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Peter P.T. Cheung
President, APQN
Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation
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Quarry Bay
HONG KONG



CC: Members of the APQN Board

Wa/jm

07 March 2007

ASIIN Membership Application Observer Status APQN

Dear Mr. Cheung,
Dear Members of the Board,

With the present letter the "Accreditation Agency for Study Programs in Engineering Sciences, Informatics, Natural Sciences and Mathematics" (ASIIN) applies for membership in the observer category in the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN).

ASIIN believes to meet the criteria for observer status as defined in the regulations of APQN:

ASIIN is the German accreditation agency specialized in the assessment of study programs in engineering sciences, informatics, natural sciences and mathematics. ASIIN is an officially licensed accreditation agency by the German *Akkreditierungsrat* (Accreditation Council).

ASIIN is a non-for-profit-association and independent from single higher education institutions or governmental bodies. Four groups of members build the general assembly (coordination group of German universities, coordination group of German universities of applied sciences, industrial federations and umbrella organizations of the trade unions' organizations, technical and scientific associations and professional organizations). (See annex I: ASIIN Membership Brochure)

The accreditation decisions are independently taken by the accreditation commission, composed of one third representatives from technical universities/universities, one third from universities of applied science and a final third of representatives from the industry. The commission is supported by permanent technical committees. The professional bodies within ASIIN work in a system of checks and balances, mutually ensuring the quality of their decisions in form and content. The headquarter is responsible for the formally consistent realization of accreditation procedures. The outcomes of the accreditation procedures are always documented and the respective data submitted to the German Accreditation Council and the interested university. (See annex II: ASIIN Structure)

ASIIN examines the compliance of study programs with quality standards relying on a peer-group-system and on permanent technical committees. A defined and published set of general and field-specific criteria helps our auditors when examining a study program. (See annex III: ASIIN Requirements and Procedural Principles)

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ASIIN conducts accreditation procedures focusing on single study programs or groups of programs of higher education institutions on a regular basis mainly in Germany, but also abroad. Up to now about 1000 programs have been accredited by ASIIN since June 2001.

Besides actively carrying out accreditations mainly in Germany, ASIIN has a strong interest in the development of accreditation and quality assurance system on a national and international level.

ASIIN negotiates and signs agreements with foreign accreditation institutions on cooperation and on the mutual recognition of accredited degree programmes. In order to do so, ASIIN is a member of several international accreditation and quality assurance organizations both Europe- and worldwide.

On the European level, ASIIN actively promotes the co-operation in quality assurance for higher education programs in engineering sciences as a member of the European Standing Observatory for the Engineering Profession and Education (ESOEPE). ASIIN is also a member of European Network for the Accreditation of Engineering Education (ENAE) and of the EUR-ACE Project for the development of European standards for the accreditation of engineering programs. Furthermore, ASIIN is a member of the European Chemistry Thematic Network Association (ECTNA) which undertakes the joint development and establishment of European accreditation standards for Bachelor and Master programs in chemistry. We are soon expecting the decision by the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA) to grant ASIIN full membership.

On a worldwide level, as provisional member in the Washington Accord, our organization supports the mutual recognition of accreditation results within the scope of its signatories' countries. Additionally, as a member of INQAAHE it is the goal of ASIIN to share information and expertise on quality assurance in higher education. Furthermore, ASIIN participates in the 6x4 EULAC project which focuses particularly on the development of accreditation standards for engineering programs at Latin American HEIs. The project also aims at narrowing the ties between Latin American and European higher education. Observer membership in APQN should round up the international network of ASIIN in its efforts to promote quality assurance in higher education. (See annex IV: ASIIN International Network)

The particular interest of ASIIN in the Asia-Pacific region is demonstrated by participation in several events taking place in the region. A few recent examples are:

- Presentation at APQN Conference and Annual General Meeting, Kuala Lumpur, Feb. 4-7, 2007
- Presentation at Institute of Engineering Education Taiwan: 2006 Conference on Best Practice of Accreditation of Engineering Education, Taipeh, June 9-10, 2006
- Reception of Malaysian Delegation in Duesseldorf, Mar. 27-28, 2006
- Reception of Chinese Delegation from Shanghai Educational Evaluation Institute in Duesseldorf, Jan 13, 2006
- Presentation at JABEE Symposium/Workshop 2005: Accreditation and Good Practice of Engineering Education leading to Master's degree, Dec. 2-3, 2005, Tokyo, Japan
- Presentation at conference Perspectives of Sino-German Cooperation in the Realm of Engineering Education and Accreditation, China, Dec. 5-10, 2005
- Accreditation at USST Shanghai, China, Sep. 27-29, 2004
- Presentation at ASEE International Colloquium on Engineering Education, Sept. 7-10, 2004, Beijing, China

ASIIN wishes to become an Observer member of APQN in order to facilitate cooperation between Germany and the Asia-Pacific region. Since the foundation of APQN in 2003, ASIIN has actively followed its development and progress. Members and staff of ASIIN have participated in APQN activities as well as interacted with APQN members during several external events.

At present, ASIIN provides its expertise in quality assurance and assists in the establishment of new quality assurance or accreditation agencies, for example by serving as expert in projects in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Lebanon.

Through observer membership in APQN, ASIIN wishes to extend and institutionalize its international relations in this region. It is the goal of ASIIN to strengthen its ties to the region and to share our knowledge and experience in the field of quality assurance in higher education. To consolidate on a recognized basis its current good ties to several member organizations of APQN, would certainly help to improve the mutual understanding of quality assurance in Germany and the Asia-Pacific region.

In signing this application, ASIIN documents its intention and willingness to contribute actively to the aims of APQN. Already, ASIIN is involved in activities promoting the introduction, continuous improvement and – taking into account important legal or cultural conditions – the harmonization of systems of quality assurance and accreditation world-wide.

We are looking forward to participating in the joint endeavour of promoting the co-operation in the field of quality assessment and assurance in higher education!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Iring Wasser', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Iring Wasser

- CEO -