

ACQUIN

Accreditation,  
Certification and  
Quality Assurance  
Institute

# Annual Report 2019

# 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 2019, 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. 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.

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 onwards 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 procedure steps in the process flows at ACQUIN in order to meet the stipulations of the legal requirements.

In the year under review, 530 accreditation and evaluation decisions were made in accordance with the previous legislation; on top of that, recommendations for accreditation were made in accordance with the new legislation for 206 study programmes, two certification procedures were carried out abroad and institutional accreditation was completed (including decisions on fulfilling requirements and system accreditation). Overall, the 30<sup>th</sup> system (re-)accreditation procedure was completed.

# 2019

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## Head Office and Committees

*The evaluation, certification, 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 board was newly elected in 2019.*
- *The **accreditation commission** renders a comprehensive contribution to the thorough and reliable task fulfilment 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 newly elected in 2019.*
- *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 2019, over 1000 **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. On 6 May 2019, Prof. Dr. Sebastian Kempgen was unanimously elected by the entire board for a new full term of three years at the general assembly of ACQUIN in Bamberg. Dr. Andreas Dold (former managing director of Aldi Süd) was newly appointed to the board. In addition to Professor Kempgen and Dr. Dold, Dr. Folker Roland (rector of the Harz University of Applied Sciences) and Prof. Dr. Christiane Jost (Vice President of Rhein-Main University of Applied Sciences) are on the board.

In 2019, the board met twice 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.

### Meetings of the Board:

1 April 2019, Frankfurt am Main  
25 November 2019, Frankfurt am Main

In 2019, the reorganization of the accreditation system and the associated effects on the structures and processes of ACQUIN were still on the agenda.

On 30 and 31 October, members of the board met with the management and several coordinators for a strategy conference in Amorbach to discuss the market environment, business expectations and the regulatory framework for accreditation in Germany. The strategy conference indicated that ACQUIN should focus on the core operations - the support of programme and system accreditation in Germany - due to the developments in the accreditation system. ACQUIN should only take on consulting tasks on demand. ACQUIN can also participate in system accreditation procedures on behalf of universities, for example in the form of participation in university committees or the appointment of experts.

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly of ACQUIN took place on May 6, 2019 at the Otto Friedrich University in Bamberg.

The session was opened by Prof. Dr. Sebastian Kempgen, CEO of ACQUIN. After being greeted by the President of University of Bamberg, Prof. Dr. Godehard Ruppert, Prof. Dr. Jürgen Handke from the University of Marburg held a lecture on "Digitization and Quality Assurance". This was followed by an exchange between the members and the coordinators, in particular regarding their experience in the implementation of digital teaching, learning and examination forms.

Subsequently, a discussion of the annual report 2018 and the presentation of the audit

report took place. The compiled financial report for 2018 was adopted unanimously.

The general assembly participants voted concordantly in favour of the discharge of the Board and of the adoption of the budget for 2019.

The members then elected the board as scheduled by a show of hands. The board members Prof. Dr. Sebastian Kempgen, University of Bamberg (first chairperson), Prof. Dr. Folker Roland, Harz University of Applied Sciences (treasurer) and Prof. Dr. Christiane Jost, RheinMain University of Applied Sciences (deputy chairperson) have been put forward for renewed candidacy and were re-elected unanimously; in addition, Dr. Andreas Dold, former managing director of Aldi

Langenselbold GmbH & Co KG, was also unanimously elected to the board of ACQUIN as a representative of professional practice. The members were asked for suggestions for filling the second position of the group of universities on the board.

The accreditation commission was also newly elected (see *annexes for composition*).

With respect to the new legal situation in the accreditation system, a discussion was held

on the procedural variants at ACQUIN (with or without the involvement of the expert committees and support in the implementation of points of criticism) and the decision-making practice of the Accreditation Council. Following the general assembly, the chairperson of the board extended an invitation to a standing reception.

## MEMBERSHIP

In 2019, ACQUIN was once again able to attract new members. As a result of 2019 withdrawal of member higher education institutions, the total number of members has slightly decreased for the fifth time in succession: as of 31 December 2019 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 associations. 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 2019, the board approved the following higher education institutions as new members of ACQUIN:**

Berlin International University of Applied Sciences

Validation Organization for Study Programmes Architecture and Planning (ASAP), Berlin

## THE APPEALS COMMISSION

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.

The complaints procedure of ACQUIN includes all elements of the evaluation and accreditation procedures. These include the rules of the procedure and the evaluation cri-

teria used in the procedure as well as the appointment of experts, the statements of the expert reports and accreditation decisions alike.

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 2019, no complaints were submitted to the appeals commission.

## ACCREDITATION COMMISSION

The accreditation commission is the central decision-making body in the evaluation, certification 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 (in procedures under previous legislation). It also appoints members of the expert committees.

In accreditation procedures under previous legislation or in procedures that take place outside the scope of the Accreditation Council, 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.

In procedures under the new legislation, the accreditation commission determines the recommendations of the expert committees and also takes into account the opinions of the universities and, if applicable, the expert groups.

## MEETINGS OF THE ACCREDITATION COMMISSION 2019

In 2018, 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 expert committee members.

### Meetings of the Accreditation Commission:

AK 72 on 25-26 March 2019, Bayreuth  
AK 73 on 24-25 June 2019, Bayreuth  
AK 74 on 23-24 September 2019, Bayreuth  
AK 75 on 3 December 2019, Würzburg

In the year under review, the members of the accreditation commission once again dealt with the decisions and requirements of the Accreditation Council on the new accreditation system and process adjustments within the head office.

The clarification of the roles of the accreditation commission and expert committees in the new system was discussed further, because despite the negative attitude of the Accreditation Council, the agency's internal bodies initially seemed indispensable to the results of the evaluation. It was noted that the accreditation commission would change from a decision-making body into an interdisciplinary quality assurance body with regard to the procedures in Germany; for procedures that would be carried out outside the German accreditation system, the accreditation commission remains absolutely

essential as a decision-making body. Various considerations were also made of the form in which expert committee members could participate in the evaluation process as additional experts as scientific advisors, even in procedures in which the expert committees are no longer contractually provided for.

In addition, the practice of the Accreditation Council was carefully observed in the first completed procedures under the new legislation with the aim of being able to draw conclusions for the interpretation of the Accreditation Regulations. The rejection of individual accreditation reports by the Accreditation Council as "no quorum" was also discussed, as was the rapporteur-style system for preparing resolutions within the Accreditation Council.

In 2019, the accreditation commission (compliance with the requirements is also taken into account in the subsequent figures) passed 530 decisions on programme and system accreditation (under the previous legislation) and certifications as well as determined 206 assessment results in programme accreditation procedures under the new legislation, in addition, two certification procedures were carried out abroad and one institutional accreditation was completed (see *Accreditation and Evaluation Procedures, Accreditation Summary*).

In 2019, the accreditation commission meeting was attended by Helke Biehl and 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 universities, 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 specialist committees also fulfilled this function in 2019 for

the procedures that were carried out under the new legislation and in which the participation of the expert committees was contractually agreed. The members of the expert committees fulfil their duties under the coordination of the respective expert committee spokesperson.

The individual expert committees co-operate with each other in accreditation practice in order to meet requirements of the profile of individual study programmes in a bundled

process and the profile of interdisciplinary study programmes.

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 resigned members in order to ensure the professional continuity within the expert committees.

## REELECTION AND PERSONNEL CHANGES IN THE EXPERT COMMITTEES

### Expert Committee Architecture and Planning:

- Mark Deutzmann (Master's student majoring in Architecture, FH Münster - University of Applied Sciences), appointed since June 2019
- Professor Dipl.-Ing. Gert Bischoff (Landscape architect, BDLA, University of Applied Sciences Erfurt), reappointed since September 2019
- Professor Dipl.-Ing. Peter Berten (Architecture, Berlin Institute of Technology), reappointed since September 2019
- Dipl.-Ing. Wolfgang Voegelé (Urban planner and architect, SRL, Karlsruhe), reappointed since September 2019
- Dipl.-Ing. Rainer Hilf (Interior architect, BDIA, Nuremberg), reappointed since September 2019
- Dipl.-Ing. Sebastian Sage (Architect, BDA, Stuttgart), reappointed since September 2019

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

- Professor Dr. Matthias Bauer (English Philology/Literary Studies, Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen), reappointed since June 2019
- Professor Dr. Verena Blechinger-Talcott (Japanese Studies, Free University of Berlin), reappointed since June 2019
- Professor Dr. Stephan Conermann (Islamic Studies, Rhenish Friedrich Wilhelm University of Bonn), reappointed since June 2019
- Professor Dr. Gabriele Diewald (German Studies, Leibniz University Hannover), reappointed since June 2019
- Professor Dr. Helmut Johannes Vollmer (English Linguistics / Language Teaching / Learning Research, Osnabrück University), reappointed since June 2019

**Expert Committee for Computer Science:**

- Professor Dipl.-Inform. Astrid Beck (Software Engineering and Media Informatics, Esslingen University of Applied Sciences), reappointed since September 2019

**Expert Committee for Engineering Sciences:**

- Professor Dr.-Ing. Peter Husar (Biosignal Processing, Ilmenau University of Technology), reappointed since September 2019

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

- Professor Dr. Nikolaus Korber (Chemistry, University of Regensburg), reappointed since December 2019
- Dipl.-Ing. agr. Geert Oppermann (GASCADE Gastransport GmbH), reappointed since December 2019

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

- Dr. med. Thomas Shiozawa-Bayer (Clinical Anatomy, University of Tübingen), reappointed since June 2019

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

- Professor Dr. Ulrich Brecht (General Business Management, Especially Internal Accounting and Controlling, Heilbronn University of Applied Sciences), appointed since June 2019
- Professor Dr. Thomas Rautenstrauch (Accounting and Finance, HWZ Zurich University of Applied Sciences in Business Administration), reappointed since June 2019
- Professor Dr. Karl-Jürgen Bieback (Social Law/Labor Law/Public Law, University of Hamburg), reappointed since December 2019
- Professor Dr. Jörg-Dieter Oberrath (Private and Public Commercial Law, Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences), reappointed since December 2019

**Expert Committee for System Accreditation:**

- Daniel Irmer (Student of Materials Science, Freiberg University of Mining and Technology), appointed since June 2019

## MEETINGS OF THE EXPERT COMMITTEES IN 2019

In 2019, 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:  
19 March 2019, Bayreuth

Computer Science:  
15 March 2019, Nuremberg  
13 September 2019, Nuremberg

Engineering Sciences:  
18 March 2019, Bayreuth  
16 September 2019, Bayreuth

Humanities, Linguistics and Cultural Studies:  
15 March 2019, Bayreuth  
10 September 2019, Munich

Art, Music and Design:

-

Mathematics and Natural Sciences:  
12 March 2019, Bayreuth  
17 September 2019, Bayreuth

Medicine and Health Sciences:  
5 March 2019, Frankfurt am Main

System Accreditation:  
28 February 2019, Frankfurt am Main

Economics, Law and Social Sciences:  
16 March 2019, Munich  
9 November 2019, Munich

## EXPERT GROUPS

In 2019, the expert committees appointed a total of over 1000 experts for 207 on-site visits in the context of the accreditation procedures, including eight visits abroad. The expert committees operated under the terms of the handout "Procedures and criteria of the expert appointment" which has been continuously adapted to the rules of the Accreditation Council for the accreditation of study programmes and for system accreditation and has been updated several times. For procedures, which are carried out according to the new accreditation system, the ex-

pert 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 pro-

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.

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 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 created.

A preliminary meeting of the experts is always held before the on-site visit. Depending on the procedure, 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 distribution-of-business plan agreed on in 2018 was maintained. This provides for a division into four teams with personnel allo-

cation: Internal Processes and Quality Assurance, Programme Accreditation and Certification, System Accreditation and University Advisory Service as well as International Matters. Decisions are centralized by the management.

In addition to the above stated team structure, project assistance, accounting and secretariat are performing their respective functions.

In the year under review, electronic time recording and project control were introduced in the office for the first time. ACQUIN launched a new website in August 2019.

During the year under review, the coordinators were supported by two employees from

secretarial and accounting areas, two project assistants, an employee for key tasks, and student assistants.

The staff of the office consists of 20 employees (as of 31 December 2019); four of them are employed part-time.

In 2019, Dominique Last resigned from ACQUIN.

Lisa Stemmler, Dr. Lyazzat Nugumanova and Giorina Maratsi were recruited as coordinators and Benjamin Taylor started to work as an employee for key tasks.

#### **WORKS COUNCIL**

In 2019, the works council developed a company agreement on the topic of Home Office.

#### **COMPANY OUTING AND COMPANY PARTIES**

On 14 August 2019, the employees of ACQUIN went on a company outing to Bad Staffelstein.

On 19 December 2019, the management invited the staff to a Bayreuth restaurant for the Christmas party.

### **ACQUINUS GMBH**

In 2019, 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 education institutions in the areas of university development, accreditation, and other services. 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 sub-jects for each bundled programme accreditation procedure and pay attention to the number of courses in terms of feasibility. With 301 (re-)accredited courses under the previous legislation and 206 recommendations for the accreditation of courses under the new legislation, ACQUIN is still one of the four agencies with the most accreditation decisions per year in Germany in 2019.

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 two certification procedures, one in Kazakhstan and one in Syria.

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 2019, the process of institutional accreditation in Lebanon was completed and another one was carried out in the Caribbean.

- **Grounds for making a decision** kept being extremely varied in 2019, for the first time, no conditions were imposed on a narrow majority of the decisions in the programme accreditation procedures.
- In compliance with the internationalisation principles of ACQUIN, the agency collaborated with foreign partner institutions in procedures at higher education institutions abroad in 2019 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 2019

In the year under review, ACQUIN brought about 527 programme accreditation decisions (under the previous legislation), including compliance with requirements and resumptions, and determined 206 results of the evaluation under the new legislation.

77 study programmes were accredited for the first time, 224 re-accreditations were granted. 146 of these accreditations were subject to conditions. It should be noted that the proportion of conditions imposed for initial accreditation procedures was less than 40 percent for the first time in the year under review than for re-accreditations, for which the proportion of conditions increased over 50 percent.

The fulfilment of the requirements was checked for 207 study programmes.

In case of an accreditation with conditions as well as a refusal of accreditation, there is a possibility of suspension of the accreditation procedure based on the statement of the higher education institution for a period of time that does not exceed 18 months.

In the course of 2019, three higher education institutions requested a suspension of the procedure in order to introduce improvements and to prepare for the procedure resumption; in one case this happened before the accreditation commission passed a decision, once after an accreditation with conditions and once after a refusal of the accreditation.

The requests for suspension were granted in all cases. In another procedure, two study programmes were denied accreditation.

The committees of ACQUIN deal comprehensively with the process of the fulfilment 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 15 study programmes after the procedure was resumed, nine of them without conditions.

### In 2019 ACQUIN within Germany

- accredited **77** study programmes for the first time  
among them **29** with conditions
- reaccredited **224** study programmes  
among them **117** with conditions
- confirmed the fulfilment of conditions for **176** study programmes
- suspended procedures for **3** study programmes
- enunciated the system accreditation for **1** higher education institution
- confirmed the fulfilment of conditions in **2** system accreditation procedures
- completed **1** system re-accreditation procedure as part of the experimentation clause
- determined evaluation results in **206** programme accreditation procedures under new legislation
- confirmed the fulfilment of conditions in **10** certified programmes

### outside of Germany

- accredited **4** study programmes for the first time
- reaccredited **2** study programmes
- confirmed the fulfilment of conditions for **31** study programmes
- determined **7** evaluation results
- confirmed the fulfilment of conditions in **1** certified programme

The decisions on the resumption of a procedure as well as the decisions on the determination of the fulfilment 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 procedure (under the previous legislation) was brought to a

conclusion at one university, and the fulfilment of the requirements was determined twice in a system accreditation procedure. On-site visits were carried out in eight procedures and the results of the interim evaluation were determined in two procedures. In combination with the two procedures under the experimental clause accompanied by ACQUIN and four other procedures that were initiated, the agency had 16 ongoing system accreditation procedures in Germany at the end of the reporting period.

Abroad, programme accreditation procedures were carried out and completed at various universities in Kazakhstan, Oman, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Liechtenstein and Switzerland, and compliance with the requirements was determined. As part of institutional accreditations, a procedure in Lebanon was completed, a university in the Turks and Caicos Islands was evaluated and the procedure was initially suspended (see *accreditation and assessment procedure in the international area below*).

In individual cases, the accreditation commission had to deal with complaints from the higher education institutions. The arguments put forward by the universities were carefully checked again in these cases. A total of four complaints was submitted for the accreditation decision, each of which dealt with the conditions imposed. In two cases,

the concerned conditions were withdrawn or reformulated on the basis of subsequent explanations by the higher education institutions. In the other two cases, there were deviations from legal or official requirements, for which the conditions could not be withdrawn, but which were forwarded to the Accreditation Council or the responsible state ministry to clarify the facts.

As part of the new accreditation system, ACQUIN completed the evaluation procedures for 206 study programmes in the year under review (including 44 first-time accreditation procedures and 162 re-accreditation procedures). In many cases, the procedures also included remedial measures, so that in the overwhelming majority of cases, non-conditional accreditation could be recommended. In addition to the accreditation of degree programmes and quality management systems in the field of study and teaching, ACQUIN also carries out certification and evaluation procedures in which the quality of scientific further education opportunities or other projects is checked. Two certification procedures for a total of seven further education programmes were completed in the year under review, one in Kazakhstan and one in Syria. In 2019, compliance with the requirements was determined for ten programmes certified in 2018.

### DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS

In 2019 there were again significant shifts in the proportion of procedures for the separate subject groups in some areas.

After the number of procedures in the humanities, linguistic and cultural sciences decreased significantly in 2018, the proportion rose again sharply and overtook all other areas: Almost a third of all resolutions and recommendations for resolutions were passed in this area in 2019, which means tripling compared to the previous year.

This contrasts with a sharp decline in the areas of computer science (the proportion of procedures fell from 12 to five percent) and art, music and design (here the proportion

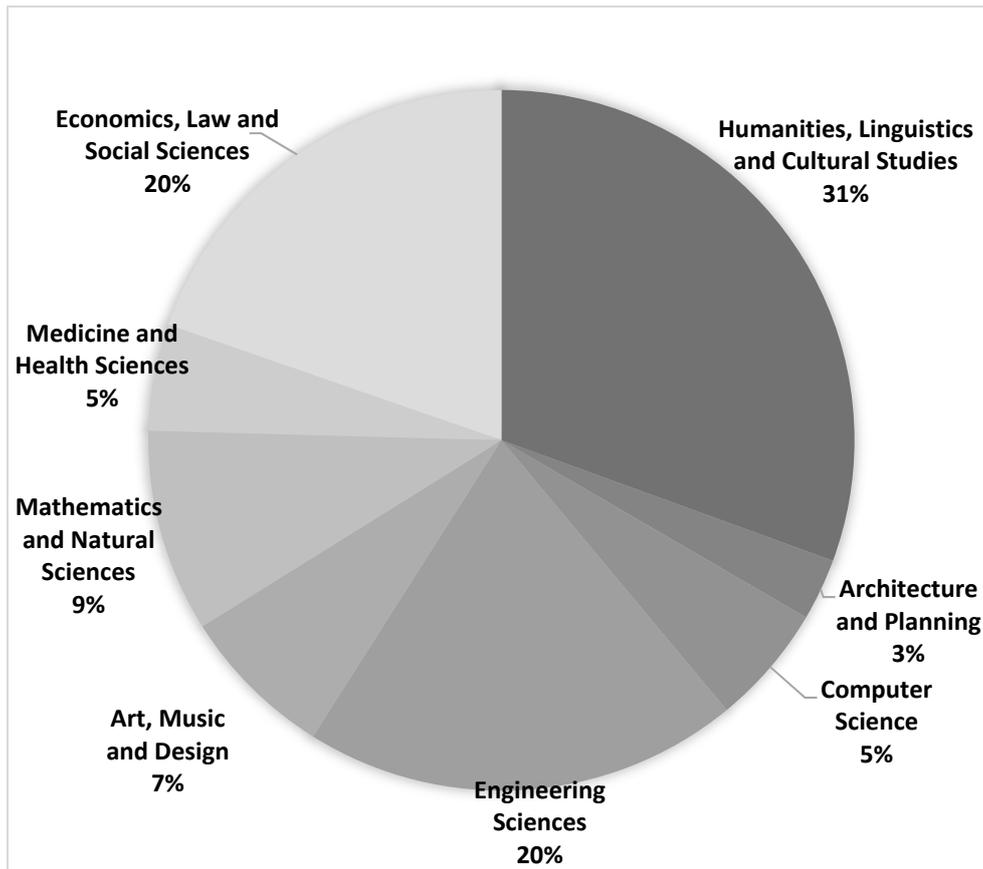
of procedures declined from 22 percent to seven percent); this means a reversal of the trend of 2018, when it was precisely in these two areas that there was a considerable increase.

The proportion of procedures in the area of engineering fell from 25 percent to 20 percent, while the proportion of procedures in the field of mathematics and natural sciences increased by three percentage points. The number of procedures in the area of economics, law and social sciences remained constant and comprised a total of one fifth of the total.

As in the last reporting years, the lowest number of procedures was recorded for the architecture and planning specialist committee, while the share of procedures in the

area of medicine and health sciences is now at five percent equal to that of computer science.

**Distribution of subjects: Resolutions (previous legislation) and recommendations for resolutions (new legislation) 2019**



## CURRENT STATE OF SYSTEM ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES

In 2019, ACQUIN completed one system accreditation procedure (under the previous law) and confirmed the fulfilment of conditions in two procedures.

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

The results of the system accreditation interim evaluations were determined for two higher education institutions. At two higher education institutions, system accreditation procedures were continued as part of the experimentation clause.

Further procedures have been initiated.

### FIRST AND SECOND ON-SITE VISIT

At the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences, the Leuphana University of Lüneburg, the Freiburg University of Education, the Ilmenau University of Technology, the Saarland

University, the University of Erfurt, the University of Hamburg and the University of Hohenheim, on-site visits were carried out in 2019 as part of system accreditation or system re-accreditation as well as the sample selection.

### DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND FULFILMENT OF CONDITIONS

A decision on system re-accreditation was made in 2019 for the University of Potsdam. The fulfilment of the conditions was determined for the FH Schmalkalden University of

Applied Sciences and the University of Bamberg in the course of 2019.

### INTERIM EVALUATION

The reports on the results of the interim evaluation at the Hof University of Applied Sciences and the Heidelberg University were

noted by the Accreditation Commission and the results determined.

### SYSTEM ACCREDITATION - EXPERIMENTATION CLAUSE

At the HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management, a procedure is linked with the American AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) as part of the experimentation clause of the Accreditation Council. The process is supported by ACQUIN and was continued in 2019.

The Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz presented a concept for a collegial audit as

part of the Accreditation Council's invitation to tender for the experimental clause.

ACQUIN has been supporting the university with this concept since 2017. In the year under review, a cooperative audit was carried out at the cooperation partner, the Maastricht University.

## ACCREDITATION AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES IN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

In 2019, 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

No on-site visits took place in Kazakhstan in 2019 as the Ministry of Education and Science only approved ACQUIN for another five years after an interruption of over a year in November 2018. New procedures were initiated immediately after the new approval.

The fulfilment of the requirements was determined in 2018 for 28 courses at two universities in Kazakhstan.

In an assessment process, four further educational programmes for teachers at the Center of Excellence (Nazarbajev Intellectual Schools) in Nur-Sultan were again evaluated and certified.

### LEBANON

The institutional accreditation process at the Saint Joseph University in Beirut, which was

carried out in French, was completed in March 2019.

### LIECHTENSTEIN

In 2019, a doctoral programme in the field of law was assessed and re-accredited at the private university in the Principality of Liech-

tenstein in Triesen. The fulfilment of the requirements was determined for a doctoral programme in the field of medical science.

### SWITZERLAND

In 2019, an evaluation procedure was carried out and was completed at the Swiss Federal

Institute for Vocational Education EHB in Zollikofen as part of a re-accreditation.

### EGYPT

On-site visits were conducted at the German University in Cairo in the course of two programme accreditation procedures for four study programmes.

## OMAN

Two study programmes at the German University of Technology in Oman, the fulfilment

of the requirements was determined as part of a re-accreditation procedure.

## 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 analyse 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 analyse 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 staff members 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. Numerous consultations were held, in particular on the restructuring of the system accreditation procedure. 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; the results of interim evaluations were sometimes presented on site.

### ACQUIN WORKSHOP FOR THE MEMBER HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

On 7 May 2019, ACQUIN organized a workshop on current topics of accreditation at the University of Bamberg following the general assembly, in which two parallel working groups were formed.

In the workshop "Quality Assurance of Joint Programs", the participants exchanged views

after an introductory presentation by the managing director of ACQUIN, Dr. Stefan Handke, about the added value of internationalization and the characteristics of different study models and discussed the application of the European Approach in accreditation procedures. The second workshop on "Quality Assurance and Digitization" was initiated by Wolfgang A. Grabow, Managing Director of Grabow & Kiss Software GmbH, who gave a lecture on the opportunities of digitization for the different perspectives of teachers and QM departments at higher education institutions. In the subsequent discussion, questions of data acquisition with regard to course evaluations, software problems and efficient communication were discussed. From the perspective of those involved in the higher education institutions management, the necessary sensitization and motivation of the teaching staff for digital teaching methods was discussed and the role of the management level and central QM departments was examined in this context. Digitization was defined less as a quality assurance tool than as an innovative didactic measure.

## 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 a permanent guest in 2019.

In March, the managing director of ACQUIN, Dr. Stefan Handke, attended a meeting of the working group for the rules of procedure in the office of the Accreditation Council. As part of the Quality Dialogue 2019, Dr. Handke took part in a workshop on quality assurance in advanced scientific training in September.

### AGENCIES MEETINGS

Representatives of the Austrian and Swiss agencies approved in Germany also took part

in the four agency meetings (in February in Berlin, in May in Bamberg, in September in Mannheim and in November in Cologne). In the context of the practices and procedures within the framework of the new accreditation system, those present discussed standards for accreditation reports, the practices of the Accreditation Council and the procedures of the agencies, for example with regard to remedial measures and the application of formal aspects. They also exchanged views on the templates and results of the meetings of the Accreditation Council and discussed the agenda items for the next meeting of the Accreditation Council. In concrete terms, the agencies made a statement on procedural security with regard to the size and composition of expert groups in bundled procedures. At all meetings ACQUIN was represented by its managing director Dr. Stefan Handke.

### **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.

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**

ACQUIN cooperates with students and student organisations in order to analyse the concerns of students regarding quality assurance measures and to seek the appropriate solutions jointly.

### **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.

### **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. In the election of the accreditation commission by the general assembly in 2019, three positions were filled with members of the student accreditation pool, the fourth position could not be filled due to a lack of proposals.

## SUBJECT-SPECIFIC AND TOPIC-ORIENTED DISCUSSIONS

In 2019, 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. Same as in the previ-

ous year, the restructuring of the accreditation system in Germany played an important role at numerous events in the reporting year.

The ACQUIN office also offered specific workshops, for instance, Helke Biehl conducted an expert training for members of the ASAP in March 2019 at the German Architecture Center in Berlin at the request of the Accreditation Association for Degree Programs in Architecture and Planning (ASAP).

## EVENT PARTICIPATION

Date and Place	Event
18 January 2019, Berlin	Conference Practice and Research Network of Universities for Public Service, "Demographic Change. Between Digitization, Task Change and New Personnel Management"
24 January 2019, The Hague	ENQA Board Meeting
2 February 2019, Siegburg	Catholic Faculty Conference
14-15 February 2019, Almaty	Al-Farabi National Kazakh University International Conference "Human Capital is the basis of industrialization 4.0", lecture
22 February 2019, Brussels	ENQA Board Meeting
18 March 2019, Berlin	DAZ, expert training for members of the accreditation network for study programmes in architecture and planning (ASAP)
22 March 2019, Potsdam	Network Quality Audit
10-11 April 2019, Málaga	ERASMUS+ Project „Eldicare“, project meeting
24-25 April 2019, Tallinn	ENQA Members' Forum
29 April-1 May 2019, Ulaanbaatar	Meeting with Mongolian National Council for Education Accreditation (MNCEA), workshop for Mongolian higher education institutions
8 May 2019, Berlin	Glienicker talks
13-14 May 2019, Lübeck	Bad Wiesseer conference and anniversary 50 years HAWs / FHs
16-17 May 2019, Kyrenia (Zypern)	CEENQA General Assembly and Members' Workshop
20-21 May 2019, Nicosia	ERASMUS+ Project „DataPRO“, project meeting
20 June 2019, Brüssel	ENQA Board Meeting
19 June 2019, Berlin	German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) competition "Rise through Education: Open Universities", workshop "Accreditation in Scientific Continuing Education", panel discussion
5-6 July 2019, Athen	ERASMUS+ Project "GDPR4H", project meeting

Date and Place	Event
16 September 2019, Frankfurt	Accreditation Council for "Scientific Continuing Education"
18-19 September 2019, Lichfield Staffordshire	ERASMUS+ Project „Eldicare“, project meeting
19 September 2019, Brüssel	ENQA Board Meeting
26 September 2019, Bern	Swiss Accreditation Council, Day of Reflection
27 September 2019, Lüneburg	Conference of the Union Expert
27 September 2019, Mainz	German Rectors' Conference "Recognition and Acknowledgement within the Scope of Accreditation"
3-7 October 2019, Turkestan (Kasachstan)	IAAR Central Asian International Forum on Quality Assurance in Education
7-8 October 2019, Almaty (Kasachstan)	KAZ-ACQUIN Workshop
16 October 2019, Yerevan (Armenia)	ENQA General Assembly
29-30 October 2019, Cottbus	ERASMUS+ Project „DataPRO“, project meeting
22 November 2019, Berlin	European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF)
10 December 2019, Bonn	Transnational Education (TNB), conference for project managers and coordinators

## 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 2019, ACQUIN continued to pay particular attention to the Central, Eastern and South-eastern 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 800 higher education institutions and other members in 48 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

Dr. Stefan Handke participated in the ENQA Members' Forum in April 2019 in Tallinn and in the ENQA General Assembly 2019 in October in Yerevan on behalf of ACQUIN. Mr. Handke did not stand for re-election when the ENQA Board was newly elected. Until his departure from the committee, he had attended four board meetings in Brussels and also supported the strategic development of ENQA there.

The association will be transformed into a stronger representation of the interests of agencies in the European Higher Education Area based on a draft strategy of the board. This should put the role of the "gate keeper" in the background, which should be left to the EQAR register in the future. A listing in EQAR is a prerequisite for being approved as an agency in Germany according to the State Accreditation Treaty.

## 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: Professionalization 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"). Giorina Maratsi (in Cottbus and Lichfield Staffordshire), Sofia Treskova (in Malaga and Athens) and Stefan Handke (in Nicosia) took part in a total of five project meetings.

## SWITZERLAND

ACQUIN is recognised by the Swiss Accreditation Council as an accreditation agency in accordance with the Swiss regulation of the University Council on accreditation in higher education. An assessment process was carried out in Switzerland in 2019.

ACQUIN was represented by Dr. Alexander Rudolph who also participated in a "Day of Reflection" of the Swiss Accreditation Council in Bern on 26 September 2019.

## REGION 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.

Dr. Stefan Handke participated in the general assembly of CEENQA in Kyrenia / Cyprus in May 2019. Mr. Handke is a member of the CEENQA board and holds the position of treasurer.

## **KAZAKHSTAN**

In 2012, the 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. The registration was renewed in 2018, so that accreditation procedures in Kazakhstan could be carried out or initiated again in 2019.

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 the period under review, accreditation procedures in Eastern Europe declined in numbers. This can be explained by the increase in

establishment of national agencies - particularly in Kazakhstan. In 2019, KAZ-ACQUIN was temporarily forced to cease operations because there was a lack of significant contract volume.

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) and IAAR (Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating).

In October 2019, Dr. Stefan Handke participated in the IAAR 2019 Central Asian International Forum on Quality Assurance in Education in Turkestan as a guest speaker. During this period, Nina Soroka, Dr. Lyazzat Nugumanova and Dr. Handke conducted a workshop on "Qualification goals and competence descriptions" in programmes at Al-Farabi University in Almaty.

In February 2019, Dr. Handke participated in the international conference "Human Capital is the Basis of Industrialization 4.0" at Al-Farabi University as a guest lecturer and talked about "Trans-national Quality Assurance: Scope, Impact and Future".

In addition to accreditation procedures, in 2019 ACQUIN also carried out a certification procedure for continuing education programs (see Accreditation and Evaluation Procedures in the International Area).

## **RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

In October 2019, ACQUIN and the agency "Russian Register" signed a cooperation agreement in Yerevan. The Russian Register founded in 1913 is a full member of ENQA.

The St. Petersburg-based organization is the largest provider of certification and assessment procedures in the Russian Federation.

## **MONGOLIA**

In April 2019, ACQUIN entered into a cooperation and partnership agreement with the Mongolian National Council for Education Accreditation (MNCEA). Dr. Alexander Ru-

dolph held a workshop for Mongolian universities in Ulaanbaatar. The emphasis was put on the basics of the accreditation procedures in accordance with the ESG and experience in gaining and training experts.

## ARABIAN REGION

In the year under review, ACQUIN sought to support humanitarian and medical care facilities in Syria. In particular, a certification procedure of study programmes of the "Academy of Health Sciences" was carried out in Idlib, Syria (without the on-site inspection). It

was conducted for the "Nursing" (B.A.), "Physical Therapy" (B.A.) and "Paramedics" (B.A.) programmes. ACQUIN sees the certification process in Syria as support of the reconstruction efforts in the region that correspond to the agency's charitable purpose.

