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**Template and Guidelines for Preparing a Self-Assessment for an International ASIIN Program Accreditation**

**for the ASIIN Seal & European Labels (EUR-ACE®, Euro-Inf®, Eurobachelor®, Euromaster®, EQAS-Food, AMSE)**

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# About the Procedure: A Brief Overview

Dear representatives of Higher Education Institutions,

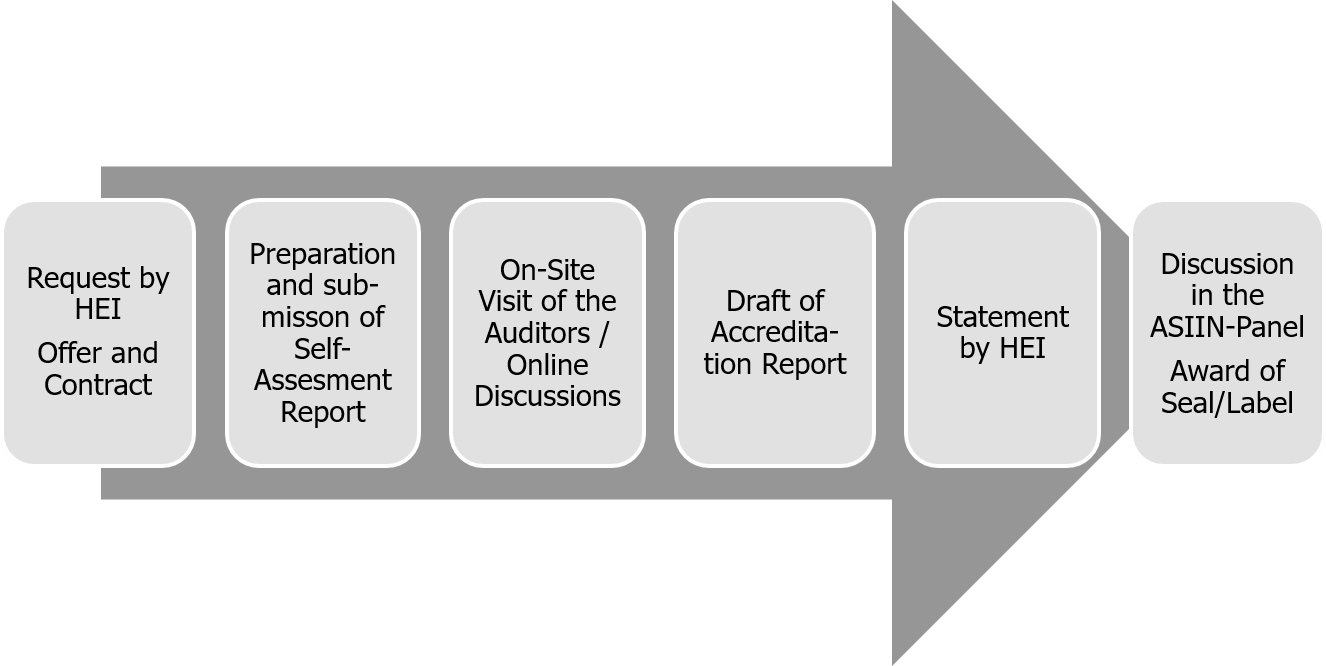
we are very pleased that you are planning to partner with ASIIN in the international accreditation of your study programmes.

ASIIN today is one of the most prestigious and sought-after accreditation agencies in the international higher education market. Its services are requested by universities in almost 50 countries today. Our trademarks are trust, efficiency, cost-effectiveness and our philosophy is to provide the best possible services to our customers in the higher education market. Our accreditation procedures rely on transparent, internationally accepted procedures and criteria that have been developed in close cooperation with our members as well as the national and international scientific and business community. Our ASIIN and International Quality Seals[[1]](#footnote-1) for programme accreditation in all STEM fields are of high reputation.

The **ASIIN seal (as well as the associated international quality seals)** confirm that a course of study meets high-level requirements of science and professional practice of the involved disciplines. At the same time, it documents that secure framework conditions for good teaching and successful learning are in place. The award of the seal is based on recognised learning outcome-oriented professional standards in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework and the "European Standards and Guidelines".

While an accreditation procedure does involve a sound preparation on the part of your institution, it is at the same time a unique opportunity to receive external expert feedback on your programme. We thus hope that you will utilise the accreditation process as a quality development project and will not see it as a mere formal inspection routine. After completing this procedure and making adjustments in line with the recommendations of the external assessors, you may find significant improvements regarding the satisfaction of internal and external stakeholders with your educational offerings, and even with regards to your standing in international rankings.

In the graph below, you will find a depiction of the various steps of an ASIIN accreditation procedure. Your personal **ASIIN project manager** will assist you in every step along the way:



In addition to the assistance provided by your ASIIN project manager, various supporting documents and templates will help you with your preparations. The information provided in this document will prepare you for the second step: **“Preparation and Submission of the Self-Assessment Report (SAR).”**

Additional useful information about the other steps in the procedure can be found in our [criteria](https://www.asiin.de/files/content/kriterien/0.3_Criteria_for_the_Accrediation_of_Degree_Programmes_2015-12-10.pdf).

This document is structured in the following manner:

* [**SAR Report Template**](#_ASIIN_Programme_Accreditation_1) (including the accredtiation criteria)
* [**Guidelines for Preparing the Self-Assessment**](#_Guidelines_for_preparing)
* [**Appendices**](#_Appendices) (including templates for supporting documents)

We invite you to proceed further in this document and begin your journey into the exciting world of higher education quality development!

If along the way you have any questions about this set of guidelines or the procedure in general, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards,

***The ASIIN Team***

# ASIIN Programme Accreditation Report Template

It is recommended to use the following template and its structure as a reference model for the **Self-Assessment Report (SAR)**. The structure corresponds with the general ASIIN accreditation criteria. Please note that the guiding questions contained therein are intended as a *guide* and represent the types of questions that may be asked by the ASIIN experts during audit discussions - if you and your colleagues can provide answers to these questions you are well prepared for the accreditation procedure.

**Section A** of the template includes tables in which basic data concerning the accreditation procedure is documented.

**Section B** contains basic data concerning the submitted study programmes.

**Section C** contains the Self-Assessment section, organised according to the ASIIN Criteria.

**Note:** you can use this file to write your SAR, or copy the template into another text file. Should you choose to use this file, please delete all pages not relevant for your SAR (introduction, instructions, unused templates, etc.) before you submit it.

**The template begins on the following page.**

# About the Accreditation Procedure

## General Data

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Website of the Higher Education Institution** |  |
| Faculty/Department offering the Degree Programme |  |

## Seals applied for

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of the degree programme (in original language)** | **(Official) English translation of the name** | **Labels applied for [[2]](#footnote-2)** | **Previous accreditation (issuing agency, validity)** | **Involved Technical Committees (TC)[[3]](#footnote-3)**  (will be completed by ASIIN) |
| Degree programme 1 |  | [delete as necessary] ASIIN, EUR-ACE® Label, Euro-Inf® Label, Eurobachelor® Label, Euromaster® Label | e.g. ASIIN, 01.01.2010 – 01.01.2014 |  |
| Degree programme 2 |  |  |  |  |
| [Add lines as necessary] |  |  |  |  |

# Characteristics of the Degree Programme(s)

| Name | Final degree (original/English translation) | Areas of Specialisation | Corresponding level of the EQF[[4]](#footnote-4) | Mode of Study | Double/Joint Degree | Duration | Credit points/unit | First time of offer |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Programme 1/ | B.Sc./Eng./ B.A.(Bachelor of Arts, for architecture) |  |  | Full time / part time, dual, sandwich course, e-learning, , etc … | If yes, name partner HEIs – please note that double / joint degree options **must** be communicated | x semesters | xxx ECTS/other CP | /date or term title/ |
| Programme 2/ | M.Sc./Eng./M.A. |  |  | Full time / part time, dual, sandwich course, e-learning, , etc … | If yes, name partner HEIs – please note that double / joint degree options **must** be communicated[[5]](#footnote-5) | x semesters | xxx ECTS/other CP | /date or term title/ |
| [add lines as necessary] |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

| Name | Intake rhythm | Intake Capacity per cohort | Average starting cohort size | Average number of graduates per cohort | Average time required to complete studies |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Programme 1/ | Each semester / annually | Max. xx students | xx students | xx students | xx semesters / years |
| Programme 2/ | Each semester / annually | Max. xx students | xx students | xx students | xx semesters / years |
| [add lines as necessary] |  |  |  |  |  |

# Self-assessment for the ASIIN-Seal[[6]](#footnote-6)

## 1. The Degree Programme: Concept, content & implementation

### Criterion 1.1 Objectives and learning outcomes of a degree programme (intended qualifications profile)

The objectives and learning outcomes (the intended competence profile) of the degree programme as a whole are described briefly and concisely. They are transparently anchored and published and thus are available to students, lecturers and interested third parties.

The objectives and learning outcomes reflect the targeted academic qualification level, are feasible and equivalent to the relevant exemplary learning outcomes specified in the applicable SSC (academic classification).

With the intended competence profile, a professional activity corresponding to the level of qualification (according to the European Qualifications Framework[[7]](#footnote-7)) can be taken up (professional classification).

The relevance of the objectives and learning outcomes for both the labour market and society is regularly reviewed in a process that involves the relevant stakeholders (in particular from higher education and professional practice) and, if necessary, the objectives are revised accordingly.

**Guiding Questions**

* Are the learning outcomes described in a consistent manner across all official documents, websites and marketing material?
* How has the intended competence profile of the degree programme been developed (regarding launch of the process, procedure, participants?
* How does the higher education institution correlate the competence profile with the sample learning outcomes from the, in their opinion, (most) relevant Subject-Specific Criteria (SSC)?

(Notice: Please use the empty Objectives-Module-Matrix).

* Where do the responsible persons see possible differences to the relevant Subject-Specific Criteria (SSC)? How can they be explained?
* For interdisciplinary degree programmes: How does the defined competence profile take into account the specifications of the interdisciplinary character?

(Notice: Please use the empty Objectives-Module-Matrix)

* Do the defined competence objectives for graduates of the degree programme find the approval of the students and the teaching staff?
* Have the learning outcomes of the degree programme been verified within the last few years? If so, for what reasons were adjustments made?
* How does the intended competence profile comply with specific areas of the profession?
* Are there any peculiarities within in qualitative or quantitative data/information of the higher education institution with regard to the acceptance of the competence profile on the labour market?

### Criterion 1.2 Name of the degree programme

The title of the degree programme reflects the intended objectives and learning outcomes as well as the teaching and learning content and, in principle also the teaching language of the programme.

The designation (both in the original language and in English) is used consistently in all relevant documents.

**Guiding Questions**

* What are the reasons for the name of the degree programme?
* Does the name of the degree programme correspond with the terminology used by the subject-specific community?
* Are the names of the degree programmes justified by their contents and the intended profile of the graduates?
* Have any misunderstandings or wrong expectations by students or by employers occurred which might be due to the name? If so, how was the reaction?

### Criterion 1.3 Curriculum

Content

The curriculum enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes are defined for each module, which, in total, enable the achievement of the overarching programme objectives.

If an internship is included in the programme, it is well-integrated into the curriculum. The higher education institution assumes responsibility for the quality of the internship in terms of its content and structure. To this end, the university coordinates with the participating companies and supervises the students during the internship.

Structure of the programme

Each module represents a well-matched unit of teaching and learning.

It becomes clear which knowledge, skills and competences the students acquire in each module.

The order of the modules ensures that the learning outcomes can be achieved and that the programme can be completed within the standard period of study.

The programme is organised in a way that allows for individual focal points and courses of study.

Student mobility

The higher education institution promotes (international) student mobility through an appropriate framework (structural design of the degree programme, recognition of qualifications and support services).

Periodic Review of the Curriculum

The curriculum is periodically reviewed with regard to the implementation of the programme objectives; curricular changes are documented. This review also includes whether the order of modules enables students to graduate within the standard period of study.

**Guiding Questions**

Content

* From the viewpoint of the responsible persons and participants of the degree programme, how does the curriculum/ how do the single modules (the structure and content) contribute towards achieving the intended competence profile?
* In the course of matching the intended competence profile with the curriculum has there been any need for adjustments within the last few years? What were the reasons? What was the reaction?
* How were the results of internship / practice interval assessed? Were there any problems with the organization or the quality of the working practice intervals of the students? If yes, what was done? Do the possibly necessary working practice intervals of the degree programme fulfil the expectations with regard to the intended learning outcomes?

Structure of the programme

* How is it ensured that the modules are consistent within themselves, are matched against each other and, where applicable, build upon each other? How do those responsible for the degree programme react if single modules do not fit (anymore) into the general concept of the degree programme?
* How do those responsible for the degree programme recognize that the modules of a degree programme *viewed all together* support the intended academic level?
* In what way do the offered election options within the degree programme promote the achievement of the intended competence profile?

Student mobility

* To what extent are the students able to implement individual windows of mobility? What problems are there? How was the reaction towards them?
* Were there any problems with regard to the intended graduation time during the last few years? If yes, what problems? How were they dealt with?

Periodic Review of the Curriculum

* How the implementation of the programme objectives in the curriculum is evaluated?
* How it is evaluated whether the order of modules enables students to graduate within the standard period of study

### Criterion 1.4 Admission requirements

The admission requirements and procedures are binding and transparent. They ensure that students are in principle able to successfully graduate from the programme.

In case of possible compensation for missing admission requirements, respective rules are defined. In such a case, appropriate courses to acquire the necessary competences should be offered. Compensation for missing prior knowledge must not decrease the qualification level of the degree programme.

Rules for the recognition of qualifications achieved externally (e.g. at other higher education institutions or outside the higher education sector) are clearly defined. They facilitate the transition between higher education institutions and with non-university places of learning without jeopardising the achievement of learning outcomes at the desired level. They are based on the principles of the Lisbon Convention.

It is regularly evaluated whether the regulations ensure sufficient (subject-related) prior knowledge of the students.

**Guiding Questions**

* What are the admission requirements for national and international students? What are the differences?
* How do the responsible persons recognize that the (formal and subject-specific) admission requirements promote the achievement of the intended competence profiles?
* If applicable: What was the reaction if the admission requirements did not fulfil this objective from the point of view of those responsible?
* How is evaluated whether the admission regulation ensure that applicants have sufficient prior knowledge to study successfully?

Criterion 1.5 Work load and credits

A credit system[[8]](#footnote-8) is based on the student workload is implemented. The workload includes contact hours and self-study time. All compulsory components of the study programme are included. Credits are awarded for every module based on the respective workload.

Bachelor's degree programmes have a total student workload of at least 180 ECTS credits; master's degree programmes have a total student workload of at least 60 ECTS credits. As a rule, 300 ECTS credits are achieved by the time a master's degree is awarded.

The estimated workload is realistic and well-founded, so that the study programme can be completed in the standard period of study. Structural peaks in the workload are avoided.

It is regularly monitored whether the credits awarded for each module correspond to the actual student workload and whether the distribution of the workload across all semesters enables graduation within the standard period of study. Students are involved in these processes. If adjustments are made, they are well documented.

**Guiding Questions**

* By which process is student workload corroborated?
* On what basis (of calculation) are credit points allocated to single modules?
* Are all mandatory parts of the degree programme (including working practice intervals) awarded with credits? If not, why?
* How is evaluated whether the credits awarded for each module correspond to the actual student workload?
* How do those responsible for the degree programme and other stakeholders - including the students - rate the student workload? What problems do occur? What is done to solve them?

Criterion 1.6 Didactics and Teaching Methodology

A variety of teaching methods and didactic means are used to promote achieving the learning outcomes and support student-centred learning and teaching. It must be considered that digital and face-to-face teaching and working infrastructures are equally important and mutually enrich each other.

The degree programme contains an adequate balance of contact hours and self-study time.

Introducing students to independent scientific work is an integral part of the study programme.

It is regularly reviewed whether the utilised learning and teaching methods support the achievement of the programme objectives

**Guiding Questions**

* How do the teaching staff and those responsible for the degree programme recognize that didactical instruments and methods promote the achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the degree programme?
* Are all members of the teaching staff able to apply the didactical instruments and methods most ideal in their opinion? If not, why?
* What elements support the independent scientific work of the students?

## 2. Exams: System, Concept & Organisation

Criterion 2 Exams: System, concept and organisation

Exams assess the extent to which the defined learning objectives have been achieved.

Exams relate to specific modules. They provide students with feedback on the competencies that they have acquired.

The study programme includes a final thesis or final project. It demonstrates that the students are able to work independently on a task at the intended level of the degree programme.

Types of exams (with possible alternatives) are specified for each module. Students are informed about the conditions for completing the module (coursework, exams etc.) latest at the beginning of the module. There are transparent rules for make-up exams, non-attendance, cases of illness as well as compensation of disadvantages in the case of students with disabilities or special needs (e.g. pregnancy, childcare, caring for relatives) etc.

The number and distribution of exams ensure an adequate workload as well as sufficient time for preparation. The organisation of the exams ensures a smooth study process.

Examinations are marked according to transparent criteria. Students have the opportunity to consult their lecturers about the results of their exams.

In the event that final theses or projects are carried out outside the higher education institution, the institution assumes responsibility for their content and favourable structural conditions.

It is regularly reviewed whether the exams can adequately determine the achievement of the learning objectives, whether the requirements are appropriate to the level of the degree programme and whether students have sufficient time for preparing and conducting the exams.

**Guiding Questions**

* Which of the used forms of examination are considered by the teaching staff and the people responsible for the degree programme to be particularly suited to verify the achieved learning outcomes?
* Which consequences for the feasibility of the degree programme do the existing regulations on possible re-sits, disability compensation for handicapped students, absence because of illness etc., have?
* Were there any cases where the specific exam management (e.g. date of exam, correction time) had negative effects on the study progress? If yes, what conclusions were drawn?
* How are the assessment criteria made transparent for the students and teaching staff?
* What experiences have been made with student assignments completed outside the institution with respect to quality assurance and level of compliance with the quality expectations?
* What is the University’s policy on fraud, plagiarism and academic integrity?
* How is evaluated whether the exams can adequately determine the achievement of the learning objectives by students?
* How is evaluated whether students have sufficient time for preparing and conducting the exams.

## 3 Resources

Criterion 3.1 Staff and Staff Development

The composition, professional orientation and qualification of the teaching staff are suitable for successfully executing the degree programme.

The research and development of the teaching staff contributes to the desired level of education.

Lecturers have the opportunity to further develop their professional and didactic skills and are supported in using corresponding offers.

It is regularly reviewed whether the subject-specific and didactic qualifications of the lecturers contribute adequately to the delivery of the degree programme.

**Guiding Questions**

* How do those responsible for the degree programme recognise that the number of staff members for teaching, supervision and support of students is sufficient?
* How do those responsible for the programme ensure that the academic qualification of the teaching staff are sufficient?
* How satisfied are those involved in the degree programme with the amount of resources available for teaching, supervision and administration?
* In what way do the research and development activities carried out by the teaching staff support the development of the degree programme?
* Who is responsible for the academic and didactic development of the teaching staff?
* How do the responsible persons recognize that professional development measures are wanted or necessary?
* How is evaluated whether the subject-specific and didactic qualifications of the lecturers
* How do those responsible for the degree programme react on occurring problems and bottlenecks?
* What constitutes the quality of possibly employed visiting lecturers and how is this measured?

Criterion 3.2 Student Support and Student Services

Sufficient human resources and organisational structures are available for

- individual subject-specific and general counselling, supervision and support of students

- administrative and technical tasks.

The allocated advice and guidance (both technical and general) on offer assist the students in achieving the learning outcomes and in completing the course within the scheduled time.

**Guiding Questions**

* Which of the existing advice and support on offer for students are deemed by those involved in the degree programme – including students – to be the most effective with respect to the academic success?
* How is support provided at different stages? (ex: admissions, studies, career…)
* What advice and support on offer for students are missed by the stakeholders including the students? Why are they not put into practice?

Criterion 3.3 Funds and equipment

The financial resources and the available equipment constitute a sustainable basis for delivering the degree programme. This includes

- secure funding and reliable financial planning,

- sufficient infrastructure in terms of both quantity and quality

- binding regulation of internal and external cooperation

**Guiding Questions**

* How satisfied are the participants of the degree programme with its equipment and facilities?
* How do the people responsible for the degree programme react to bottlenecks in equipment and facilities?
* Do the higher education institutions internal and external cooperations work successfully from the point of view of those responsible?

## 4. Transparency and Documentation

Criterion 4.1 Module descriptions

The module descriptions are accessible to all students and teaching staff and contain the following:

* module title
* person(s) responsible for each module
* teaching method(s)
* credits and work load
* intended learning outcomes
* module content
* admission and examination requirements
* form(s) of exams and details explaining how the module mark is calculated
* recommended literature
* date of last amendment

**Guiding Questions**

* Do the module descriptions cover all the items listed in the criterion?
* Are the module descriptions published in a location where students would expect them to be published?

**Criterion 4.2 Diploma and Diploma Supplement**

Shortly after graduation, a diploma (degree certificate) is issued together with a diploma supplement. The latter must be provided in English.

These documents provide information on the student's qualifications profile and individual performance as well as the classification of the degree programme with regard to the respective education system.

The marks of individual modules are presented and the way in which the final mark is calculated is explained. In addition to the final mark, statistical data as set forth in the ECTS sers’ Guide is included to allow readers to assess the individual mark.

**Guiding Questions**

* Have any problems occurred with awarding the graduation certificates and Diploma Supplements to the students? If yes, what was the reaction?

Criterion 5.3 Relevant rules

The rights and duties of both the higher education institution and students are clearly defined and binding (guidelines, statutes etc.). All relevant course-related information is available in the language of the degree programme and accessible to anyone involved.

**Guiding Questions**

* How is it ensured that domestic and foreign students know their rights and duties?
* Who is responsible for taking decisions about which documents?

## 5. Quality Management: Quality Assessment and Development

**Criterion 5. Quality management: quality assessment and development**

The study programme is subject to periodical internal quality assurance which includes all stakeholders. The results of these processes are incorporated into the continuous development of the programme. Processes and responsibilities are defined for the further development of the programme.

The results and any measures derived from the various quality assurance instruments used (various survey formats, student statistics, etc.) are communicated to the students.

**Guiding Questions**

* What measures for the improvement of the quality of the degree programmes have been taken within the last few years?
* Which elements of the internal quality assessment have been especially useful for the continuous improvement of the degree programmes?
* To what extent is the aspect of “learning outcome orientation” taken into consideration in the conception and the practical use of the instruments of quality assurance of a degree programme?
* How do the students evaluate the internal quality assessment and development of their degree programmes with respect to
  + their participation?
  + the consequences on their studies?
* How do the teaching staff and executive level evaluate the internal quality assessment and development of their degree programmes with respect to
  + their participation?
  + the support at solving problems and the improvement of teaching?

# Additional Criteria for Structured Doctoral Programmes

These additional criteria to be applied in ASIIN accreditations of structured doctoral programmes are based on the so called "Salzburg Principles", which have come out of a conference organized by the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Science and the European Association of Universities (EUA) in Salzburg in February 2005. The originally 10 principles have subsequently been further developed in October 2010 by the Council of the EUA, which is composed of representatives of the European Rectors' Conferences, eventually resulting in the "Salzburg II Recommendations". The criteria are also aligned with the recommendation of the German “Wissenschaftsrat”. Further adjust- and amendments have come out of internal discussions with the ASIIN Accreditation Commission and its 14 Technical Committees. Individual doctoral arrangements are not subject to accreditation procedures and are therefore not covered by these criteria.

Criterion D 1 Research

### The core component of doctoral training is the advancement of knowledge through original research.

### Graduates acquire advanced, cutting-edge knowledge and are able to demonstrate, on the level of internationally recognised scientific research, a deep and comprehensive understanding of their research field. They demonstrate the ability to design and carry out an original research project at the forefront of the discipline, contribute to the advancement of science, and are able to adequately present the results to different audiences.

Evidence:

* Description of research activities and projects related to the doctoral programme on behalf of the university or research institute
* Documents/other sources where objectives and learning outcomes are written down and published, e.g. regulations, homepage, guidelines
* Study and examination regulations
* Active participation of doctoral candidates at conferences, seminars, research colloquiums etc.
* Sample of published dissertations or papers in scientific journals
* […]

Criterion D 2 Duration and Credits

Structured doctoral programmes operate within an appropriate time duration.

Applying the credit point system (e.g. ECTS) developed for cohorts of students in the first and second cycles is not a necessary condition for structured doctoral programmes.

Evidence:

* Study and examination regulations
* Documents where the courses of studies and their organization are regulated
* Statistical data on graduation time
* Statistical data on the time spans between the completion of the doctoral thesis, the doctoral defence, and the publication of the thesis
* […]

Criterion D 3 Soft Skills and Mobility

Doctoral candidates are offered a wide range of opportunities for their personal and professional development and take advantage of institutional support for career development and mobility. This includes support structures for professional development, training in transferable skills, and preparation for career choices.

Doctoral candidates are provided with opportunities for academic mobility and international collaboration within an integrated framework of cooperation between universities and other partners.

Evidence:

* Documents that inform about the effective regulations about mobility, professional development, and training courses
* Possibly statistical data about mobility and international co-operations
* Information on qualification programs, guidance, and career support for early career researchers
* Documents on programmes, courses, and integrative measures for international students
* Data related to supervision of BA/MA theses, labs etc. by doctoral candidates
* […]

Criterion D 4 Supervision and Assessment

A transparent contractual framework of shared responsibilities between doctoral candidates, supervisors, the institution (and where appropriate including other partners) is in place and continuous support by their supervisors is provided. Assessment rules are clearly formulated and binding.

Evidence:

* Documents out of the daily use of the higher education institution that make apparent the existing advice and support concept
* Relevant results from internal surveys and evaluations
* Supervision and assessment regulations
* […]

Criterion D 5 Infrastructure

Doctoral candidates are provided with an adequate research environment that allows them to appropriately carry out their research projects.

Evidence:

* Co-operation agreements, regulations for internal and external co-operations
* Documents out of the daily use of the higher education institution that describe the equipment and facilities, e.g. laboratory handbooks, inventory lists, financial plans
* Access to current scientific publications and books
* […]

**Criterion D 6 Funding**

Structured doctoral programmes need to have adequate and sustainable funding.

Evidence:

* List of available grants and counselling/information on funding options
* Cooperation agreements, regulations for internal and external co-operations
* […]

**Criterion D 7 Quality Assurance**

The faculty/HEIs offering the structured doctoral programme has passed regulations documenting the rights and duties of the doctoral candidates as well as relevant organizational arrangements.

Rules of good scientific practice are followed.

The faculty collects data related to individual progression, net research time, completion rate, dissemination of research results, and career tracking and uses this data to continuously assess the quality of the structured doctoral programme.

Evidence:

* Regulations and Guidelines for structured doctoral programmes
* Internal regulations about quality management (quality assurance regulation etc.)
* Sample information material about the quality management and its results which the higher education institution regularly uses for its internal and external communication (e.g. link to specific web pages, reports, flyer)
* Quantitative and qualitative statistical data from evaluations, study progression statistics, number of graduates etc.
* […]

# Guidelines for preparing the Self-Assessment

An accreditation process with ASIIN is based on a **self-assessment** preparedby the applying institution of higher education. The self-assessment prepared by the institution consists of two components: the **Self-Assessment Report (SAR)** and **Supporting Evidence**.

The SAR consists of a text document in which the institution analyses in an aggregated manner if and how the degree programme/s fulfil/s the **accreditation criteria**. The Supporting Evidence consists of official documents, rules, policies, statistics, etc., which support the explanations made by the institution in the SAR.

In the following sections, we will:

* introduce the **accreditation criteria** and explain how your self-assessment must address these, and
* provide **general guidelines** for the preparation and submission of the SAR and the Supporting Evidences.

## Introduction to the Criteria

The ASIIN accreditation process focuses on determining whether the degree programme/s which you have submitted fulfil/s the **accreditation criteria**.

ASIIN typically applies **two** **sets** of criteria to each submitted degree programme:

* the general **ASIIN Criteria**
* the **Subject-Specific Criteria (SSC)**.

In the self-assessment, we ask that your institution describes and provides evidence on how it complies with **both**.[[9]](#footnote-9)

The ASIIN Criteria and SSC are described in more detail in the following sections.

### General ASIIN Criteria

The general **ASIIN criteria** (“Criteria for the Accreditation of Degree Programmes – ASIIN Seal”) are based on the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for the European Higher Education Area. Their primary focus lies on whether a degree programme is **conceptually sound**, i.e. whether it is organised in a manner which supports students in achieving the intended learning outcomes.

To demonstrate alignment with the ASIIN criteria, your institution’s self-assessment must describe the relationship between

* the overall intended learning outcomes, i.e. the **knowledge, skills and competences** which the degree programme aims to impart, and
* the contribution made by **each individual module/course and the programme’s components and characteristics** (admission criteria, teaching methods, etc.) towards achieving these outcomes.

The structure of the general ASIIN criteria reflects this approach. The ASIIN SAR template (included in this document) leads you through the ASIIN criteria, one by one. Each section of the template (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, etc.) corresponds to one specific criterion. The template begins by asking the institution to provide an analysis of the degree programme’s intended learning outcomes; in the subsequent sections, it must demonstrate how the various components and characteristics of the programme contribute to their achievement.

### Subject-Specific Criteria (SSC)

In addition to the general accreditation criteria, ASIIN together with its grand alliance of national and international members and stakeholders have defined **learning** **outcomes and competence frameworks,** the so-called **Subject-Specific Criteria (SSC)**,on the Bachelor and Master level for the different STEM disciplines.The SSC are the result of regular assessments carried out by ASIIN and summarise good higher-education practices in a variety of disciplines, while taking into consideration labour market demands.[[10]](#footnote-10) By naming the abilities, skills and competences regarded as "state of the art" in the respective subject area, the SSC provide an orientation for the **subject-specific design of degree programmes**. The SSC also contribute to the comparability of national and international accreditation procedures, by ensuring that similar programmes are assessed according to the same subject-specific parameters.

For your self-assessment, please download the corresponding SSC from the [ASIIN website](https://www.asiin.de/en/programme-accreditation/quality-criteria.html). Within your SAR, alignment with the SSC should be referred to in your description of the Learning Outcomes and Curriculum. As supporting evidence, the institution can submit an [Objectives-Module Matrix](#_Example_Learning_Objectives-Module_1).

## General Guidelines for preparing the Self-Assessment Report (SAR)

The preparation of the self-assessment requires the use of information from the applicant´s internal quality management systems, self-examination processes and the feedback of relevant stakeholder groups, with the goal of identifying possible areas of improvement for the continuous development of the submitted degree programme(s).

The previously mentioned [SAR template](#_ASIIN_Programme_Accreditation_1), provided in this document, offers a clear structure which will support both those who write the report as well as those who must read and assess it.

To ensure an effective and efficient review of your SAR, the following guidelines should be adhered to:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Submit one report per programme cluster**  Your SAR can describe either one study programme or multiple, content-related study programmes (i.e. a “cluster” of study programmes).  Whether your submitted study programmes can be combined in into one or multiple clusters will be indicated in the offer prepared by ASIIN. If your programmes are to be assessed in clusters, **you should submit one SAR per cluster[[11]](#footnote-11)**. | **Examples of typical programme clusters:**  Bachelor and Master programmes in Mathematics;  Bachelor and Master programmes in Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Mechatronics;  Bachelor and Master programmes in Civil Engineering, Architecture. |
| **Ensure the format complies with international scientific writing practice**  The SAR should have the format of a scientific evaluation report. Supporting evidence should be referred to wherever applicable. Explain all abbreviations and acronyms and ensure all the pages of the report are numbered. To improve legibility, ensure sufficient line spacing (ex: 1.5). If considered useful, you can add a glossary to explain acronyms. | **Examples of referencing:**  “The programme is divided into learning units (LUs) with an average student workload of 5 credit points (see Appendix 1.3 ‘Curriculum’).”  “The teachers regularly attend events organised by the International Council on Systems Engineering (INCOSE). One INCOSE event was also hosted by the faculty (see Appendix 5.2 ‘INCOSE Meeting Agenda Sep 2019’).” |
| **Summarise programme similarities**  Within each SAR, information that is relevant for multiple degree programmes in the cluster should be summarised. The objective should be to avoid needless repetition and thereby improve the legibility of the report.  At the same time, the institution should take care to also describe the programme-specific features (e.g. the intended learning outcomes, curriculum etc.) in sufficient detail. | **Example description:**  “For both study programmes, the first semester is identical and includes modules in Mathematics and Physics, as well as in communication skills and academic research and writing.  Following the first semester, the Mechanical Engineering programme includes modules in…..  The second semester of the Process Engineering programme focuses on….  Both programmes also include an English-language module in each semester, with the goal of letting students reach a C1 level by the end of their studies.” |
| **Guide the assessors through your appendices**  The SAR is also a guide through the complementary evidences. Typically, a short and concise evaluation of each criterion together with a reference to the relevant appendix will be sufficient.  Where indicated in the criteria (criteria 1.1, 1.4, 3, 5.2), please also provide URL links leading to the site where the required information is published. In case the information is published in a linked file (PDF, Word, Excel, etc.), please do not provide the URL of the file itself, but rather the URL of the page from which the file can be downloaded. | **Example description:**  “Upon their graduation, all students receive a transcript, a diploma as well as an English-language diploma supplement, which contains statistical data as set forth in the ECTS User's Guide, to allow readers to categorise the individual result/degree (see ‘Appendix Criterion 5.2’).”  “The programme’s intended learning outcomes are transparently listed on the programme website (see [www.abc-university.edu/physics/ba\_physics/about)](http://www.abc-university.edu/physics/ba_physics/about)).”  “All rules and regulations concerning the degree programme can be downloaded from the following dedicated webpage: [www.abc-university.edu/physics/ba\_physics/rules&regulations](http://www.abc-university.edu/physics/ba_physics/rules&regulations).” |
| **Include Evaluation and Assessment**  The SAR should not be a mere description. Rather, it should cover strengths and weaknesses, challenges and envisaged solutions. The “guiding questions” in the SAR template are designed to provide assistance. | **Example:**  “While the programmes already contain English language modules in each semester, the faculty decided it would be helpful for the students if they took an internationally recognised English-exam, which they could subsequently present to potential employers. As a result, as of Fall semester 2017 the faculty requires students to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) in the final year of their studies. The initial results show that a number of students still struggle with certain aspects, particularly the writing component. Consequently, as of Fall semester 2020, additional written assignments were introduced in all English-language modules (see samples in Appendix Criterion 3).” |
| **Find the right length**  There is no minimum or maximum number of pages for an SAR. Experience shows that concise reports of 40-50 pages, which are well structured and make appropriate references to supporting documents, can be significantly more informative and legible than long reports of over 100 pages. Please remember that the expert panel must review and process the information you provide, and that excessively long SARs can make this more difficult. |  |

## Supporting Evidence and Submission Guidelines

It is of crucial importance that the self-assessment is well-documented and supported by suitable evidence – in fact, a self-assessment without supporting evidence will not be accepted. Therefore, your institution is asked to compile an annex with all pieces of evidence.

An [checklist of all required evidences](#_Checklist_of_Required) is provided in the appendix. **The applying institution should make sure that all required evidences are submitted with the SAR**. The institution can and should submit evidences not mentioned in the list where applicable.

**IMPORTANT:** Please remember that comprehensive and well-structured documentation is critical for the peers’ analysis and ensures a speedy and effective review process. Missing, incomplete, untranslated, unpublished or poorly prepared documents may result in a postponement of the audit, a repeat of the on-site visit, a temporary accreditation limited to one year, a suspension of the procedure or even a negative accreditation decision, all of which may be associated with additional costs in terms of time and resources for your institution. If you have any questions or doubts regarding ASIIN documentation requirements, please contact your ASIIN project manager.

### General Guidelines for Supporting Evidence and Submission

[All required evidences](#_Example_Learning_Objectives-Module), as well as all other evidences the institution wishes to submit, must be provided together with the SAR to your ASIIN project manager **10-12 weeks prior to the audit**.

Unless otherwise specified in the contract, it is the responsibility of the institution to provide **all required evidences in English**. Information provided on websites, which can be automatically translated using standard browser translation extensions, must not be additionally translated, unless specifically requested.[[12]](#footnote-12)

**Please carefully read and adhere to the following:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ensure compatible file formats**  The SAR and supporting evidence can be submitted **electronically**. Please make sure to provide all files in a commonly used format.  All files should be submitted via a single download link and/or zip-file.[[13]](#footnote-13) | **Sample acceptable file formats:**  PDF, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, typical photo and video formats (.jpeg, .png, .mpeg, .mov)… |
| **Evidences that apply to multiple programmes in the cluster need only be submitted once**  The evidences indicated in the template should be provided for each programme under review. However, evidences which apply to several of the submitted programmes need only be submitted once. | **Sample evidences which may apply to multiple programmes:** |
| **Evidences should be named appropriately and organised in a structured manner**  It is recommended to submit evidences as **separate files**. All submitted files should have **short** **English-language names clearly indicating the file contents**. Files can be organised according to the ASIIN criteria or study programme. | **Sample structure for submitted documents:** |
| **Samples of graded student work must be provided**  Required evidences include a representative sample of **graded** **student work samples** (see criterion 3). “Graded” means that the samples should include the grade given to the student by the teacher.  Samples must include students’ **final projects / theses**, as well as other student work from various semesters, various modules and various students.  Typically, student work samples are inspected by the audit team **on-site**. For **online audits**, these samples must be scanned and submitted electronically along with the SAR and other supporting documents. | **Sample structure for submitting student work samples:** |
| **For Online Audits, Photo and Video Material of Facilities and Equipment must be provided**  In case of an online audit or an onsite visit where long distances make the visiting of all facilities impractical, the institution must provide **photo and / or video material** **of the facilities and equipment** used for the respective programmes (see criterion 4.3). | **Sample evidences:** |

# Appendices

## Checklist of Required Evidences

The following evidences must be submitted by your institution along with the SAR. Failure to do so will in most cases result in a request to submit the missing information and may lead to a suspension of the procedure until necessary evidences have been submitted.

Depending on the institution, evidences may exist in different formats. The inclusion of several evidences in one document / source is acceptable, as long as all evidences are provided for.

Evidences should be submitted for **each** study programme. If an evidence applies to multiple study programmes (ex: admission regulations), it must only be submitted once. Please ensure the submitted evidences are **self-explanatory to someone who is not familiar with your institution and your country’s education system**, or are otherwise accompanied by a brief explanation.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Required Evidence**  **Submit all evidences in English** | **Relevant ASIIN Criteria** | **Provided?** |
| Study regulations | All criteria |  |
| Documents/other sources where programme-specific objectives and learning outcomes are written down and published, e.g. regulations, homepage, diploma supplement | 1.1, 1.3 |  |
| Official document in which official programme name is indicated, e.g. Diploma Supplement, Transcript of Records, Study Regulations | 1.2 |  |
| Objective-Module Matrix indicating how general outcomes are attained via individual modules (see Objectives-Module Matrix template) | 1.3 |  |
| Study Plan or Curricular Overview in a table format that informs about the student workload (credit points and hours) for each module in every semester | 1.3 |  |
| Module descriptions for all compulsory and elective modules (see Module Handbook template). They must also be provided for final projects, compulsory internships and all modules taken at partner institutions as part of a double- or joint degree. | 1.3, 4.1 |  |
| Official admission regulations | 1.4 |  |
| Documents/other sources containing provisions for the recognition of externally acquired academic achievements | 1.4 |  |
| Documents/other sources indicating that student workload is corroborated by the institution, e.g. student surveys | 1.5 |  |
| Examination regulations | 2 |  |
| Representative selection of graded exams/reports/ final projects and other student work, generally inspected during on-site visit | 2 |  |
| Statistical data about the progress of studies, e.g. number of students, average grade, failure rate, amount of re-sits, duration of studies, number of graduates and their distribution, etc. | 1.5, 2, 6 |  |
| Academic and professional qualifications of all teaching staff involved in the programme (see Staff Handbook template). In case the programme includes a double- or joint degree option, qualifications must also be provided for the relevant teaching staff at the partner institutions. | 3.1 |  |
| Cooperation agreements (e.g. learning agreements, agreements for use of laboratories, etc. - only relevant in case of cooperation with other universities, companies, research institutions, etc.) | 3.2 |  |
| In case of an online audit, photo and / or video material of the programme facilities and equipment | 3.2 |  |
| Sample diploma or degree certificate | 4.2 |  |
| Sample diploma supplement including all relevant study programme information | 4.2 |  |
| Any other regulations which apply, e.g. code of conduct, teacher responsibilities, etc. | 4.3 |  |
| Sample student survey questionnaire | 5 |  |
| Results of student surveys | 5 |  |

## Example Learning Objectives-Module Matrix

**Allocation of overall intended learning outcomes and module** **objectives**

To help assess the alignment of objectives within a programme of studies, it is best to make transparent how individual modules contribute to the realisation of the overall learning outcomes.

The relationship between the intended learning outcomes and the individual modules which implement them can be presented using the following table. Individual learning outcomes or modules can be assigned and combined in various ways. The following tables are intended as examples.

Table 1: Objectives matrix, example 1

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Intended learning outcomes for the programme as a whole**  **(competence profile/*learning outcomes*)**   * + Knowledge   + Skills   + Competences | **Corresponding module objectives/modules**  **(operationalisation)** |
|  | *Module designations should be clear* |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Table 2: Objectives matrix, example 2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Knowledge a | Knowledge b | Skill a | Skill b | Competence a | Competence b | Etc. |
| Module A | \*\* |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Module B |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Module C |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Module D |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Etc. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

\*\* Classification of the module’s contribution, e.g. “high”/“medium”/“low” or other categories depending on the institution’s needs.

## Example form for Module Handbook

The **Module[[14]](#footnote-14) Handbook** or **complete collection of module descriptions** serve asa **key tool** for the assessment of your study programmes**.** In addition, **their primary purpose** should be to serve as a **reliable source of information** **for** **students.** They should therefore be made available to students in the **course language** and **translated into English** for the assessors**.** A module descriptionshould contain the following information about the module:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Module designation |  |
| Semester(s) in which the module is taught |  |
| Person responsible for the module | *Please indicate a specific person.* |
| Language |  |
| Relation to curriculum | *Compulsory / elective / specialisation*  *Names of other study programmes with which the module is shared* |
| Teaching methods | *e.g. lecture, lesson, lab works, project, seminar etc.* |
| Workload (incl. contact hours, self-study hours) | *(Estimated) Total workload:*  *Contact hours (please specify whether lecture, exercise, laboratory session, etc.):*  *Private study including examination preparation, specified in hours[[15]](#footnote-15):* |
| Credit points |  |
| Required and recommended prerequisites for joining the module | *E.g. Algebra 101…*  *E.g. existing competences in ...* |
| Module objectives/intended learning outcomes | *Key question: what learning outcomes should students attain in the module?*  *E.g. in terms of:*   * *Knowledge: familiarity with information, theory and/or subject knowledge*   *Skills: cognitive and practical abilities for which knowledge is used*   * *Competences: integration of knowledge, skills and social and methodological capacities in working or learning situations[[16]](#footnote-16)*   *E.g.: “Students know that/know how to/are able to…”* |
| Content | *The description of the contents should clearly indicate the weighting of the content and the level.* |
| Examination forms | *e.g. oral presentation, essay, etc.* |
| Study and examination requirements | *Requirements for successfully passing the module* |
| Reading list | *Names of textbooks, articles, etc.* |

## Example form for Staff Handbook

**Please submit 1 page per person**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name | *N.N.* | | | | | | |
| Post | *Teaching area and designation* | | | | | | |
| Academic career | *Initial academic appointment*  Habilitation *[German post-doctoral qualification] (subject)*  *Doctorate (subject)*  *Undergraduate degree (subject)* | | | *Institution*  *Institution*  *Institution*  *Institution* | | | *Year*  *Year*  *Year*  *Year* |
| Employment | *Position* | | | *Employer* | | | *Period* |
| Research and development projects over the last 5 years | *Name of project or research focus*  *Period and any other information*  *Partners, if applicable*  *Amount of financing* | | | | | | |
| Industry collaborations over the last 5 years | *Project title*  *Partners* | | | | | | |
| Patents and proprietary rights | *Title* | |  | | | *Year* | |
| Important publications over the last 5 years | *Selected recent publications from a total of approx.*  *(give total number):*  *Author(s)*  *Title*  *Any other information*  *Publisher, place of publication, date of publication or name of periodical, volume, issue, page numbers* | | | | | | |
| Activities in specialist bodies over the last 5 years | *Organisation* | *Role* | | | *Period* | | |
| *Membership without a specific role need not be mentioned* | | | | | | |

1. Along with its own recognised seal, ASIIN is authorised to award the following European quality labels: EUR-ACE® Label: European Label for Engineering Programmes; Euro-Inf®: Label European Label for Informatics; Eurobachelor®/Euromaster® Label: European Chemistry Label; AMSE Label: for medical programmes; EQAS Food Label: for programmes related to food studies. Please visit [our website](https://www.asiin.de/en/programme-accreditation/quality-seals.html) for additional information. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [delete as necessary] ASIIN Seal for degree programmes; EUR-ACE® Label: European Label for Engineering Programmes; Euro-Inf®: Label European Label for Informatics; Eurobachelor®/Euromaster® Label: European Chemistry Label; AMSE Label: for medical programmes; EQAS Food Label: for programmes related to food studies. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. TC: Technical Committee for the following subject areas: TC 01 - Mechanical Engineering/Process Engineering; TC 02 - Electrical Engineering/Information Technology; TC 03 - Civil Engineering, Geodesy and Architecture; TC 04 - Informatics/Computer Science; TC 05 - Materials Science, Physical Technologies; TC 06 - Engineering and Management, Economics; TC 07 - Business Informatics/Information Systems; TC 08 - Agriculture, Nutritional Sciences and Landscape Architecture; TC 09 – Chemistry, Pharmacy; TC 10 - Life Sciences; TC 11 - Geosciences; TC 12 - Mathematics; TC 13 - Physics. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. EQF = The European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Double / Joint degree options related to a study programme must be comprehensively documented – [required documents](#_Example_Learning_Objectives-Module) (module descriptions, staff handbook, etc.) must be provided by all participating institutions [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Includes the assessment for the European subject-specific seals, where applicable. When the accreditation process is finalized, possible requirements and/or recommendations and also deadlines apply to the ASIIN seal as well as to the subject-specific seals. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) | Europass](https://europa.eu/europass/en/european-qualifications-framework-eqf) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. In the European Higher Education Area, it is assumed that the ECTS Users' Guide is applied as the basis for the calculation of credit points; (ECTS Users' Guide 2015, ISBN 978-92-79-43562-1) available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/ects/users-guide/docs/ects-users-guide_en.pdf> (accessed: 11.10.2021) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. In the event that your study programme is a multi- or interdisciplinary programme, or that none of the provided criteria sets directly apply, please describe in your SAR the alignment with the SSC which you consider most relevant (this can include parts of multiple sets of criteria). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Subject Specific Criteria exist for the following subject areas: Mechanical Engineering/Process Engineering; Electrical Engineering/Information Technology; Civil Engineering, Geodesy and Architecture; Informatics/Computer Science; Physical Technologies, Materials and Processes; Engineering and Management, Economics; Business Informatics/Information Systems; Agriculture, Nutritional Sciences and Landscape Architecture; Chemistry, Pharmacy; Life Sciences; Geosciences; Mathematics; Physics; Medicine. To download the respective criteria, please visit the [ASIIN website](https://www.asiin.de/en/programme-accreditation/quality-criteria.html). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. In order to assess related study programmes in a more efficient manner, clusters of up to six study programmes can be arranged. The definite number of programme clusters is defined in the ASIIN offer. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Please note that for linked files such as PDF, Word, Excel, etc., automatic translation does not work – translations of linked files should be provided by the institution. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Depending on the needs of the individual peer panels we may – in certain cases – also ask for a printed version of the application documents. However, in general only electronic documents are required. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. “Modules” are units of instruction, composed of a sum of teaching and learning whose contents are concerted. In some countries, modules may be known as “courses”. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. When calculating contact time, each contact hour is counted as a full hour because the organisation of the schedule, moving from room to room, and individual questions to lecturers after the class, all mean that about 60 minutes should be counted. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Cf. European Commission: Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and the European Council on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, COM(2006) 479 final, 2006/0163 (COD), Brussels 05/09(2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)