



# ASIIN-Policy Paper

## Subject: Quality Policy

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

This paper documents ASIIN's principles and rules internally and externally on the topic of "Quality Management for ASIIN" (Quality Management Manual / Quality Policy).

ASIIN policy papers are prepared on selected topics. As a component of ASIIN's **quality management system**, they are the link between the quality objectives and the process specifications or process descriptions. Policy papers are a summary of relevant resolutions of various committees or the ASIIN office on a topic to simplify their implementation and to increase transparency internally and externally. In case of doubt, the individual resolutions of the respective competent bodies are authoritative.

ASIIN's policy papers are guidelines for action for all members of the agency in full-time or honorary positions.

## 1.2 Areas of Application

The Quality Management Policy applies in principle to the following **fields of activity** of ASIIN, which are organised in three areas (pillars) in ASIIN's product and service portfolio:

	<i>Assessments / Accreditations / Certifications</i>	<i>Academy</i>	<i>Quality development</i>
e. V.	Assessments for the Seal of the German Accreditation Council		
	Accreditation / Certification of degree programmes (ASIIN- and Third-party seals)		Third-party-/EU-Projects
	Accreditation / Certification of QM Systems (ASIIN- and Third-party seals)		

Consult	Certification of modules and training courses	ASIIN training & workshops	Evaluations Quality assurance/improvement of studies and teaching (in accordance with ESG, Type 1)
			Evaluations Quality & Organisational Development, Effectiveness (Type 2)
	Execution of certification procedures for third parties	ASIIN Conferences	Consulting services regarding QM and organisational development

This policy document is required to varying extent in all **processes (procedures)** that are assigned to one of the above product/service areas.

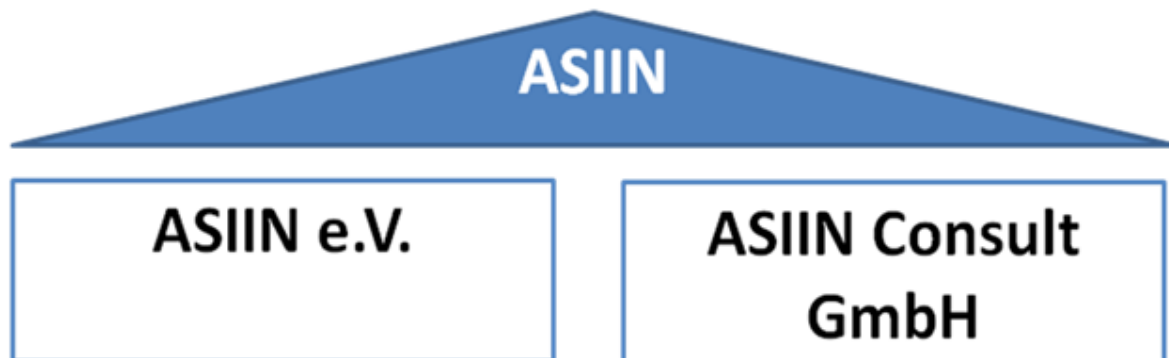
The above portfolio structure of ASIIN allows for a clear demarcation of activities internally and externally, each under the regime of the ESG<sup>1</sup> and EQAR<sup>2</sup>. Thus, in daily practice, references to the ESG and EQAR are only used for activities in the following fields:

- ✓ Assessments for the seal of the German Accreditation Council
- ✓ Accreditation / certification of study programmes (ASIIN and third-party seal)
- ✓ Accreditation / certification QM systems (ASIIN and third-party seal)
- ✓ Certification of modules and courses (ASIIN seal)
- ✓ Evaluations for quality assurance of studies and teaching within the framework of the ESG

## 2. Organisation and Responsibilities

### 2.1 Organisational structure and QM

The ASIIN Group comprises two companies: ASIIN e.V. as a non-profit association and parent company and ASIIN Consult GmbH as a subsidiary, in which part of the range of services is bundled.



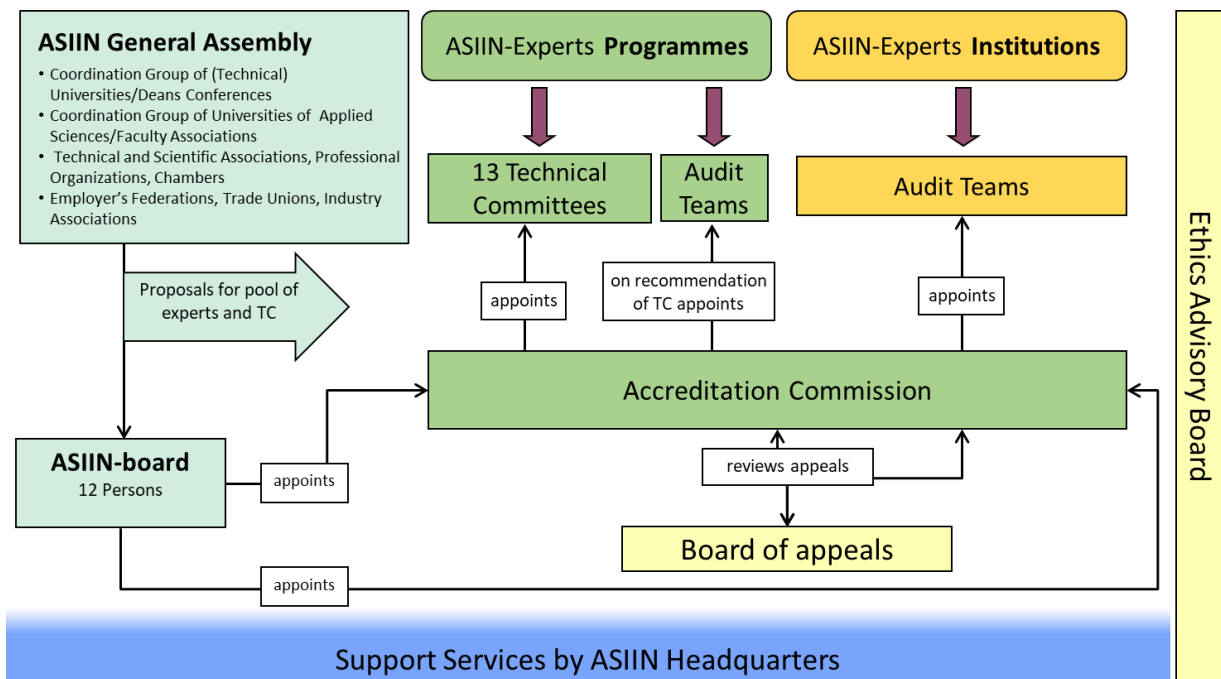
The following documents regulate the organisation, areas of competence and responsibilities of the organisational units in ASIIN e. V.:

- Statutes of ASIIN e. V. in the current version
- Rules of procedure of the Accreditation Commission in the current version
- Rules of Procedure of the Technical Committees in the current version
- Rules of Procedure of the Appeals Committee in the current version

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<sup>1</sup> Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). (2015). Brussels, Belgium.

<sup>2</sup> European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR): "a register of such agencies, including those that have demonstrated their substantial compliance with a common set of principles for quality assurance in Europe"; vgl. <http://www.eqar.eu>



**Figure 1: Structure of ASIIN e. V.**

The following bodies belong to ASIIN Consult: Advisory Board (consisting of the Board of Directors of the e.V.), Shareholder (Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the e.V.), Management / Procurement (according to the Commercial Register), Certification Committee (decision-making body for the product/service area certification of modules and courses in the Certification Pillar). The following documents regulate the organisation, areas of competence and responsibilities of the organisational units in ASIIN Consult:

- Shareholders' agreement for ASIIN Consult in the current version
- Advisory Board Regulations of ASIIN Consult in the current version
- Inter-Organ Agreement ASIIN e.V. and ASIIN Consult
- Rules of Procedure of the Certification Commission in the current version (service area Certification of Modules and Courses)

The ASIIN office is responsible for controlling the implementation of quality management, the instruments and the documentation for both the product/service areas of the e.V. and those of the Consult.

The respective bodies of the e.V. and Consult are responsible for resolutions regulating / influencing quality within the scope of the area of responsibility assigned to them in accordance with the statutes.

## 2.2 Logic of documents

Ebene / level 01 **Mission**

Quelle/Source: Strategiepapier der ASIIN, 2013-04-29

Denomination Docs:

01QMÜber-[xxx]-jjjj-  
mm-tt

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<b>Ebene / level 02</b>	<b>Objectives and Strategy</b>	
	Quelle/Source: Strategiepapier der ASIIN, 2013-04-29	<i>Denomination Docs:</i> 02QMStrat-[xxx]-jjjj- mm-tt
<b>Ebene / level 03</b>	<b>QM-Policy Manual</b>	
	Quelle/Source: vgl. jeweiliges Dokument	<i>Denomination Docs:</i> 03QMPol-[xxx]-jjjj- mm-tt
<b>Ebene / level 04</b>	<b>Processes</b>	
	Quelle/Source: vgl. jeweiliges Dokument	<i>Denomination Docs:</i> 04QMProz-[xxx]-jjjj- mm-tt
<b>Ebene / level 05</b>	<b>Job instructions</b>	
	Quelle/Source: vgl. jeweiliges Dokument	<i>Denomination Docs:</i> 05QMAA-[xxx]-jjjj- mm-tt
<b>Ebene / level 06</b>	<b>QM templates</b>	
	Quelle/Source: vgl. jeweiliges Dokument	<i>Denomination Docs:</i> [Nr. Ebene]QM[Bez Ebene]-[xxx]-jjjj-mm- tt

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The documents of levels 01, 02 and 03 are generally published on the ASIIN website - if necessary in excerpts or summarised, e.g. in the respective criteria documents for the product/service areas accreditation / certification of study programmes (ASIIN and third-party seals); accreditation / certification of QM systems (ASIIN and third-party seals); certification of modules and courses evaluations quality assurance/improvement of studies and teaching (according to ESG).

The documents of levels 04, 05 and 06 fall under the internal documentation system and are not intended for publication. An exception to this are process descriptions and templates for the implementation of accreditation/certification procedures, which are also designed for the

use and information of applying higher education institutions, experts and committee members.

The documents of levels 01 and 02 are the results of the strategy process of ASIIN and a continuation of the purpose of the ASIIN organisation set in the statutes of the association when it was founded in 1999.

The present policy document Quality Management Manual / Quality Policy is placed on level 03 of the documentation of the quality management system in a series of different policy documents that are relevant to quality and are intended to promote quality.

### 3. Principles: Quality Policy and Objectives

#### 3.1 Goals and principles of the quality policy

The goals of ASIIN's quality policy are derived from the goals of the organisation as a whole. On behalf of the Executive Board, ASIIN conducted an internal strategy development process in 2012/13 to guide the work of the agency. The result of this process is a strategy paper that encompasses the overall organisation (e.V. and Consult GmbH) and sets out the following conviction, goals and paths:

Mission	<p>The representatives of higher education institutions, business and administration active in ASIIN share the conviction that good academic education is the basis for the sustainable development of modern societies.</p> <p>"Education" is understood here as a development and learning process for the acquisition of diverse competences and as its result. The educational outcome supports the successful shaping of personal, social and professional life.</p>
Goals	<p>Therefore, ASIIN pursues the national and international goal,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ to ensure and strengthen the quality of academic education;</li> <li>→ to create transparency about the quality achieved in academic education and continuing education;</li> <li>→ to strengthen academic and professional mobility by ensuring the quality of academic education and its transparent communication.</li> </ul> <p>We do this for the member societies of ASIIN in the non-profit association, for higher education institutions, teachers and learners, for professional practice, politics and interested third parties.</p>
Path	<p>ASIIN achieves its goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ by providing services to providers or systems in academic education and continuous education both nationally and internationally</li> </ul>

	<p>→ through accreditation and certification, evaluation and consulting services on system and organisational development as well as training</p> <p>→ through the (voluntary) participation of external experts from academia and professional practice.</p>
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The conviction and the formulation of goals from the strategy process complement and interpret the purpose of the association as laid down in its statutes since its foundation in 1999.

**This self-image relates to all product and service areas of ASIIN in e.V. and Consult.**

ASIIN's internal quality work follows the logic of the **TQM approach** (Total Quality Management), according to which quality is not the goal but an integral part of every activity and every process of an organisation and its individual members.

Accordingly, the cyclical understanding from the so-called **Deming circle** (Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle) should be integrated into everyday processes as well as into organisational and product development projects. Consequently, ASIIN's quality management system is not to be run as a "secondary bureaucracy" that constantly reconstructs daily processes from a bird's eye view. Rather, the instruments of quality work should be easily and directly accessible to the employees in their respective tasks and functions, or the work processes and the instruments used should be designed in such a way that they support integrated quality work - setting goals, implementing them, checking results, deriving improvements - within the framework of the execution of a task.

The principles of objectivity, validity, confidentiality and transparency apply to the following service areas as guiding principles for action:

- Assessments for the seal of the German Accreditation Council
- Accreditation / certification of study programmes (ASIIN and third-party seal)
- Accreditation / certification of QM systems (ASIIN and third-party seal)
- Certification of modules and courses (ASIIN certificate)
- Evaluations for quality assurance and improvement in teaching and learning

**On the principle of objectivity:** All procedures of external quality assurance and enhancement (accreditation/certification as well as evaluation according to ESG) of ASIIN are based on quality requirements defined in advance and independently of the individual applicant as a catalogue of criteria for the review. In addition, ASIIN's principles for the implementation of all types of external quality assurance procedures are intended to balance out subjective positions of individual participants in the procedure and to ensure uniform and comparable decisions.

**On the principle of validity:** ASIIN sees its competence in bringing together lines of discussion from different subject cultures, educational systems and approaches to quality-oriented management in study and teaching as well as from the side of various stakeholders from science, professional practice and politics from Germany and abroad, which ASIIN's committee members process when developing the procedures and criteria. Criteria and procedural principles used in external quality assurance gain validity from broad acceptance by relevant national and international stakeholders and from constant comparison with the relevant European agreements (ESG).

**On the principles of confidentiality and transparency:** All ASIIN procedures should be designed in such a way that both confidentiality and transparency are achieved and maintained. In the individual procedures, personal data is usually introduced by the clients, the experts and also the committee members. In addition, there is data that concerns the strategic planning of the applicants and is naturally classified as confidential by them. Therefore, every procedure must be designed in such a way that this data is handled in accordance with data protection regulations. At the same time, the results of all external quality assurance procedures in the above-mentioned fields of performance must create transparency in the public about the quality of the examined object (e.g. a study programme or an institution). The procedure must also be so transparent that the persons directly involved in it have an overview of the process, the requirements placed on them, the basis of the procedure and its possible results, can understand the path of an application, as well as the associated decisions and their justification, and can assign responsibility for them.

The employees entrusted with the respective work and projects should also be able to apply the aforementioned principles in the product and service areas of

- Handling certification procedures for third-party providers
- evaluations in the area of quality and organisational development
- Consultation services related to QM and organisational development
- Third-party funding/EU projects

as far as transferable.

### 3.2 ASIIN Internal QM Activity Areas

For the product and service areas

- Assessments for the seal of the German Accreditation Council
- Accreditation / certification of study programmes (ASIIN and third-party seal)
- Accreditation / certification of QM systems (ASIIN and third-party seal)
- Certification of modules and courses (ASIIN seal)
- Evaluations for quality assurance and improvement in teaching and learning

quality assurance measures are implemented in four fields of activity. These take into account the special features of a volunteer and member organisation, where essential parts of the service provision arise from the interaction of volunteer forces and fewer full-time employees.

The four fields of activity and associated parameters are:

**Field 1** - Experts and committee members: The quality of the **pool of experts** - Here the quality expectation refers to the following parameters:

- Expertise of the reviewers or panel members
- Experience of the experts or panel members
- Composition of the expert teams
- Independence/impartiality of the reviewers or panel members
- Availability of the reviewers or panel members

**Field 2** - Criteria of external quality assurance and improvement (certification/accreditation, evaluation according to ESG): The quality of the **criteria and procedural principles** - Here the quality expectation refers to the following parameters:



- Validity
- Objectivity
- Timeliness
- Accessibility for those involved in the procedure

**Field 3** - Procedure implementation: The **quality in the application of the criteria and procedural principles** - Here the quality expectation refers to the following parameters:

- Transparency
- Confidentiality
- Consistency
- Objectivity
- Efficiency

**Field 4** - Acceptance: The **recognition of the procedure results by third parties** - Here, the quality expectation refers to the following parameters:

- Recognition by national actors
- Recognition by international actors

These quality parameters should - as far as transferable - also apply to "tailor-made" projects and evaluations in the following product and service areas:

- Handling of certification procedures for third-party providers
- Evaluations in the field of quality and organisational development
- Consulting services in QM and organisational development.

### 3.3 Quality Expectations (specific to each service)

ASIIN has defined quality expectations for each of the following service areas:

- Assessments for the seal of the German Accreditation Council
- Accreditation / certification of study programmes (ASIIN and third-party seal)
- Accreditation / certification of QM systems (ASIIN and third-party seal)
- Certification of modules and courses (ASIIN seal)
- Evaluations for quality assurance and improvement in teaching and learning

Activity field	Parameter	Quality Expectations
Field 1 - Experts and committee members	Experience of the experts or committee members	Individually per expert and committee member in general: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• desirable: proven accreditation or evaluation experience, international experience, experience in university self-administration.</li> <li>• Participation in training and induction offers</li> </ul>

Activity field	Parameter	Quality Expectations
		(See also the requirements related to Expert groups in the respective criteria and procedure specifications)
Field 1 - Experts and committee members	Expertise of the experts or committee members	Individually for each expert and committee member in general: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proven technical and / or professional expertise related to the examined item</li> </ul>
Field 1 - Experts and committee members	Composition of the expert teams	The expert group per procedure should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• due to their composition, be able to cover the subject (s) to be assessed in a procedure in terms of subject matter / content ;</li> <li>• by virtue of their composition, be able to see the concerns of the relevant stakeholders and include these in their assessment ;</li> <li>• include, wherever possible, already experienced and new experts ;</li> <li>• due to their composition at special form of organization of the university experience with this high - school - have form ;</li> <li>• be able to include experience from foreign systems and with international or European standards in the assessment ;</li> <li>• be composed of people from scientific institutions / universities with experience / expertise in control and quality development as well as in the design of teaching and learning processes, as well as students and representatives from professional practice.</li> </ul> (See also the requirements related to Expert groups in the respective criteria and procedure specifications)

Activity field	Parameter	Quality Expectations
Field 1 - Experts and committee members	Independence / impartiality of the experts or committee members	<p>Experts are not employed in a procedure if they</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are involved in an application process at the institution which is to be assessed ;</li> <li>• on a regular basis publish or carry out projects together with lecturers from the institution to be assessed ;</li> <li>• are active at the institution to be assessed or are otherwise dependent on it .</li> </ul> <p>Acting board members and vote independently of third organizations and give i hre vote and a vote due to the present facts, their personal Egg n - assessment, experience and expertise from.</p>
Field 1 - Experts and committee members	Availability of the experts or panel members	<p><i>Temporal</i> availability: The experts and committee members relevant dates are made known as early as possible.</p> <p>For experts and committee members relevant dates and meetings are jointly determined via voting within the respective groups.</p> <p><i>Readiness</i> :</p> <p>The agency carries the immediate financial costs incurred by the committee members in the execution of their duties (travel expenses, administration fee).</p> <p>Experts and committee members can support the objectives, methodology, the criteria and procedural principles for each method identify.</p> <p>The member organizations of ASIIN support the recruitment of Gutachte r * held n un d board members .</p>
Field 2 - Criteria and procedural principles	objectivity	Criteria and process - principles are defined beforehand independent of individual procedures.
Field 2 - Criteria and procedural principles	validity	The used criteria and procedure rules are adopted and put into effect by the competent ASIIN bodies or the respective seal owner.

Activity field	Parameter	Quality Expectations
		<p>The criteria and procedural principles used are generally supported by the ASIIN member organisations.</p> <p>The criteria and procedural principles used are recognised by the applying institutions as a basis for evaluation.</p> <p>The criteria and procedural principles used are recognised by accreditation bodies for accreditation agencies at home and abroad.</p>
Field 2 - Criteria and procedural principles	Topicality	<p>The criteria and procedural principles used are classified by the participating experts, committee members and applicants as oriented towards current developments (from science, professional practice and society).</p> <p>The criteria and procedural principles allow the decision-making bodies to take into account new developments (from science, professional practice and society) that affect the accreditation object in their decisions.</p>
Field 2 - Criteria and procedural principles	Accessibility for those involved in the proceedings	<p>The criteria and procedural principles are documented and published.</p> <p>They can be viewed by the parties involved in the proceedings at any time.</p>
Field 3 - Procedure execution	Transparency	<p>Standard procedures and elements of the process are documented and published.</p> <p>They can be consulted at any time by those involved in the procedure.</p> <p>The status of each procedure is known to those directly involved.</p>
Field 3 - Procedure execution	Confidentiality	<p>Experts, committee members and procedural supervisors have undertaken to treat all personal and procedural data confidentially.</p> <p>Experts, committee members and procedural advisors will only disclose personal and procedural data to third parties authorised by them and, in case of doubt, obtain the permission of the person or organisation concerned.</p> <p>Authorisation to publish the name in connection with a procedure is granted with the commitment to act as an expert.</p> <p>Confidentiality is also ensured in the technical processing and archiving of personal and procedural data.</p>

Activity field	Parameter	Quality Expectations
		When processing and archiving personal and procedural data, the relevant requirements of the supervisory bodies and the relevant legal provisions (e.g. DSGVO) are observed.
Field 3 – Procedure execution	Uniformity	<p>The criteria defined for the award of a certificate/seal are applied in all related procedures.</p> <p>The principles and procedures foreseen for the award of a certificate/seal are followed in all related procedures.</p> <p>Mechanisms are in place to support the consistent application of the criteria and procedural principles.</p> <p>The individual decisions on the award of a certificate/seal are based on common principles (criteria and procedural principles and their consistent interpretation).</p>
Field 3 - Procedure execution	Objectivity	Mechanisms take effect that balance the subjective positions of individual participants in the process and relate them to positions that can be supported by the majority.
Field 3 - Procedure execution	Efficiency	<p>For the implementation of procedures, schedules are available that are coordinated with the parties involved in the procedure.</p> <p>Any necessary adjustments to schedules for procedures are made as early as possible and communicated to those involved in the procedure.</p> <p>Experts, committee members and process supervisors adhere to deadlines that have been set. Unavoidable obstacles to this are communicated as early as possible.</p> <p>The design of the procedure and supporting processes avoids delaying effects of any kind on the process, unless these are due to quality assurance and are explicitly defined for this purpose.</p> <p>The design of procedures and supporting processes is geared towards the highest possible efficiency in the use of resources, insofar as this does not jeopardise compliance with quality expectations.</p>
Field 4 - Recognition	Acceptance by national and international actors	ASIIN's methodology, criteria and procedural principles are suitable for

Activity field	Parameter	Quality Expectations
		<p>meeting the objectives set by the competent regulators, in particular the ESG.</p> <p>Overall, they are comparable to approaches established internationally or in other countries.</p> <p>ASIIN's methodology, criteria and procedural principles are accepted by accreditation bodies for accreditation agencies and by relevant associations and networks at home and abroad as a basis for membership.</p>

These quality expectations should - as far as transferable - also apply to "tailor-made" projects and evaluations in the following product and service areas:

- Processing certification procedures for third-party providers
- Evaluations in the area of quality and organisational development
- QM-related consultation services and organisational development.

## 4. Quality Management: Instruments

ASIIN integrates a number of mechanisms into its own process flows that are intended to support the achievement of the aforementioned quality expectations in the planning, review and further development of its activities in the various product and service fields.

One central mechanism that is intended to have this effect is already "built into" ASIIN e.V.'s organisational structure as a structural principle: the principle of "checks and balances".

### 4.1 Mutual control of committees through internal checks and balances

The allocation of tasks for the ASIIN committees results in a mutual control between and within the committees as a basic structural principle for the realisation of both decisions on accreditations or certifications/seals and criteria and procedural principles that guide the procedures. A procedure is guided by at least two structural levels so that they check and balance each other. The structure for the conduct of external quality assurance procedures and (where provided) seal/certificate decisions includes the following components:

<b>Component checks and balances</b>	Accred . / Cert . Study Programmes	Accred . / Cert . QM systems	Certification of Modules and courses	Eval . Quality Assurance (according to ESG)
Establishment and maintenance of the expert pool by the responsible body	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	-	-
Appointment of experts previously included in the expert pool as a rule	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Expert proposal for procedures from a different body than the appointing body	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b> (Office)	<b>X</b> (Office)
Evaluation (Level 1): Expert group	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Evaluation (Level 2): Expert committees - uniform application of criteria from a professional point of view	<b>X</b>	-	-	-
Final evaluation + decision (Level 3) by the respective decision-making body for awarding certificates/seals (ASIIN and third-party seal)	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	-
Appeals Committee (for all decisions on a seal/certificate)	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	-
(Further) development of the fundamental ASIIN approach in accreditation / certification by a joint Accreditation Commission	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
(Further) development of general criteria and procedural principles for study programmes or QM systems as well as interpretation authority (own seals) by joint Working Group	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	-	<b>X</b>

<b>Component checks and balances</b>	Accred . / Cert . Study Programmes	Accred . / Cert . QM systems	Certification of Modules and courses	Eval . Quality Assurance (according to ESG)
Programmes and Systems				
Draft criteria (own seals) from a professional point of view by expert committees	<b>X</b>	-	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Mix of stakeholder groups (teachers, professional practice, students) and expertise in each decision- making body	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

## 4.2 Professional procedural support

In the product and service areas

- Assessments for the seal of the German Accreditation Council
- Accreditation / certification of study programmes (ASIIN and third-party seal)
- Accreditation / certification of QM systems (ASIIN and third-party seal)
- Certification of modules and courses (ASIIN seal)
- Evaluations for quality assurance and improvement in teaching and learning

the rule of continuous, full-time procedural supervision applies to all procedures.

The role and function of the procedure supervisor is documented in the ASIIN criteria documents for the various seals and includes the overall coordination of a procedure, the ongoing monitoring of the application of relevant specifications, schedules and required process steps, moderation of all parties involved in the procedure, support of the experts and committee meetings, preparation of draft reports, draft resolutions and procedure documentation and the function as a central information hub between applicants, experts and other involved committees.