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Decision No. EI-2024-31 on the accreditation of the M.Sc. Civil Engineering, delivered by Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria

The President of the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education,

Considering the Research Code, in particular Articles L. 114-3-1 to L. 114-3-6;

Considering the Board's deliberation of 29th September 2022 on the accreditation criteria for courses abroad (excluding doctoral/PhD programmes);

Considering the Decision No. 2023-9 of 16th March 2023 on the international accreditation procedure of the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education;

Considering the agreement DEI_2023_CONV17 of 14th June 2023 for the evaluation/accreditation of fourteen training courses, delivered by six Centres of Excellence in Nigeria;

Considering the opinion issued by the Accreditation Commission on 18th June 2024;

Decides:

Article 1

Noting that the M.Sc. Civil Engineering delivered by Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria meets the four accreditation criteria, voted by the Board of the High Council on 29th September 2022, as follows:

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 1: TRAINING POLICY AND CHARACTERISATION

The M.Sc. Civil Engineering is in line with the university's strategy and the socio-economic needs. This M.Sc. is complementary to the other programmes offered by the university's Faculty of Engineering and has been awarded the "African Centre of Excellence" label. The programme tackles the challenges associated with building construction and infrastructure in a comprehensive and engaging manner, with due consideration to environmental concerns. To reach out the objectives, the programme proposes numerous strong links with research and socio-economic partnerships at the national level. To carry on research work, the required facilities (equipment, library, and software) are available within the Department, allowing the students to develop their one-year research project. Other national laboratories complement their research needs, for example in materials characterisation.

The students can pursue a Ph.D. programme in the same Department. It would be interesting to add core courses on ethics and research integrity. Links with socio-economic partners are long-standing and well-established, thanks to several effective partnerships with public institutions and private companies, which add value to the programme. It would be beneficial to engage these partners more actively by having them to contribute to the development of the programme and offer additional professional seminars. MoUs have been signed at the University level, allowing outgoing mobility with foreign universities and international partnerships. Despite the local situation, these international exchanges could be improved, in particular regarding the incoming of foreign students.

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 2: THE PEDAGOGICAL ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The curriculum of the M.Sc. programme is consistent and set in a comprehensive manner. Over a two-year period, on the basis of well-chosen and organised courses, students take the core and elective courses required for building and infrastructure construction. Interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity are proposed through courses available in other Departments of the University. The knowledge and skills are well-defined and address the main challenges of the socio-economic domain of Constructions. The teaching methods are well diversified. It is recommended for the acquisition of information and communication skills to be further developed.

A one-month work placement is only compulsory for students on the ACENPEE programme, which is a second stage of professional immersion. It appears actually that all students have already completed a six-month work placement during the B.Sc. programme. A one-year research project combining practical and theoretical work is proposed. Students are strategically connected with socio-economic partners.

They only have access to international opportunities through social networks and communication with alumni, although a holistic approach is taken by the Policy Assurance Committee at the university level. In addition, even if they are partially addressed, additional skills useful for their integration into the labour market could be more formally offered to M.Sc. students.

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 3: ATTRACTIVENESS, PERFORMANCE AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The attractiveness of the programme is conveniently monitored. The number of applicants is high compared to the available opportunities. The choice has been made to remain selective in recruiting students, with 30 to 50% enrolled to take account of capacity and the availability of supervisors. The monitoring is done using a simple and accessible Google form. This survey is also a tool for evaluating the M.Sc. programme, and the results are sent to the Quality Assurance Committee, which makes recommendations to the Department. Monitoring job market integration shows that graduates are very well integrated, with 91% employed, mainly in the business sector or doctoral programmes. Modern social media are also used by the programme to stay in contact with graduates.

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 4: MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

The contributors to the programme have a high level of expertise covering the full scope of the M.Sc. in Civil Engineering programme. The number of teaching, technical and administrative staff is adequate and satisfying. The programme organisation is clearly defined and efficient, and high-level pedagogical resources are available in the department, the faculty or the university. A significant financial contribution would allow for the renewal of specific equipment and provide access to costly simulation software licenses to benefit students and contractors (private companies).
The different procedures for recruitment and examinations are well-detailed and explained in an extensive way in the PG Handbook. Continuous assessment of the courses is performed through a systematic process, and feedback is considered. The integration of newly recruited staff is efficient, in particular with the introduction of a mentoring strategy.

Article 2

The M.Sc. Civil Engineering delivered by Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria, is accredited for a period of five years from the date of this decision.

Article 3

The decision is accompanied by the following recommendations and comments:

- Add much more laboratory work and incorporate real-life case studies presented by outside speakers. More professional seminars on new challenges can also be offered. This will make it even easier to prepare graduates to enter the job market and get them up and running in companies more quickly.
- It would be interesting and efficient to further involve external contributors and students in the Department bodies and to open the discussion concerning the curriculum evolution.
- Financial support is needed to maintain and renew the equipment. To this end, it is suggested to apply for more funding by agencies and propose new services to companies.
- A determined policy using modern tools and media (Internet, social media) would make it possible to reach students in foreign countries.
- More financial support is needed to provide scholarships, stipends or research grants to more students. Applying for more funding is highly recommended.

Article 4

This decision will be published on the Hcéres website.

Paris 27th June 2024.

The acting President
signed
Stéphane Le Bouler