



Approved by the ENAAEE Administrative Council (20/11/2017)

Leuven Communiqué (November 2017)

After more than 10 years of programme accreditation, ENAAEE is facing new challenges: recent developments in Higher Education Quality Assurance, ongoing debate on institution vs. programme accreditation, common training principles for engineers, improvement of the value and recognition of EUR-ACE labels by students and employers, etc.

The European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education convened its 1st Members Forum at KU Leuven (Belgium), 18-19 October 2017:

“Challenges, perspectives and good practice of programme accreditation in engineering education”
with the final objective of drafting an agenda for ENAAEE orientation in the following years.

The forum gathered experiences and reflections from 75 individuals actively engaged in EUR-ACE accreditations. The present communiqué is the summary of the conclusions and recommendations issued from 9 parallel workshops and 3 break-out sessions.

Communiqué

Programme Quality

- A main role for ENAAEE is to assist in the development of engineering programmes, that is to **encourage and support improvements** in and learning, through accreditation, and to promote the introduction of new teaching methods.
- The major benefit of accreditation should be and is for the engineering community by **improving the quality of engineering programmes**, and consequently of engineering graduates and of engineering artefacts and processes.
- For programme providers, the **real benefit is the accreditation process itself**: the self-evaluation process and report (SER) provide an invaluable management tool to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the programme and of the faculty; additionally, the accreditation provides a detailed external review of all aspects of teaching by qualified peers.
- ENAAEE should be open and supportive **to innovative pedagogical methods**, while drafting principles to maintain quality (e.g. online distance learning).



Accreditation Process

- The direct, **on-site exchange between peers** and independently answering faculty, administration and students is essential and cannot be substituted with paper assessment.
- ENAAEE and the authorized agencies should actively promote '**lean' programme accreditation procedures** which use synergy effects with programme, institutional or system accreditation, but still fulfil the EAFSG and do not compromise the quality of the EUR-ACE label and the consistency and reliability of the accreditation procedures. Lean "procedures" for the **periodical renewal** of agency authorizations and programme accreditation should be mandatory, focusing on the assessment of the changes.
- If **outcome based** assessments tend to be the norm, ENAAEE should develop a strategy to promote them, in particular ENAAEE should examine ways of presenting technical and transferable skills learning outcomes in a way which acknowledges that, in a good learning environment, students will develop transferable skills and technical competence through the same learning event.
- A key criterium for accreditation should be to look for proof how an HEI has installed its **assessment plans with performance indicators**; the accreditation agency should not be prescriptive about the form of these indicators, but to evaluate their effectiveness.
- The **student competence assessment** is a key issue that ENAAEE should dig out, advise and disseminate; this includes: self vs. peer assessment, self-awareness methods, combination of formative and summative assessment, work-based or integrated learning...

ENAAEE Strategy

- With the rise of institution accreditation and the changes in national regulations, which make programme accreditation more often optional than mandatory, EUR-ACE accreditation system enters a new era; it must demonstrate that the **benefits** for the final users and the whole engineering community **exceed the costs** in time and human resources.
- ENAAEE should seek for **bridges and synergies** with uphill systems like the EAFSG (Standards and guidelines of the European Higher Education Area), transverse systems like EASPA and downhill like the CDIO (educational framework "Conceive — Design — Implement — Operate").
- ENAAEE should be **a cross roads and a platform** where agencies and programme providers exchange best practices and experiences. ENAAEE should **draft advice notes** for accreditation agencies on accreditation issues with suggestions -no prescriptions- of how to address the observed difficulties.
- Studies on the **congruity of ENAAEE programme outcomes** with the outcomes of other international systems to help global mobility of students and graduates should be undertaken as appropriate.
- As to the **transnational accreditation**, the ENAAEE "Rules for Translational Accreditation" should be enforced; it should not be operated as a revenue generating exercise, but to promote the international EUR-ACE label recognition.
- ENAAEE together with the national agencies should **identify key persons and services** to be directly addressed to promote the EUR-ACE label and Quality System, e.g. University International Mobility advisors, Immigration offices, Employers' associations ...