



## Standards and Procedures on Transnational Accreditation For ENAAEE Authorized Agencies

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### **Scope:**

This document covers standards and procedures which ENAAEE Authorized Agencies (agencies authorized by ENAAEE to award the EUR-ACE® label) shall follow when performing:

- Transnational Accreditation, as below defined (i.e. including the award of the EUR-ACE label)
- Accreditation of International<sup>1</sup> 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<sup>1</sup>.

### **TRANSNATIONAL ACCREDITATION**

In 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. In this situation the accreditation procedure may include analysis of the standards defined in the EAFSG only.

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



#### **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, for the first two years the newly authorized Agency is restricted to perform accreditation reviews with the EUR-ACE® label awarding to the national territory only.

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, before the accreditation process starts, must share this information with all other authorized ENAAEE Agencies through the ENAAEE Secretariat and the ENAAEE Label Committee (via the Chair of the Label Committee).

#### **- 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 must immediately inform the HEI that an ENAAEE Authorized Agency exists in that country. At the same time, the requested Agency must ask the HEI and provide ENAAEE (via the Label Committee Chair and the Secretariat) the reasons why this request is made when existing a local authorized Agency in the HEI country. This information as identified by the HEI will be evaluated by the Label Committee to identify any problem related to the local Agency accreditation process in continuing the monitoring and improving the transnational accreditation process within ENAAEE;
- b. if the HEI still confirms the request, the requested Agency shall inform the local Agency with copy to the ENAAEE Secretariat that it intends to carry out the accreditation in accordance with the EAFSG;
- c. before signing the contract on accreditation a formal communication (in writing or by e-mail) between the two Agencies (the requested Agency and the local authorized Agency) shall take place and possible collaboration and agreement shall be explored. Duplication between the two agencies should be avoided and a complementary way of working should be sought; A written agreement from the local Authorised Agency confirming that the requested agency may perform the EUR ACE label accreditation procedure for the indicated programmes will be included in the dossier that will be presented to ENAAEE when the concerned programmes are submitted for EUR ACE label approval.
- d. the requested Agency shall ask the HEI for information 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<sup>2</sup>);

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<sup>2</sup> 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.



- e. the requested Agency will check that there are no other legal restrictions to do the accreditation;
- f. if all the above mentioned conditions are fulfilled, the review can proceed under the sole responsibility of the requested Agency, but the local Agency will be invited to suggest a member of the Review Team or alternatively to nominate an Observer (at the expense of the said local Agency).

**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 requested Agency shall ask the HEI to inform if a EUR-ACE authorized agency has not refused, in the past two years, any of the programmes submitted by the HEI for accreditation;
- b. the requested Agency should check that there are no other legal restrictions to do the accreditation;
- c. 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;
- d. the requested Agency must share this information with all EUR-ACE Agencies (via informing the ENAAEE Secretariat and the LC members);
- e. if the conditions a) and b) are fulfilled 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);
- f. 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).

**B) ENAAEE Authorisation 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 authorisation 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 authorisation to award the EUR-ACE label and any authorisation 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, awarding the EUR-ACE label on programmes of these degrees is to be assessed in accordance with the EUR-ACE label procedure.