

3.2 Sequence of the procedure

The sequence of an accreditation procedure can be subdivided as follows:

1. Preparation	HEI	- A request is submitted to the ASIIN Office (accreditation request and a curricular overview which clearly states the content of the programme or programmes). - Form: electronic using the "Accreditation Request" form (www.asiin.de) - Required information: even in the case of an informal request, information such as the name(s) of the programme(s), type of degree, number of semesters, the seal(s) being applied for, any particularities, proposed responsibility of the ASIIN Technical Committees, proposed peer profiles, contact details is required.
➤ request		
➤ Preparation of proposal	ASIIN	- The responsibility of ASIIN/its respective Technical Committees and the applicable procedure model and type are determined (see 3.1). - Where significant divergence from the applicable criteria is apparent, the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes must decide whether and on what terms a proposal can be issued; where necessary, the ASIIN office provides information on the criteria applied in this regard. - The number and profile of peers required as well as the overall length of visits are determined by the competent Technical Committee(s). - Calculation and forwarding of proposal, including a proposed timetable for the procedure, by the ASIIN office.
➤ Acceptance of proposal/conclusion of contract	ASIIN and HEI	- Contract concluded by means of acceptance of the proposal by the HEI and, if desired, by means of a separate contract.
2. Assessment	HEI and ASIIN	- Presentation of self-assessment report (or draft, if preferred) by the HEI.
➤ Pre-assessment		

			- Formal pre-assessment of the draft self-assessment report by the ASIIN office. - (Optional) preliminary discussions at the ASIIN office. - Submission of final self-evaluation report by the HEI.
➤ Review team	ASIIN		- Nomination and appointment of the review team (ASIIN office, Technical Committees and Accreditation Commission).
➤ Visit	ASIIN and HEI		- Scheduling and preparation of the visit. - Assessment of the self-assessment report by the peers and the ASIIN office. - Feedback by the peers of initial impressions, any additional requirements and any preparatory questions for the HEI to the ASIIN office. - According to the procedure type and country in which the HEI is located, preparatory meetings or a teleconference among the review team or involving the HEI might be necessary; where necessary, the ASIIN office provides information on the criteria applied in this regard. - Confirmation of date, including agenda, for the visit to the HEI. - On-site visit to HEI carried out (review team and ASIIN representative(s)); one peer assumes the role of team spokesperson.
➤ Reporting	ASIIN		- Submission of accreditation report (status version of the peers after the visit) to the HEI to be checked for factual errors and commented on.
	HEI		- Comments on accreditation report by the HEI and correction of factual errors, if any, and amendments.

3. Decision	ASIIN	- Final assessment by the peers with a recommendation for the decision on accreditation. - Comments by relevant Technical Committee(s) with recommendation for the decision on accreditation.
➤ Recommendation of peers ➤ Recommendation of Technical Committees		
➤ Decision of the Accreditation Commission	ASIIN	- Model I: Decision by the ASIIN Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes on accreditation and, if relevant for each case, on the award of the seal(s) applied for. - Model II: Adoption of report and recommendation by the ASIIN Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes for the decision to be submitted to the competent external national accreditation body, depending on the country in which the HEI is located. - Model III: Combination of models I and II (see above).
➤ Notification and publication	ASIIN and HEI	- Notification of the decision to the HEI. - Transmission of the accreditation report (final version) to the HEI and, if positive, any certificates/authorisations for the use of a seal. - Transmission of the accreditation report (final version) to the owners of any additional seals applied for (e.g. to the German Accreditation Council). - Publication of a summary and of the accreditation report on the website in accordance with the requirements of the ESG.

3.3 Request submission: the HEI's self assessment report

The accreditation process is based on a so called self assessment report by the applying institution of higher education.

The preparation of the self assessment report offers the opportunity to use internal quality management systems and self examination processes in order to involve relevant stakeholder groups and to identify possible areas of improvement for the (further) development of a degree programme.

Ideally, the accreditation process will be utilized by the higher education institution as a quality development project and will not be seen as a formal inspection routine.

The self assessment report is created in two steps:

1. Self assessment: The higher education institution uses the self assessment report to analyze in an aggregated manner if and how the degree programme/s fulfil/s the accreditation criteria and which particularities have to be taken into account. Variations from the criteria can be explained.

There should be a special focus on evaluation and assessment rather than on mere description, including, for example strengths and weaknesses, challenges and envisaged solutions. The “guiding questions” below are designed to give some assistance in that respect.

The self assessment report is also a guide through the complementary attachments. Typically, a short and concise evaluation of each criterion together with a reference to the relevant attachment will be sufficient.

If the accreditation process includes a “cluster” of similar degree programmes, information that is relevant for all degree programmes should be summarized. At the same time, information that is important for specific degree programmes (e.g. intended learning outcomes, curriculum etc.) should be reported separately.

2. Evidence: It is of great importance, that the self assessment is reasonably documented and supported by suitable pieces of evidence. Therefore it is necessary to compile an annex with all pieces of evidence. This annex includes all internal regulations, documents, quantitative and qualitative data and information, etc., that the higher education institution already has in use, for example where they have been generated by internal quality management processes and must not be produced just for the accreditation process. A sample list of possible pieces of evidence is included in this guideline but can and should be altered where applicable.

ASIIN offers a template/guideline with key questions for the preparation of the self assessment report

This guideline can be used as a reference model. The structure corresponds with the accreditation criteria and differentiates between guiding questions for the analysis and suggestions for possibly useful pieces of evidence. Both are not mandatory but thought to be of assistance.

For the ASIIN quality seal and the possibly applied for European subject specific labels a guideline for the preparation of the self assessment report, based on the General Criteria and the Subject-Specific-Criteria, is available.

If a subject specific label is to be obtained in a second tier procedure after a national accreditation procedure, the ASIIN office provides an individual guideline about the necessary self assessment and documentation.

Self assessment and evidence can both be provided electronically, depending on the degree of digitalization within the institution's internal data and document management system, and can include links to specific web pages, data bases or similar.

Depending on the needs of the individual peer panels we may also ask for a printed version of the application documents in specific cases, whereas it is expected to use only electronic documents in the near future.

3.4 Principles for the selection of peers

ASIIN asks the higher education institution to state the ideal expertise profile for the group of peers. ASIIN's Accreditation Commission decides who will be nominated for a given procedure based on the recommendation of the responsible Technical Committee(s), and appoints the peers.

The group of peers

For a single accreditation, the group of peers is normally composed of:

- 2-3 full-time professors (university, university of applied sciences and, if applicable, university of cooperative education)
- 1 industry representative
- 1 student

For cluster accreditations, the group of peers is expanded in accordance with the needs of the subject matter.

In all cases, the group of peers should:

- Include members who are able to understand the subject matter of the programme or programmes under review;
- Include members who understand the needs of stakeholders in the particular programme concerned and incorporate them into their evaluation;
- If possible, include peers experienced in accreditation as well as auditors who are new to the field;
- If the degree programmes under consideration are offered by higher education institutions with a special form of organisation (e.g. universities of cooperative education or privately run institutions), include members who have experience at this type of institution.

In some cases, members of ASIIN committees involved in the accreditation procedure may serve as peers as part of the agency's internal quality assurance mechanisms.

Auditors with a background in higher education should:

- Have proven subject expertise;
- Be able to demonstrate their activities in the subject area;

- Ideally: have experience in accreditation or evaluation, teaching experience at a higher education institution, international experience, and experience in the administration of higher education institutions.

Auditors with a professional background should:

- Have proven subject expertise;
- Have experience with direct responsibility for employing graduates in a professional setting;
- Ideally: have experience in accreditation or evaluation, teaching experience at a higher education institution, international experience, and experience in the administration of higher education institutions.

Auditors from the student body should:

- Be actively studying a subject relevant to the accreditation procedure;
- Be able to reflect on the experience of studying, while not having significantly exceeded the normal time taken to complete a degree;
- Be familiar with Bachelor's and Master's level programmes.

For Germany, students nominated by the Student Accreditation Pool are considered during the selection process of the student representative.

Persons excluded from the nomination as peer:

- Persons who are in the process of applying to the institution under review.
- Academic colleagues whose publications or projects are principally produced in cooperation with teaching staff from the institution under review.
- People who work at the institution under review and/or have a dependent relationship to it.
- Generally, professors from the same federal state or region.

Preparation of peers

The agency offers regular seminars/workshops for auditors and committee members to prepare them for the task and to reflect on their understanding of their role and update their knowledge of the auditing process. The agency expects its peers to make use of these opportunities or similar offers provided by other agencies.

Confidentiality and impartiality

Before participating in an audit, every peer must sign a confidentiality and impartiality declaration. The applicants are informed of the composition of the auditing team. If bias is suspected, the higher education institution may request the substitution of peers. The relevant Technical Committee handles this type of requests.