limited-in time appointment of the members, a systematic and routine repetition of the qualification test.

Concerning Condition 3

According to criteria 19.1 to 19.3, the Agency must prove the existence of an internal complaints procedure which adequately defines the review subject and ensures the independence of the decision-makers involved in the review procedure. Such a complaints procedure has not been documented by ACQUIN.