

The logo for ACQUIN, featuring the word "ACQUIN" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A solid red circle is positioned between the 'Q' and 'U'.

Accreditation,  
Certification and  
Quality Assurance  
Institute

# Annual Report 2018

# 2001

At the time of the initial accreditation by the Accreditation Council in 2001, the Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute ACQUIN was launched with 57 members from four German federal states. By the end of 2018, its membership was held by 164 higher education institutions as well as professional societies and associations from all over Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Lebanon.

Same as in 2006 and 2011, in 2016 the Accreditation Council approved re-accreditation of ACQUIN for a period of five years. In February 2017, the Accreditation Council ascertained fulfillment of the conditions imposed in the course of the re-accreditation procedure. The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) also confirmed compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and extended the listing of ACQUIN with EQAR until 30 June 2021. ACQUIN continues to regard itself as a global actor representing aspiration to contribute to the improvement of the quality of higher education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and beyond.

In the year under review, just under 700 accreditation and evaluation decisions were made (including decisions on the fulfillment of the conditions as well as system accreditations and certifications). With 29 completed system accreditation procedures, ACQUIN plays a leading role in the further development of the accreditation system in Germany. In the course of 17 years of practical work, the operational and organisational structure of ACQUIN has proven its effectiveness and assured a continuous focus on quality.

# 2018

As a result of the Federal Constitutional Court ruling of 17 February 2016, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Rectors' Conference have further developed the accreditation system which ensures the constitutional conformity of the system of quality assurance in higher education. The State Treaty on a Country-wide Accreditation System for Quality Assurance in Teaching and Learning at German universities was ratified by the end of 2017 and came into force on 1 January 2018. The implementation of accreditation procedures, which is carried out after the conclusion of a contract from 1 January 2018, is based on the model statutory ordinance adopted by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany on 7 December 2017.

The reorganisation of the accreditation system required new process steps in the process flows at ACQUIN in order to meet the stipulations of the legal requirements. In the year under review, the first two programme accreditations were carried out in accordance with the new legislation and numerous others were initiated. At two universities a procedure that is established as an equivalent to a system accreditation is carried out as part of the experimentation clause of the Accreditation Council.

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## HEAD OFFICE AND COMMITTEES

In 2018, ACQUIN made just under 700 evaluation and accreditation decisions (including decisions on the fulfillment of conditions). The evaluation and accreditation procedures were carried out jointly by the accreditation commission, the expert committees, the appointed expert groups as well as the ACQUIN head office in a carefully structured process and in the context of clearly defined division of responsibilities.

According to the procedure requirements, the **committee structure** is made up as follows:

- The effective cooperation of the bodies and committees of ACQUIN is insured by its **board** and **general assembly**. Both strategic steering committees of ACQUIN are focused on the application and implementation of the objectives and operational principles of ACQUIN when using the criteria and procedures for accreditation and certification. Board elections are held every three years.
- The **accreditation commission** renders a comprehensive contribution to the thorough and reliable task fulfillment by ACQUIN. The accreditation commission of ACQUIN is composed of representatives of universities, colleges of art and music, universities of applied sciences, professional practice and students. According to its statute, the chairmanship of the accreditation commission is held by a chairperson. The accreditation commission members are appointed for a period of two years. The accreditation commission was re-elected in 2017.
- The **expert committees** partially expanded its pool of personnel; long-standing expert committee members were re-elected or replaced by new expert representatives. They are also composed of representatives of higher education institutions, professional practice and students. The expert committee members are appointed for a period of four years.
- The **appeals commission** has been appointed to ensure an orderly and independent appeal procedure to address objections of contractual partners of ACQUIN with respect to accreditation decisions. The appeals commission is made up of five members, with one member per each group of universities, colleges of art and music, universities of applied sciences, professional practice and students. The term of office shall be three years.
- In 2018, approximately 800 **experts** - university faculty members, students and representatives of professional practice - on behalf of ACQUIN evaluated study programmes and internal quality assurance systems at higher education institutions taking into account the criteria of the Accreditation Council and the

"Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG) as well as the relevant country-specific legal requirements.

- In order to meet the requirements of the evaluation and accreditation procedures and to provide the adequate degree of publicity, the **head office** of ACQUIN is always adequately staffed. From December 2017 onwards, the operations have been carried out under a dual leadership in the spirit of a collegial management.

## THE BOARD

In addition to the general assembly of ACQUIN, the board is a major strategic steering committee of the agency. The board bears the economic responsibility for ACQUIN and thus has a particular interest in the efficiency and effectiveness of the ACQUIN operations.

In 2018, the board met four times in order to decide on the membership applications, to make the personnel-related decisions and to discuss matters that are of fundamental relevance for ACQUIN. The board plays a crucial part in keeping track of the developments and results of the work of the agency necessary for making essential decisions on the further development of the performance capability of ACQUIN.

The agenda in 2018 mostly focused on the reorganisation of the accreditation system.

### Meetings of the Board:

17 January 2018, Frankfurt am Main

16 April 2018, Frankfurt am Main

14 May 2018, Lüneburg

12 November 2018, Frankfurt am Main

As of 30 April 2018, Professor Dr.-Ing. Gerd Zimmermann, University of Weimar, and Professor Dr. Stefanie Groppe, University of Tübingen, resigned from the Board of ACQUIN. In accordance with Section 7 (3) sentence 3 of ACQUIN Statute, the Board elected Professor Dr. Ing. Sebastian Kempgen, University of Bamberg, to serve the remainder of his term of office as a cooperating member of the executive board and appointed him first chairperson.

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On 14 May 2018, the general assembly of ACQUIN was held at the Leuphana University of Lüneburg.

The vice chairperson of ACQUIN, Professor Dr. Christiane Jost, started the assembly with her welcoming speech. She pointed out that Professor Dr.-Ing. Gerd Zimmermann had resigned from his position as chairperson of ACQUIN in April 2018 and thanked him for the fact that ACQUIN had become one of the leading agencies in programme and, above all, system accreditation, not least because of his long-term commitment.

After the opening statement by the President of Leuphana University, Professor Dr. Sascha Spoun, Dr. Christoph Grolimund, President of ENQA and Di-

rector of the Swiss Agency for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ), in his keynote speech entitled "Trends in External Quality Assurance", provided a European perspective on the German accreditation system. A subsequent panel discussion with representatives of science, politics, media and industry addressed the following question: "Quality assurance - who cares? What should quality assurance achieve?" The panel included Edelgard Bulmahn, Federal Minister of Education and Research 1998-2005, Dr. Ing. Christoph Grolimund, Dr. Ulrich Hoffmeister, Chief Executive for Further Training of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce Lübeck, and Professor Dr. Sasha Spoun. Julia Dietrich, systemic consultant and coach at company development consultancy

Brückel Unternehmensentwicklung GmbH, acted as moderator.

Brief statements from the panelists followed: "What constitutes the quality of a study programme?", "Can there be quality assurance in area of teaching and learning at all?", "What should quality assurance at universities accomplish?" The resulting debate touched upon, inter alia, the state influence on the governance of higher education institutions, the perception of accreditation at higher education institutions, the function of accreditation agencies, the compliance with standards and the impact of accreditation on competition among higher education institutions.

This was followed by a discussion of the annual report 2017 and the presentation of the audit report. The compiled financial report for 2017 was adopted unanimously.

The general meeting participants voted concordantly in favour of the discharge of the Board and of the adoption of the budget for 2018. Subsequently, the members confirmed the election of the following members to the Board of ACQUIN on 18 October 2017 and 16 April 2018: Professor Dr. Folker Roland, Harz University of Applied Sciences (as treasurer) and Professor Dr. Sebastian Kempgen (as first chairperson) by a simple show of hands as per the statute.

Due to the establishment of a collegial management of two people at the

head of the office, a change in the statutes was necessary, the term "manager" was replaced by "management". The draft amendment to the statute was approved by the general assembly.

With regard to the reorganisation of the accreditation procedures, the Managing Director Dr. Stefan Handke outlined ACQUIN approach of offering the universities three procedure variants in the future; the most cost and time effective option would no longer require the involvement of expert committees. Although the special subject-related and content support is still a quality feature of ACQUIN and should be continued in principle, the demand of the higher education institutions and the most requested services should be taken into account by the agencies in the future. Therefore, the General Assembly was asked to approve the pilot project of ACQUIN in order to test the variations of the procedure on the market for a transitional period before subsequently changing the statutes, which shall provide for the involvement of the expert committees. The general assembly approved the procedural variants for programme accreditation.

Following the general assembly, the attendees had the opportunity to participate in a guided tour of the Leuphana University Central Building designed by Daniel Libeskind. The event was concluded with a standing reception.

## MEMBERSHIP

In 2018, ACQUIN was once again able to attract new members. As a result of 2018 withdrawal of member higher education institutions, the total number of members has slightly decreased for the fourth time in succession: as of 31 December 2018 ACQUIN consisted of 164

members - in the vast majority higher education institutions (in balanced proportions universities and universities of applied sciences as well as colleges of art and music) and scientific societies and science-related professional asso-

ciations. The highest number of members amounted to 172 and was reached in 2014.

The geographical reach of the membership extends across all German federal states, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Lebanon.

**In 2018, the Board approved the following higher education institutions as new members of ACQUIN:**

HfKM Regensburg - College of Catholic Church Music & Musical Education in Regensburg

International Burch University, Ilidža, Bosnia and Herzegovina

### THE APPEALS COMMISSION

The complaints procedure of ACQUIN includes all elements of the evaluation and accreditation procedures. These include the rules of the procedure and the evaluation criteria used in the procedure as well as the appointment of experts, the statements of the expert reports and accreditation decisions alike. In order to address complaints, careful precautions are taken as they are systematically integrated into the procedure.

The appeal procedure of ACQUIN provides that a higher education institution appeals regarding accreditation decisions are initially submitted to the accreditation commission and then, if the appeal is not rectified, they are forwarded to the appeals commission for a revision and statement issuance. Recommendations of the appeals commission are considered by the accreditation commission.

In 2018, no complaints were submitted to the appeals commission.

### ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

The accreditation commission is the central decision-making body in the evaluation and accreditation procedures. It has a number of key tasks related to the overall coordination of the procedure: it determines the procedural principles and guidelines, discusses and reaches decisions on the evaluation results and makes accreditation decisions based on them. It also appoints members of the expert committees. Its decisions for accreditation

of an individual study programme (programme accreditation) or internal quality assurance systems of higher education institutions in the area of teaching and learning (system accreditation) are based on the expert report, the statement of the concerned higher education institution on the expert report and the statement of the competent expert committee. The procedures of certification and institutional accreditation are carried out along the same lines.

## MEETINGS OF THE ACCREDITATION COMMISSION 2018

In 2017, the accreditation commission held meetings four times - in March, June, September, and December - in order to come to an agreement regarding the evaluation criteria and procedural principles, to make accreditation decisions, and to deal with the appointment of new or the re-election of long-standing committee members.

In the year under review, the members of the accreditation commission primarily dealt with the decisions and requirements of the Accreditation Council on the new accreditation system, the guidelines for expert appointments, and the compilation of expert groups for accreditation procedures (Resolution of the German Rectors' Conference from 24 April 2018) and the various variants, according to which ACQUIN will carry out procedures in the future (with or without involvement of the expert committees, with or without remedial loops). Procedure adjustments within the office were explained, and a handbook with the outline of the compilation of the self-reports under new law for higher education institutions was adopted.

An important topic was the attempt to clarify the role of the committee members in the new system, as a clear positioning of the Accreditation Council on

### Meetings of the Accreditation Commission:

AC 68 on 26 March 2018, Bayreuth

AC 69 on 18 June 2018, Wismar

AC 70 on 24-25 September 2018, Bayreuth

AC 71 on 10 December 2018, Bayreuth

the referral of the agency-internal committees is still pending. Initial ideas on the merging of expert committees and expert groups were discussed so that, in addition to a mere commentary, expert committees are able to continue to have a compensatory effect on the procedures.

Based on the expert reports, statements of higher education institutions and opinions of expert committees, the accreditation commission made a total of just under 700 decisions on programme and system accreditations as well as certifications and evaluations in 2018 (see further *Accreditation and Evaluation Procedures, Accreditation Summary*).

In 2018, the accreditation commission meeting was attended by Helke Biehl, Bettina Kutzer, und Sofia Treskova who represented the head office.

## EXPERT COMMITTEES

Since its foundation in 2001, ACQUIN has set up nine expert committees composed of representatives of higher education institutions, colleges of art and music, universities of applied sciences, professional practice and students. The expert committees play a significant role in the evaluation and

accreditation procedures, they nominate the experts and ensure the uniformity and appropriateness of the implementation of the procedures on the basis of the evaluation report drawn up by the expert groups and the statement of the respective higher education institution. The performance of the

expert committees is therefore essential for the internal quality assurance and quality control. The members of the expert committees fulfill their duties under the coordination of the respective expert committee spokesperson. The individual expert committees cooperate with each other in the accreditation in order to meet requirements of the profile of individual study programmes in a bundled process and the profile of interdisciplinary study programmes.

A shared exchange of opinions and experiences of expert committees and accreditation commission takes place regularly, as a rule, every two years. On 13 March 2018, a cross-committee meeting was held in Bayreuth with the participation of the Board, attended by

numerous members of the expert committees and the accreditation commission. In particular, they discussed the future strategic positioning of ACQUIN and reviewed the changes in procedures and the position of the committees within the agency.

A working group with members from the accreditation commission and expert committees met once in 2018 to focus on the strategic development of ACQUIN.

Personnel changes were made in several expert committees. On the one hand, there was a recruitment of additional personnel in order to take proper account of the various academic disciplines; on the other hand, there was a replacement of retired members in order to ensure the professional continuity within the expert committees.

## REELECTION AND PERSONNEL CHANGES IN THE EXPERT COMMITTEES

### Expert Committee for Humanities, Linguistics and Cultural Studies:

- Professor Dr. Holger Kuße (Slavic Studies, TU Dresden), reappointed since March 2018
- Professor Dr. Stefan Kammhuber (Psychology, Speech Studies, University of Applied Sciences Rapperswil), appointed since March 2018
- Professor Dr. Franz Bosbach (History of the Early Modern Age, University of Duisburg-Essen), reappointed since September 2018
- Professor Dr. Thomas Spitzley (Philosophy, University of Duisburg-Essen), reappointed since September 2018
- Professor Dr. Tilman Steiner (Journalism, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz / Bavarian Broadcasting BR in Munich), reappointed since September 2018

After several years of involvement in the expert committee the following member has resigned:

- Professor Dr. Alexander Thomas (Psychology, University of Regensburg)

### Expert Committee for Computer Science:

- Professor Dr. Joachim Scheja (Business Informatics, Nuremberg Institute of Technology Georg Simon Ohm), reappointed since September 2018

- Professor Dr. Ulf Schreier (Applied Computer Science, Furtwangen University), reappointed since September 2018
- Professor Dr. Tonja Kaltenhäuser (Computer engineering, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences), reappointed since December 2018

#### **Expert Committee for Engineering Sciences:**

- Professor Dr.-Ing. Andrea Kobylka (Production Technology, WHZ - University of Applied Sciences Zwickau), reappointed since March 2018
- Sophie Wolfram (Student majoring in Electrical Engineering / Information Technology, University of Applied Sciences Jena), appointed since June 2018
- Professor Dr.-Ing. Hans-Friedrich Hinrichs (Environment and Energy Technology, SRH University of Applied Sciences Hamm), reappointed since December 2018
- Professor Dr. Rudolf Stauber (Advanced Materials and Process Engineering, Friedrich–Alexander University Erlangen–Nürnberg, Director of the Project Group IWKS at the Fraunhofer Institute for Silicate Research ISC), reappointed since December 2018
- Professor Dr.-Ing. Georg Weidner (Mechanical Engineering, University of Applied Sciences Schmalkalden), reappointed since December 2018

#### **Expert Committee for Art, Music, and Design:**

- Professor Martin Köttering (President of the University of Fine Arts HFBK Hamburg), reappointed since September 2018
- Professor (emeritus) Dr. Peter Rautmann (former Rector of the University of the Arts Bremen), reappointed since September 2018

#### **Expert Committee for Mathematics and Natural Sciences:**

- Professor (emeritus) Dr.-Ing. Dr. oec. Peter Dierich (Mathematics, Zittau/Görlitz University of Applied Sciences), reappointed since June 2018
- Professor Dr. Karl Heinz Hoffmann (Physics, Chemnitz University of Technology), reappointed since June 2018
- Professor Dr. Jörg Völkel (Geosciences, Technical University of Munich), reappointed since June 2018
- Professor Dr. Jutta Ludwig-Müller (Botany, TU Dresden), reappointed since December 2018

#### **Expert Committee for Medical and Health Sciences:**

- Professor Dr. med. Christoff Zalpour (Physiotherapy, Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences), reappointed since March 2018

- Max Zilezinski (Student majoring in Health Care Sciences, Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences), appointed since June 2018
- Professor Dr. med. Helga Fritsch (Anatomy, Rector of the Medical University of Innsbruck), reappointed since December 2018

**Expert Committee for Economics, Law and Social Sciences:**

- Professor Dr. Karl Lenz (Sociology, TU Dresden), reappointed since March 2018
- Professor Dr. Andrea Braun von Reinersdorff (General Business Administration and Hospital Management, particularly Human Resources Management, Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences), reappointed since March 2018
- Professor Dr. Ernst Troßmann (Business Administration, University of Hohenheim), reappointed since June 2018
- Dr. Christoph Anz (Head of Education Policy, BMW Group), reappointed since December 2018
- Professor Dr. Ralf Kuckhermann (Social Sciences, Nuremberg Institute of Technology Georg Simon Ohm), reappointed since December 2018

## MEETINGS OF THE EXPERT COMMITTEES IN 2018

In 2018, the expert committees held meetings regularly in order to issue the guidelines for the upcoming procedures, to appoint expert groups, to submit statements on the individual procedures, and to coordinate the procedure standards for the work of the expert committees.

In each session, the agenda included discussions on the new developments in the German accreditation system and in the European Higher Education Area. The preparation of the meetings as well as the continuous support of the expert committees were carried out by appointed coordinators.

### Meetings of the Expert Committees

Architecture and Planning:

13 March 2018, Bayreuth

17 September 2018, Erfurt

Computer Science:

14 March 2018, Nuremberg

21 September 2018, Nuremberg

Engineering Sciences:

12 March 2018, Bayreuth

10 September 2018, Bayreuth

Humanities, Linguistics and Cultural Studies:

14 March 2018, Bayreuth

Art, Music and Design:

9 March 2018, Bremerhaven

6 September 2018, Berlin

Mathematics and Natural Sciences:

13 March 2018, Bayreuth

11 September 2018, Bayreuth

Medicine and Health Sciences:

15 March 2018, Frankfurt am Main

13 September 2018, Munich

System Accreditation:

20 March 2018, Frankfurt am Main

Economics, Law and Social Sciences:

17 March 2018, Munich

10 November 2018, Munich

## EXPERT GROUPS

In 2018, the expert committees appointed a total of approximately 800 experts for 158 on-site visits in the context of the accreditation procedures. The expert committees operated under the terms of the handout "Procedures and criteria of the expert appointment" which was adapted in 2013 in accordance with the new rules of Accreditation Council for the accreditation of study programmes and for the system accreditation; subsequently updated in 2015/16.

For procedures, which are carried out according to the new accreditation system, the expert appointment is carried out in accordance with the documents developed and adopted by the German Rectors' Conference "Binding Guide to the Appointment of Academic Teaching Staff as Experts in accordance with the Article 3 (3) of the State Treaty on Accreditation" and "Guidelines on the Appointment of Experts and the Compilation of Expert

Groups for Accreditation Procedures" in the version dated 24 April 2018.

In the course of the appointment process of the expert group members, the scientific requirements, student needs and practical professional requirements are taken into account, therefore expert groups alongside representatives of academics also include representatives of students, and representatives of professional practice. For the evaluation of an individual study programme the expert group shall consist of at least five members: three professorial representatives, a representative of the professional practice and a student representative. In bundled procedures the number of experts is increased accordingly. Here the requirement resulted from the reasoning to § 25 of the Model Statutory Ordinance that "the relationship of the proportions of represented groups is to be maintained", in procedures according to new law; occasionally, it is still ambiguous in terms of the total size of expert groups on the part of the agencies which could result in a subsequent rejection of the composition of expert groups by the Accreditation Council and which, on the other hand, should not cause appointment of disproportionately large expert groups that could lead to significant additional costs in larger bundles.

In many cases, the expert groups include international experts. The groups are composed of both experts who have already participated in the procedures of ACQUIN as well as new experts who have no previous experience in accreditation procedures.

The preparation of the experts involves several stages. The request addressed to potential experts is carried out on behalf of the responsible expert committee and includes initial information on

the accreditation procedure, its dates and content as well as the role, the self-perception and the tasks of the expert group in the accreditation procedure. Subsequently, the self-documentation and other relevant documents (ACQUIN guides, criteria of the Accreditation Council, resolutions by the Council of Ministers of Culture, etc.) are sent in order to get the expert group acquainted with the evaluation criteria and procedures. If necessary, experts can get a consultation from the person in charge of the relevant expert committee or a coordinator from the head office. The expert groups are provided with a handout containing detailed information on their roles and responsibilities within the procedure. Furthermore, in 2016 an online training video was published on the website of ACQUIN.

A preliminary meeting of the experts is always held before the on-site visit. Depending on the process, it takes two to four hours and is intended to elucidate the course of proceedings, to exchange views on the self-documentation, and to compile a list of potential questions as well as in general to prepare for the discussions with the higher education institution members. The appointment of a spokesperson from the group of experts is followed by a further insight into the role and self-perception of the experts.

To ensure the independence and impartiality of the experts, the experts involved in the respective accreditation procedures are asked to sign a declaration of impartiality in accordance with the criterion 2.3.3 of the "Rules for the Accreditation of Agencies" issued on 08.12.2009 and amended on 10.12.2010 (Accreditation Council). This document was amended in 2018 due to changes in data protection according to the Data Protection Regulation.

## THE HEAD OFFICE

The coordinators of the head office are responsible for implementation and organisation of the procedures; they also provide a support system for committees, public relations and internal quality assurance. In addition, their scope of responsibilities includes participation in national and international conferences and meetings of scientific associations, maintenance of contacts with higher education institutions in Germany and abroad, and initiation of new co-operation projects.

The coordinators are supported by two employees from secretarial and accounting areas as well as two project assistants.

The previously maintained office structure with sub-division "Programme Accreditation", "System Accreditation", "International Work" and "Committee Work" has undergone changes. A new Organisational Chart was enacted and includes four staffed teams: Internal Processes and Quality Assurance, Programme Accreditation and Certification, System Accreditation and University Counseling, and International Area. Decisions are more centralised in the management. In addition to the above stated team structure, project assistance, accounting and secretariat are performing their respective functions.

The staff of the office consists of 17 employees (as of 31 December 2018); three of them are employed part-time. In 2018, Stephanie Bernhardi, Kateryna Kryvko and Dorit Monz resigned from ACQUIN Hilde Volkmann retired. A series of recruitments of new employees was carried out: Dr. Jasmine Rudolph started her work as a coordinator, Daniela Reutershan takes care of Finance and Controlling, Sofia Treskova and Annette Lowack are employed as project assistants. In addition, the office is supported by several student assistants and interns.

### WORKS COUNCIL

In 2018, the works council evaluated the results of the survey on flexibilisation of working hours and concluded a company agreement on annual leave with the management.

### OFFICE PARTIES

The summer party of ACQUIN was held on 13 July 2017 on the premises of the head office. The student assistants and several former employees also were able to attend it.

The management invited employees to a restaurant in Bayreuth for the celebration of Christmas on 17 December 2018.

## ACQUINUS GMBH

In 2018, the ACQUINUS GmbH continued pursuing the goal of exploring new business fields in the area of consulting services provision for higher education institutions and university-related institutions through careful selection of reference projects. The ACQUINUS GmbH offers consulting services for higher ed-

ucation institutions in the areas of university development, accreditation, etc.

After the departure of Dorit Monz, Tobias Auberger took over the management of ACQUINUS.

Four projects were carried out in the year under review.

## ACCREDITATION AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Since the foundation of ACQUIN, **programme accreditation** has been one of the main tasks of the agency. A high-quality implementation is ensured in each procedure. The competent expert committees check appropriate combinations of subjects for each bundled programme accreditation procedure and pay attention to the number of courses in terms of feasibility. In 2018, ACQUIN (re-)accredited 375 courses and thus belongs to the four agencies in Germany with most accreditation decisions per year.

The German accreditation system has been further developed with the process of **system accreditation**: from programme accreditation to evaluation of the internal quality assurance system of a higher education institution. ACQUIN announced its first nationwide completion of a system accreditation procedure at a German university in 2011, and now its market share of the ongoing and completed procedures amounts to about forty percent.

In addition to the accreditation of study programmes and quality management systems in the field of teaching and learning, ACQUIN ensures achievement of a similar programme quality in advanced scientific training that does not lead to a degree by carrying out **certification procedures**. In the year under review, ACQUIN completed four certification processes, including one in Kazakhstan.

Another procedure type carried out abroad is **institutional accreditation** and **evaluation procedures**. The focus of such procedure is the organisation and functioning of an entire higher education institution and it involves evaluation of the areas of teaching and learning, research and internal self-government. In 2018, an on-site visit was carried out in Lebanon.

- **Grounds for making a decision** turned out to be extremely varied in 2018. The majority of decisions in the programme accreditation resulted in the accreditation with conditions, whereas in the case of re-accreditations, for the first time, the majority of accreditations were granted without conditions.
- In compliance with the internationalisation principles of ACQUIN, the agency collaborated with **foreign partner institutions** in procedures at higher education institutions abroad in 2018 as well.
- The coordinators of ACQUIN were responsible for the **support of higher education institutions**, they were in charge of providing comprehensive information to the programme and system managers on preparation, implementation and follow-up procedures as well as on the committee work associated therewith before signing agreements.

## ACCREDITATION SUMMARY OF 2018

In the year under review, ACQUIN brought about 679 programme accreditation decisions.

149 study programmes were accredited for the first time, 226 programmes were reaccredited; 178 of these accreditations included conditions. It has to be stated that the proportion of the conditions for re-accreditation is much lower than for initial accreditation and falls just below 40% for the first time accreditation procedures.

The fulfillment of conditions was confirmed for 298 study programmes, in 9 cases the conditions were only partially fulfilled, and a three-month extension period was granted. The accreditation procedure was suspended for 12 study programmes. In one case, no fulfilment of the requirements could finally be proven, as the study and examination regulations were not approved by the responsible state authority; in this case, the accreditation period was not extended.

In case of an accreditation with conditions as well as a rejection of accreditation, there is a possibility of suspension of the accreditation process based on the statement of the higher education institution for a period of time that does not exceed 18 months. In 2018, two degree programme accreditations resulted in a rejection. The institutions in question requested a suspension of the procedure in order to introduce improvements and to prepare for the proceedings resumption. For five courses of study, two higher education institutions applied for suspension after resulting programme accreditation with conditions.

The requests for suspension were granted in all cases.

### In 2018 ACQUIN

- accredited **149** study programmes for the first time, among them **88** with conditions
  - reaccredited **226** study programmes, among them **90** with conditions
- confirmed the fulfilment of conditions for **298** study programmes
- suspended the procedure for **6** study programmes
- enunciated the system accreditation for **3** higher education institutions
- confirmed the fulfilment of conditions in **4** system accreditation procedures

The committees of ACQUIN deal comprehensively with the process of the fulfillment of conditions and the resumption of suspensions. Due to this elaborate monitoring of the follow-up phase after the accreditation decision, ACQUIN ensures a significant contribution to the quality improvement of teaching and learning.

In the period under review, accreditation was granted for six study programmes after resumption, in four of those cases there were no conditions. The decisions on the resumption of a procedure as well as the decisions on the determination of the fulfillment of conditions fall within the competence area of the accreditation commission. The decision of the accreditation commission is made based on the statements of the relevant standing expert committees.

The system accreditation procedures were completed at three higher education institutions; in one case a follow-up examination took place, and the

fulfillment of conditions in system accreditation procedures was confirmed four times. A higher education institute was approved for the initiation of the system accreditation for the first time in 2018; in three further institutions the system accreditation was launched. The results of the interim evaluation were identified at one higher education institution accredited by ACQUIN. Together with the two procedures under the experimental clause that is monitored by ACQUIN, at the end of the reporting period the agency recorded eleven ongoing system accreditation procedures in Germany.

Abroad, programme accreditation procedures were carried out and completed at several universities in Kazakhstan, Egypt, Oman, and Liechtenstein. An on-site visit took place at a university in Lebanon as part of institutional accreditation (see *Accreditation and Evaluation procedures in the International Area*).

In individual cases, the accreditation commission had to deal with complaints from the higher education institutions. In these cases, the arguments of the universities were carefully examined. A total of six complaints were submitted for the accreditation decision;

they were granted in all cases. These issues concerned conditions that were withdrawn or reformulated on the basis of subsequent explanations provided by the higher education institutions or assessed as fulfilled.

As part of the new accreditation system, two procedures were carried out in the year under review, in which the committees of ACQUIN drafted an accreditation report and the higher education institution submitted an application for accreditation to the Accreditation Council. Further procedures were initiated and evaluations carried out.

In addition to the accreditation of study programmes and quality management systems in the field of teaching and learning, ACQUIN also carries out certification procedures in which the quality of scientific continuing education courses is examined. In the year under review, four certification procedures were carried out on a total of 14 training programmes, including one in Kazakhstan. In addition, the first on-site visit took place in the evaluation process of a project which is promoted within the comprehensive programme of German Federal States for better study conditions and higher quality in teaching.

#### DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS

In 2018, there were significant shifts in the number of procedures carried out in the field of individual subject groups. The number of procedures in the field of humanities, linguistics and cultural studies steadily increased in recent years, thus surpassing all other areas; but this year the proportion has decreased from 29 to 10 percent. On the other hand, there has been a strong growth in the field of computer science (the proportion of procedures has more than doubled from five to 12

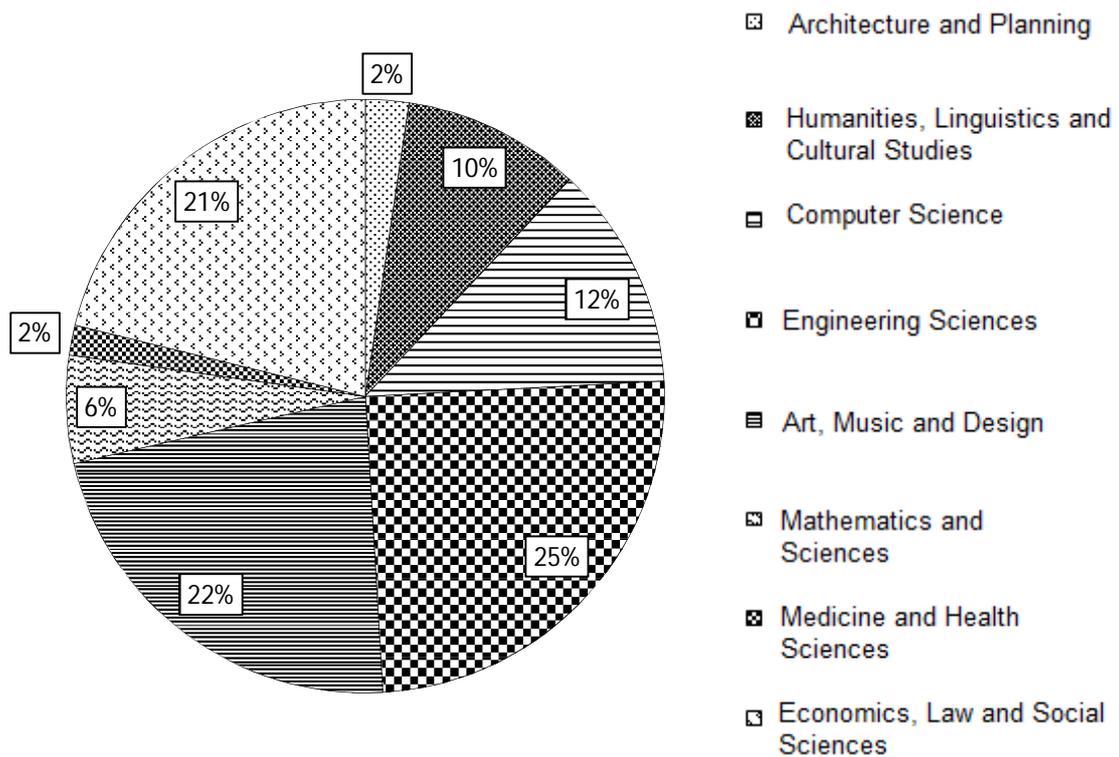
percent), art, music and design (almost doubling the proportion of proceedings from 12 percent to 22 percent) and engineering (increasing share from 17 to 25 percent).

The proportion of architecture and planning, mathematics and natural sciences, medicine and health sciences as well as economics, law and social sciences procedures has remained fairly stable, with a slight one to two percentage point reduction in all cases.

As in previous years, the lowest number of procedures has been carried out in

the field of architecture and planning and in medicine and health sciences.

**Distribution of subjects: accredited programmes in 2018**



The percentage breakdown by subject groups illustrates that the claim of ACQUIN that it accredits study programmes of all subject groups remains justified.

## CURRENT STATE OF SYSTEM ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES

In 2018, ACQUIN completed three system accreditation procedures and confirmed the fulfillment of conditions in four procedures.

In further eight ongoing procedures, documents were examined, expert groups were appointed, and on-site vis-

its were organised. The result of the system accreditation interim evaluation was determined for one higher education institution. A higher education institution was approved for system accreditation, and the process of system accreditation was introduced at further higher education institutions.

### APPROVAL

In 2018, the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences was approved for the ini-

tial system accreditation by the accreditation commission. The procedure was initiated.

### FIRST AND SECOND ON-SITE VISIT

The initial evaluation in the context of system accreditation as well as the selection of random samples took place in 2018 at the University of Potsdam and the Ilmenau University of Technology.

The first system re-accreditation procedure was carried out at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (see further Experimentation Clause).

### DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

In 2018, decisions on system accreditation were made for Ludwigburg University of Education, University of Applied Sciences Schmalkalden, and University of Bamberg. Furthermore, an additional

condition was issued for the University of Jena in the course of the follow-up procedure according to the specifications of the Accreditation Council; its fulfillment was ascertained in the same year.

### FULFILLMENT OF CONDITIONS

The fulfillment of the conditions was confirmed in the course of 2018 for the OTH – Technical University of Applied Sciences and Kaiserslautern University of Applied Sciences.

In addition, in the process of partial system accreditation of teacher education at the universities of Hamburg, the fulfillment of the conditions was demonstrated.

### INTERIM EVALUATION

The report on the results of the interim evaluation at Leuphana University Lüneburg was considered by the accreditation commission, and the result was determined.

The University of Applied Sciences Fresenius, Idstein, declared its renunciation of the implementation of the no longer mandatory interim evaluation.

### SYSTEM ACCREDITATION - EXPERIMENTATION CLAUSE

The system accreditation at the HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management is linked to the accreditation procedure of the American AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business).

The procedure is carried out as part of the experimentation clause of the Accreditation Council and is supported by ACQUIN. The joint procedure took place in 2018.

### SYSTEM RE-ACCREDITATION - EXPERIMENTATION CLAUSE

Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz presented a concept for a collegiate audit as part of the invitation to tender issued by the Accreditation Council on the Experimental Clause. ACQUIN ac-

companies the university in this concept, and in 2017 it held meetings at the university. In 2018, accompanied by the Accreditation Council, the first inspection with selection and explanation of the audit topics took place in Mainz.

## ACCREDITATION AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES IN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

In 2018, ACQUIN continued to carry out and complete a number of accreditation procedures outside of Germany. These programmes are not offered in cooperation with German higher education institutions, so ACQUIN does not grant the seal of the German Accreditation Council, instead it awards the quality seal of ACQUIN; if required, an inspection result is determined, and an accreditation recommendation is provided to a country-specific accreditation authority.

To meet the demands of growing interest of foreign higher education institutions in evaluation procedures by ACQUIN, the agency promotes international composition of its committees wherever possible. This way the committee work is enriched not only by experts with international experience, but also by professors from abroad (Switzerland, Austria, Lebanon) in several expert committees as well as in the accreditation commission.

### KAZAKHSTAN

A total of 55 degree programmes in Kazakhstan were awarded the Seal of Approval of ACQUIN in 2018: four at the private German-Kazakh University in Almaty, 17 at the Kazakh National Al-Farabi University in Almaty, six at the Kazakh National Academy of Art in Almaty, 16 at the Eurasian National University Gumil'ov in Astana (including 15 reaccreditations), and 12 at the private

Central Kazakh Academy in Karaganda.

The assessment was carried out as early as 2017 - no on-site inspections took place in Kazakhstan in 2018 and no new contracts were signed due to the fact that the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan did not issue re-approval of ACQUIN for more than a year - until it did in November 2018 for a period of five years. Immediately after the

re-approval new procedures were initiated.

The requirements were met for 85 programs at five universities in Kazakhstan in 2018.

In the course of the evaluation procedure, four teacher training programmes were evaluated at the Center of Excellence (Nazarbajev Intellectual Schools) in Astana and certified without conditions.

#### **RUSSIA**

In the year under review the fulfillment of the requirements was determined for the procedure conducted at the State

Polytechnic University in Saint Petersburg in co-operation with the Russian accreditation agency NCPA.

#### **LEBANON**

As part of the institutional accreditation procedure at the Saint Joseph University in Beirut, which shall be carried out

in French, an on-site visit took place in December 2018.

#### **LIECHTENSTEIN**

In 2018, a doctoral programme in the field of medical science was evaluated

and re-accredited at the private university in the Principality of Liechtenstein in Triesen.

#### **EGYPT**

Four study programmes at the German University in Cairo were re-accredited

without conditions following the on-site visit in April 2018.

#### **OMAN**

Two study programmes were accredited for the first time at the German

University of Technology in Oman after the on-site visit in January 2018.

## PARTNERSHIP AND DIALOGUE

*In order to achieve its objectives, a continuous dialogue and partnership in national and international context is of great importance for ACQUIN. Goal-oriented cooperation is crucial for the discussion, development and reception of further advancement in the field of quality assurance procedures and it supports the recognition of the work of ACQUIN.*

- **Cooperation with higher education institutions**  
*ACQUIN cooperates with the mergers of higher education institutions and their initiatives at a European, national and local level in order to jointly analyze the requirements for quality assurance and develop appropriate measures for comprehensive development, assurance, monitoring and improvement of quality in teaching and learning.*
- **Cooperation within the German accreditation system**  
*In the national context, ACQUIN cooperates with the Accreditation Council and the accreditation agencies accredited by the Accreditation Council in order to contribute to the maintenance and development of the accreditation system.*
- **Cooperation with students**  
*ACQUIN cooperates with students and student organisations in order to analyze the concerns of students regarding quality assurance measures and to seek the appropriate solutions jointly.*
- **Cooperation within subject areas**  
*ACQUIN cooperates with the organised forms of disciplines, the departments and faculty conferences as well as scientific societies in order to discuss the subject-specific requirements and conditions in the process of external quality assurance through accreditation and to find the appropriate solutions jointly.*
- **Cooperation in international networks**  
*ACQUIN is a member of the central international organisations and project initiatives that contribute to the achievement of the association goals. ACQUIN is involved in international and particularly European groupings of institutions of external quality assurance. This way ACQUIN is engaged in the development of the European Higher Education Area.*
- **Cooperation in partnership-based projects**  
*The exposure to national and international projects helps ACQUIN to expand its base of experience. Specific concepts are discussed and common solutions for specific issues are developed. The project work is a learning opportunity for ACQUIN as an organisation and the individual experience and expansion of expertise for its employees.*

## CONTACTS WITH THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The coordinators and management of ACQUIN conducted a number of discussions (on the premises of the head office in Bayreuth or locally at higher education institutions) in order to inform those responsible at higher education institutions on criteria and methods of the evaluation and accreditation procedures. In addition, primarily in international procedures and procedures for system accreditation, a personal handing-over of the accreditation certificate takes place, occasionally it is accompanied by a festive ceremony or further associated events.

### ACQUIN WORKSHOP FOR THE MEMBER HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

In March 2018, ACQUIN invited the member universities of ACQUIN to a workshop in Bayreuth titled "Accreditation in transition - innovations and challenges of quality assurance in higher education institutions from 2018 onwards". Attendees were introduced to the cornerstones of the State Treaty and Model Statutory Ordinance as well as the modified procedures of ACQUIN. Additionally, it provided opportunities for an open discussion and direct feedback to the agency.

On 15 May 2018, following the general assembly ACQUIN organised a workshop on current topics of accreditation at the Leuphana University Lüneburg. The introductory lecture by Dr. Olaf Bartz, Managing Director of the Accreditation Council, titled "Further Development of the German Accreditation System" was followed by parallel working groups. In particular, the focus was put onto the paradigm shift in programme accreditation and the relationship between agencies and higher education institutions in the new system as well as future procedures in the field of system accreditation and alternative procedures.

## COOPERATION WITH THE ACCREDITATION COUNCIL AND THE AGENCIES

ACQUIN regularly meets with its partners within the German accreditation system in order to exchange ideas on the advancement in the field of quality assurance procedures.

### COOPERATION WITH THE ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

In 2013, Professor Reinhard Zintl, a member of the appeals commission of ACQUIN, was appointed a representative of German Rectors' Conference and Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Accreditation Council on a proposal from the agencies.

Mr Zintl, spokesman of the agencies, accompanied by Dr. Verena Kloeters, Commercial Managing Director of AQAS, continued to serve in his capacity until further notice to ensure the continuity of agency representation in the Accreditation Council. He attended the meetings of the Accreditation Council on 20 February, 14 June, and 24 September 2018 in Bonn.

At the agency meeting in September 2018 (see further) the office of the Accreditation Council was represented by Olaf Bartz.

#### **AGENCIES MEETINGS**

Authorised in Germany representatives of the Austrian and Swiss agencies took part in four agency meetings. The attendees discussed the draft resolutions of the Accreditation Council as well as the procedures under the new accreditation system. At all meetings ACQUIN was represented by its management.

At the agency meeting in Basle on 9 February, the participants discussed, among other things, the possibilities of extension of the deadline according to new and previous legal provisions, the planned scale of changes of the Accreditation Council, the application processing system, and the cooperation with the Accreditation Council Coordinating Committee of the Student Accreditation Pool (KASAP).

In the context of the accreditation report grid, the agencies jointly provided feedback on the draft and sent it to the Accreditation Council office.

Another agency meeting took place on 6 June in Hannover. This time the attendees deliberated on the agenda items of the next Accreditation Council meeting, in particular, on the compilation of bundles in accreditation procedures and the composition of expert groups in clusters, and possible rejection of accreditation applications due to non-compliant clustering or expert groups. Another topic included dealing with the elimination of deficiencies in accreditation procedures and the possible impact of agencies' advisory services in this regard when registering with EQAR.

During this agency meeting, a meeting of the lawyers of the agencies took place once again, during which, among other things, the General Data

Protection Regulation and the country-specific Statutory Ordinances were discussed.

Dr. Olaf Bartz for the Accreditation Council, Colin Tück for EQAR and Lara Schu, and Philipp Jäger for the Coordinating Committee of the Student Accreditation Pool (KASAP) attended the meeting of the agencies in Bonn on 18 September as guests.

Dr. Olaf Bartz informed the participants that the "remedy for deficiencies" should be referred to as a "quality improvement loop" in the future, but that the Accreditation Council had not at that time concluded on how to deal with deficiencies and how to present them in the accreditation reports after elimination.

Mr Tück was of the opinion that, in the view of EQAR, there could in principle be a remedial loop, but that this should be strictly separated from consultation, as the agencies being active participants in the system are not allowed to advise universities at the same time. Furthermore, Mr Tück informed the agency representatives on the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR), in which the procedural results of the agencies shall be merged in the future. The idiosyncrasy in Germany is caused by the fact that a common database of the German Rectors' Conference and the Accreditation Council exists, and it contains all the accreditations of the old system. It is planned that procedures under old law will be incorporated by the German Rectors' Conference into DEQAR. For the new system, a direct interface between German Rectors' Conference/Accreditation Council database and DEQAR shall be established. All procedures that do not result in the Accreditation Council seal being awarded should, if possible, be registered by the agencies in DEQAR.

The discussion with Ms Schu and Mr Jäger focused primarily on the issues of missing training and recruiting concepts with information on quality assurance and financing, under-represented subjects, and lack of capacity among the pool members (see further Student Participation).

The last meeting of the year took place in Berlin on 27 November, the day following the Accreditation Council meeting on "20 years of the Bologna Process

### COOPERATION WITH AKAST

Within the framework of cooperation with the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Canonical Study Programmes in Germany e.V. (AKAST), ACQUIN undertakes the implementation of accreditation procedures for non-canonical study programmes.

- New Impulses for the European Higher Education Area". The topics included the composition of expert groups in bundling procedures, the Data Protection Regulation, the reporting system in the Accreditation Council, and the preliminary examination of applications for accreditation with the introduction of the so-called "traffic light system" in the office of the Accreditation Council.

The cooperation agreement between the agencies ACQUIN and AKAST was renewed in the year under review.

On behalf of ACQUIN, Tobias Auberger attended the meeting of the AKAST Accreditation Commission in Frankfurt am Main in March. The managing director of AKAST, Barbara Reitmeier, also regularly attends meetings of the accreditation commission of ACQUIN in Bayreuth.

## PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS

### GUTACHTERGRUPPEN EXPERT GROUPS

Students are always represented in the expert groups set up by ACQUIN. ACQUIN works in cooperation with the Student Accreditation Pool for this purpose. The Student Accreditation Pool is a self-regulatory body of students who want to get involved in evaluation and accreditation procedures. However, in some disciplines it is not possible to employ procedures with suitable pool members as these subjects are hardly represented in the pool. ACQUIN and the Student Accreditation Pool agreed that the decision on the expert nominations is made solely by the expert committees.

### EXPERT COMMITTEES

Students are represented in all committees. ACQUIN cooperates with the Student Accreditation Pool when selecting students.

The decision on the appointment is statutorily made by the accreditation commission. In 2018, a student member was appointed to the expert committee for engineering sciences. In this case, this was not a member of the Student Accreditation Pool as there was no suggestion for the relevant department (in addition to the already appointed university student, a second student position should be filled with a female representative of a university of applied sciences for this committee).

A second representative of the students was appointed to the expert committee for medicine and health sciences.

Since the Student Accreditation Pool for the health care area does not have any suitable pool members, the Federal Association "Young Care" (DBfK) was asked for suggestions.

#### **ACCREDITATION COMMISSION**

Students are full voting members of the accreditation commission of ACQUIN. According to the statutes, the accreditation commission includes a student of a university and a student of a university of applied sciences and their substitute representatives. When the accreditation commission was elected by the 2017 General Assembly, three of the four positions were filled by members of the Student Accreditation Pool.

#### **MEETINGS WITH THE STUDENT ORGANISATIONS**

The funding of the Student Accreditation Pool and the lack of representation of certain subjects in the pool remained an issue. Over the course of the agency meeting in September 2018, complaints were made on the fact that KASAP did not provide the agencies with a training concept in the area of quality assurance and funding information; the required report was submitted in November 2018, but some points remained unclear.

The demand of the pool to prohibit student experts from working directly for the accreditation agencies and to sanction directly requested members of the pool still seems illogical, especially when proposals of the pool are not always immediately available. In principle, however, ACQUIN adheres to the principle of cooperation with the Student Accreditation Pool.

### **SUBJECT-SPECIFIC AND TOPIC-ORIENTED DISCUSSIONS**

In 2018, the coordinators and the management of ACQUIN continued to participate in a series of conferences and events of faculty and department meetings as well as scientific associations in Germany and abroad in order to discuss the objectives, criteria and procedures of accreditation as well as the prerequisites and framework conditions for securing and improving quality with the representatives of the disciplines.

In the year under review, the restructuring of the accreditation system in Germany was on the agenda of numerous events, and the office of ACQUIN was repeatedly asked to provide detailed information on the restructuring of the accreditation procedures. For instance, Dr. Stefan Handke was invited to the German Police University for a workshop on the topic of accreditation of study programmes in November 2018.

## PARTICIPATION IN EVENTS

| Date and Place               | Event   |
|------------------------------|---|
| 19 January 2018, Heidelberg  | Conference on the Document Processing for Quality Management in Teaching and Learning                             |
| 26 January 2018, Wittenberg  | Catholic Faculty Conference   |
| 14-17 February 2018, Geneva  | UNESCO Regional Consultation Meeting on Quality Assurance in Higher Education for the Western European Region     |
| 21 March 2018, Jena          | QM-Network of Thuringian universities   |
| 10 April 2018, Berlin        | DAAD Conference „Quality Assurance & Quality Development in Higher Education“                                     |
| 19-20 April 2018, Zaragoza   | ENQA Members Forum  |
| 11-12 May 2018, Tirana       | CEENQA General Assembly   |
| 4 June 2018, Berlin          | German Society for Psychology, Workshop "Securing Quality in the Study of Psychology"                             |
| 8 June 2018, Berlin          | Bad Wiesseer District   |
| 19 June 2018, Dresden        | ERASMUS+ Project „Enhancing Teaching Practice in Higher Education in Russia and China“ (ENTEP), Workshop          |
| 13-14 September 2018, Hagen  | Plenary Session Experts' Network Union  |
| 26-28 September 2018, Athens | ERASMUS+ Project „DataPRO“, Kick-off Meeting  |
| 27 September 2018, Budenheim | 10th GEW Science Conference "Pleasure or Pain - Quality of Teaching and Studies Put to the Test"                  |
| 16-17 October 2018, Astana   | IAAR Central Asian International Forum on QA in Education   |
| 18-19 October 2018, Astana   | ENQA General Assembly   |
| 8 November 2018, Mainz       | Departmental Conference Architecture  |
| 16-17 November 2018, Athens  | ERASMUS+ Project „Eldicare“, Kick-off Meeting   |
| 16-17 November 2018, Vienna  | 13th European Quality Assurance Forum   |
| 15-16 November 2018, Detmold | Annual music colleges network conference "Diversity at music colleges"  |
| 26 November 2018, Berlin     | Conference Accreditation Council "20 Years Bologna Process - New Impulses for the European Higher Education Area" |
| 29 November 2018, Berlin     | DAAD Conference "Anchor Points Abroad"  |
| 7 December 2018, Bern        | Workshop of the Swiss Accreditation Council   |
| 6-7 December 2018, Berlin    | ERASMUS+ Project "GDPR4H", Kick-off Meeting   |

## MEMBERSHIP AND COOPERATION IN INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

ACQUIN defined priority areas for its activities, and they are characterised by partnership projects, cooperation in networks and evaluation and accreditation procedures. In 2018, ACQUIN paid particular attention to the Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe as well as to Asia and the Arab world.

- Since 2003 ACQUIN has been a "full member" in the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and maintained an active exchange of information with interested partner institutions from around the world within this global network.
- Since 2004 ACQUIN has been a member of the European Platform European University Association (EUA) with the status of an "affiliate member". The EUA is now an association of approximately 850 higher education institutions and other members in 47 European countries.
- Since 2003 ACQUIN has been a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA,) since 2009 ACQUIN has been listed in the European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAR) created by the E4 group (EUA, ENQA, EURASHE and ESU).
- ACQUIN is focused on the region of Central Asia and Central, East and Southeast Europe, and this focus illustrates that the Agency is an active member in the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA).

### ENQA

Marion Moser and Dr. Stefan Handke participated in the ENQA Members' Forum in Zaragoza in April 2018.

At the ENQA General Assembly 2018 in Astana, Dr. Handke was elected to the ENQA Board. Representation on the panel will enable better communication between ENQA and the accreditation agencies in Germany. It is of a

great importance because of the system changes in Germany, as all agencies undergo an evaluation by ENQA, on the basis of which the inclusion in the register EQAR is carried out. A listing in EQAR is, according to the State Treaty on Accreditation, a prerequisite for being approved as an agency in Germany.

### ERASMUS +

ACQUIN is involved as a partner in three ongoing projects of the EU programme for the promotion of education, training, youth and sport (Erasmus +) (duration until 2020). Topics: Professionaliza-

tion of Data Protection Officers in general ("DataPRO"), Qualification of Data Protection Officers under the new Data Protection Act for the Healthcare Industry ("GDPR4H"), and Training of

Healthcare Professionals for the Aging Population ("EldiCare").

Applications were submitted for eight further projects.

## SWITZERLAND

After careful consideration of the application and consultation of the Agency, the Swiss Accreditation Council decided on 8 June 2018 to approve ACQUIN as an accreditation agency un-

der the Swiss Regulation of the University Council on Accreditation in Higher Education (Accreditation Regulation HFKG). The recognition is valid until 7 June 2023.

## REGIONS OF CENTRAL, EASTERN AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE AND ASIA

For the implementation of the accreditation procedures in the region ACQUIN maintains contacts with numerous higher education institutions that request information about the organisation and preparation for the evaluation processes from the head office.

On behalf of the agency Dr. Stefan Handke attended the General Assembly of CEENQA in Tirana in May 2018. Dr. Handke was elected by the members to the board of CEENQA and took over the position of treasurer.

## KAZAKHSTAN

In 2012, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan founded the Accreditation Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan and set up the so-called Accreditation Register. The Kazakh Accreditation Council is composed of representatives of the Ministry, Parliament, higher education institutions and employers.

The Register includes accredited higher education institutions, accredited programmes and accreditation bodies that are approved in Kazakhstan and thus are entitled to carry out accreditation of institutions and study programmes. ACQUIN was added to the register in 2012 and submitted an application for membership renewal in 2016. In November 2018, the Ministry of Education and Science confirmed the re-registration of ACQUIN in the register.

The relationship with Kazakhstan was also expanded by ACQUIN with the establishment of a branch office. The foundation of the KAZ-ACQUIN LLP in Almaty was completed in May 2017. The subsidiary of ACQUIN is managed by Dr. Stefan Handke and is available to universities in Kazakhstan as a point of contact for the preparation of evaluation procedures.

In addition to conducting its own accreditation procedures in Kazakhstan, ACQUIN cooperates with the National Agency IQAA (Independent Kazakh Agency for Quality Assurance in Education). Furthermore, ACQUIN entered into a cooperation agreement with another Kazakh Accreditation and Rating Agency - Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating (IAAR). ACQUIN and these two accreditation agencies

mutually support each other in the appointment of a national expert for the evaluation of study programmes. In addition to accreditation procedures, in 2018 ACQUIN also carried out

a certification procedure for continuing education programs for the first time (see Accreditation and Evaluation Procedures in the International Area).

### UKRAINE

In May 2018, ACQUIN organised a visit to the Berdyansk State Pedagogical State University within the framework of the CEENQA-initiated QUAERE (Quality Assurance System in Ukraine: Development on the base of ENQA standards and guidelines) pilot project. The aim of the project was to learn about the challenges, requirements and specificities of such procedures on the basis of an on-site programme accreditation procedure; its organisation is similar to the procedures in Germany, and it is formally based on the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).

Based on the experience and information gained over the course of this process (and in other procedures conducted at the same time with ASIIN at other Ukrainian universities), a national accreditation system will be established in cooperation with the Ukrainian Ministry of Science. In Berdyansk, for example, the study programmes "History and Archeology" (B.Sc./M.Sc.) were evaluated. Two experts from German universities participated in this procedure: Dr. Anne-Kristin Borszik, coordinator of ACQUIN, and coordinator of QUAERE, Wroclaw University of Science and Technology, Poland.

### MONGOLIA

After carrying out an evaluation procedure at the German-Mongolian Institute for Resources and Technology (GMIT) in Ulan Bator in 2017, ACQUIN continued to strengthen its relations with Mongolian higher education institutions over the course of the year under review

and submitted its reports to the Mongolian National Council for Education Accreditation (MNCEA). Application for inclusion into the local register in order to be able to carry out accreditation procedures in Mongolia in the future.

### ARABIAN REGION

With regard to its focal point in the Arab world, ACQUIN and the Arab Organisation for Quality Assurance in Education (ARO-QAE) agreed in 2007 on future cooperation in a "Memorandum of Association". The network is aimed at providing support to Arab states and their respective higher education institutions in developing the quality assurance competences and capacities.

In the period under review, ACQUIN kept expanding its cooperation with higher education institutions from Lebanon and continued the process of institutional accreditation at the Saint Joseph University in Beirut. Two study programmes were accredited for the first time at the German University of Technology in Oman after the on-site visit in January 2018.

