



Transnational Accreditation by ENAAEE Authorized Agencies: A Good Practice Guide

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Scope:

This document covers good practice guidelines which ENAAEE Authorized Agencies (agencies authorized by ENAAEE to award the EUR-ACE® label) should follow when performing:

- Transnational Accreditation, as below defined (i.e. including the award of the EUR-ACE label)
- Accreditation of International¹ Double or Joint Degrees

Definitions:

“Transnational Accreditation”: Accreditation (including the award of the EUR-ACE label) by an ENAAEE Authorized Agency, of an (engineering) degree programme run by a Higher Education Institution (HEI) based in a country different from the Agency’s country.

“Double (Dual) Degrees”: Degrees awarded following successful completion of the requirements for two degree programmes from two HEIs, as defined in an agreement between the two HEIs, each HEI being primarily responsible for its own degree programme.

“Joint Degrees”: Awarded by two or more partner HEI’s, following successful completion of a programme comprising a single joint curriculum leading to a single degree. Governance groups, governance boards share authority and responsibility.

TRANSNATIONAL ACCREDITATION

As a guiding principle, each HEI is entitled to choose which ENAAEE Authorized Agency they wish to accredit their engineering degree programmes leading to the award of the EUR-ACE Label. This includes the freedom of the HEI to choose an agency other than its national agency, should it wish to do so (this is already formally the case in several EHEA countries). This also includes the possibility to undergo an accreditation by an external agency in addition to a mandatory national one.

A) ENAAEE Authorized Agencies accrediting outside their own country:

Any EUR-ACE-authorized Agency can award the EUR-ACE label in any country in accordance with the rules below.

However, in authorizing for the first time, an Agency to award the EUR-ACE label, ENAAEE can restrict the operations of the newly authorized Agency - for the purpose of granting the EUR-ACE label – to that Agency’s national territory for a period determined by ENAAEE.

¹ In this document, only double or joint degrees involving institutions from two (or more) different countries are considered.



Any ENAAEE Authorized Agency which receives an invitation to accredit a degree program in accordance with the EUR-ACE Framework Standards and Guidelines (EAFSG), at a HEI outside its own country, must share this information and offer to work collaboratively with other ENAAEE Agencies in that country, through the “Members Only” section of the ENAAEE web site as soon as an invitation is received.

- A1. If an ENAAEE Authorized Agency is requested to review and accredit a programme by a HEI based in another country, in which an ENAAEE authorized Agency exists,

- a. the Agency receiving the request should immediately advise the HEI that an ENAAEE Authorized Agency exists in that country, and a possible agreement between the two Agencies should be explored. (Duplication between the two agencies should be avoided and a complementary way of working should be sought.)
- b. if, in spite of this, the HEI confirms the request, the requested Agency should advise the local Agency that it intends to carry out an accreditation in accordance with the EAFSG, subject to the condition that the local Agency or any ENAAEE authorized agency has not turned down, in the past two years, any of the programmes submitted by the HEI for accreditation (except for the case mentioned in the footnote ²);
- c. if this condition is fulfilled, the review can proceed under the sole responsibility of the requested Agency, but the local Agency should be invited to suggest a member of the Review Team or alternatively to nominate an Observer (at the expense of the said local Agency). It is recommended that the HEI be invited to provide to the requested Agency the arguments that support the HEI’s decision to apply to a foreign Agency for the EUR-ACE label, this information being useful to ENAAEE in continuing the monitoring and improving the transnational accreditation process within ENAAEE.

-A2. If an ENAAEE Authorized Agency is requested to review and accredit a programme by a HEI based in another country in which no ENAAEE Agency exists (even where there may be other accreditation/QA agencies),

- a. the Agency receiving the request should first check that there is no legal restriction on its accrediting the programme(s);
- b. assuming no legal restriction exists, the ENAAEE Agency should make contact with any local accreditation/QA agencies in the country to explore opportunities for involving them in the process;
- c. the programme accreditation process can then proceed as usual under the responsibility of the requested accrediting Agency; any existing local Agency can be invited to nominate an Observer in the Review Team (at the expense of the said local Agency).
- d. At the same time, the requested accrediting ENAAEE Agency should promote, in accord and with the support of ENAAEE, the EUR-ACE label in the said country (this may be facilitated by the involvement of the local Agency’s observer in the Review Team).

² Note: In exceptional cases (such as, if the turn down of the programme towards EUR-ACE Label was due to the additional requirements of the original Agency beyond the EAFSG) , even though a HEI was denied in the past two years the EUR-ACE label to some of its Engineering programmes submitted for accreditation, the HEI can request another EUR-ACE Agency to ask ENAAEE if the case could be revised and the LC would consider the case on its merits and may allow the said programmes to be reviewed by the said other Agency.



B) ENAAEE Authorization of Agencies based outside the EHEA:

ENAAEE favours the extension of the EUR-ACE system outside the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and also participates in EU funded projects with this aim.

ENAAEE has to ensure the quality of its authorized agencies and thus of the awarded labels. The authorization of Agencies outside of the EHEA will be a significant challenge in this regard: particular care must be paid to the full compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG) as well as with the EAFSG, both in the documentation produced by the applying Agencies and of their behaviour in carrying out the QA and accreditation processes; this compliance will be rigorously assessed by the ENAAEE Review Team when an Agency applies for authorization to award the EUR-ACE label and any authorization granted by ENAAEE will be for fixed time periods.

ACCREDITATION OF DOUBLE (DUAL) AND JOINT DEGREES

The accreditation of a double (dual) or joint degree programme will normally be sought by one of the participating HEIs through the relevant national ENAAEE Agency, which will have full responsibility for the accreditation and the award of the EUR-ACE label. The national Agencies of the other participating HEIs should be informed and possibly involved (see items A1 and A2 as relevant).

If in the same process, the HEI seeks for the programme the “national accreditation” in some of the countries in which the participating HEIs are based, then of course it should meet the requirements legally in force for this accreditation. This may result in a joint accreditation process by all the authorized agencies concerned.

As Double (Dual) degrees are in fact legally separate programmes that lead to the award of two or more separate degrees conferred by different HEIs, each programme is normally accredited, as far as national accreditation is concerned, separately, according to the national legislation. However, as far as the EUR-ACE label is concerned, it is recommended that the concerned ENAAEE agencies co-ordinate the reviewing process of the said separate degrees in order to avoid duplication of work and unnecessary expense for HEIs.

In any case, the quality requirements indicated in the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for degrees provided by HEIs based in different countries must be fulfilled together with the principles reflected in the UNESCO/Council of Europe “Code of good practice in the provision of transnational education”. The “European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes” approved by EHEA ministers in May 2015 shall also be applied. More generally, ENAAEE Transnational Accreditation shall comply in any case with every overarching set of standards and guidelines officially adopted within the EHEA.
