Report from a HEI going through the process of an ASIIN accreditation

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1. Who we are
2. Our accreditation
3. Your accreditation: Recommendation and pitfalls

Background

Hamburg:

- Second biggest town in Germany
- Located in northern Germany

Hamburg University of Applied Science

- 4 Faculties
- 17 Departments
- 12.100 Full-Time Students
- 80 Degree Programmes
- Wide range of degree majors:
  - Art
  - Economics
  - Life Sciences
  - Social work
  - Engineering
  - Informatics

Our Situation

- The Department of Informatics offers 4 degree programmes
    - o Applied Informatics (B.Sc.)
    - o Technical Informatics (B.Sc.)
    - o European Computer Science (B.Sc.)
    - o Informatics (M.Sc.)
- In 2007, three of them had to be reaccredited (first accreditation 5 years ago) and first time accreditation of one Bachelor degree programme
- We made substantial changes to all accredited programmes prior to reaccreditation
- Personnel in charge of accreditation at HEI as well as organisation of HEI has changed

Our Accreditation: The Process

The „Classical" structure

1. Decide to do accreditation
2. Decide which agency to do the job

3. Write self-assessment report about your programme
4. Get feedback from agency
5. Modify programmes
6. Submit final report
7. Audit of HEI by Peers
8. The verdict
9. Modify the degree programme
10. Get final accreditation

Add (0 ... ∞) bureaucracy

Our structure

1. Our law: Get accreditation!
2. Clear to everybody: ASIIN
3. Collect data from ASIIN and design of programmes according to standards & collected data
4. Self-assessment report is only documentation
5. Get feedback from agency

6. Submit final report
7. Audit of HEI by Peers
8. The verdict
9. Slight modifications
10. Final accreditation

Our Accreditation: People involved

- One Professor responsible for Accreditation
- Dean of Department (coordination)
- All professors
- Some Students
- Central administration (heavily!)
- Faculty administration
- Dean of Faculty (only representation)
- President of university (only representation)

Our Accreditation: Timetable

- Collection of data: Permanently…

- Creation of a steering-committee:
  6 month prior to accreditation

- Creating the final curriculum:
  4 month prior to accreditation

- Last minute:
  Writing self-assessment report (3 weeks fulltime)

Our Accreditation: Report

Our self-assessment report

- Was edited by one person

- Contained only 57 pages for four degree programmes

- Followed the structure proposed by ASIIN and compatible with EQANIE

- Contained 600 pages appendix ;-)

- Appendix includes only standard items like module handbook, staff handbook, published legislation, quality data relevant for the degree programmes, …

Our Accreditation: Summary

- Accreditation had to be done…
- Accreditation helped us to focus on quality of degree programme
- Accreditation motivated us to systematically collect data about the degree programmes
- Accreditation helped us clearing some critical issues in the development of the curriculum
- Accreditation was smooth because we did not have to cope with "central accreditation bureaucracy"
- Accreditation was smooth because we have really great programmes

Your Accreditation: Pitfalls

- Accreditation is not just writing a report
- Accreditation is not a "one-man show"
- Accreditation needs broad support within the department
- Accreditation is time-consuming
- Accreditation may uncover existing problems in the department
- Accreditation is especially painful if your degree programme does not comply to any standards
- Accreditation does not hinder innovation

Your Accreditation: Recommendations

- Read all the documents available from your accreditation agency

- Do not design a programme contrary to any standards

- Be innovative, i.e. deviate from standards where necessary

- Do accreditation within the department and ask for help by centralised administration

- Do not consider accreditation as a bureaucratic event

- Let everybody in the department know:
  Accreditation is not only concerned with the curriculum

Questions?

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