

## Decision on the Substantive Change Report by British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education (BAC)

Register Committee

Ref. RC43/C124

Ver. 1.0

Date 2024-07-03

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<b>Decision of:</b>	2024-07-02
<b>Result:</b>	Take note
<b>Report received on:</b>	2024-06-14, 2024-06-17 and 2024-06-20
<b>Agency registered since:</b>	2015-01-31
<b>Last external review report:</b>	2020-02-20
<b>Registration until:</b>	2025-02-28
<b>Absented themselves from decision-making:</b>	n/a
<b>Attachments:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Substantive Change Report of 2024-06-14</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Substantive Change Report of 2024-06-17</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">Substantive Change Report of 2024-06-20</a></li> </ol>

1. The Register Committee considered the Substantive Change Report of 2024-06-14, 2024-06-17 and 2024-06-20.
2. The Register Committee took note of the changes in the agency's activity (accreditation of higher education institutions) and changes in the agency's committee regulations.

### **A. Changes to existing quality assurance activities**

3. The Register Committee noted that BAC has revised its *Independent Higher Education (IHE) scheme document* and made adjustments in the standards for accreditation of higher education institutions. The changes focus on clarifying and streamlining the standards.
4. The Committee noted that the agency took further steps towards strengthening the decision-making process following the modes of site visits (hybrid, online and physical). The agency also reduced the number of documents required for re-accreditation.
5. **The Register Committee expects that these changes will be analysed in full as a part of BAC's next renewal of registration, more specifically, whether the revised standards cover all aspects of ESG in practise (ESG2.1), whether the updated standards are fit for purpose to achieve the aims and objectives set for it (ESG 2.2), and whether the revised standards are consistently implemented (ESG 2.5).**

## B. Organisational Changes

6. The Register Committee noted that BAC updated the Terms of References (ToRs) for its Board of Trustees, Standing Committee and Audit Committee as a part of their annual review of ToRs.
7. Furthermore, the Register Committee noted that an independent financial expert has been added to the Audit Committee in May, 2024 and the organisation also introduced a new position in its governance structure - Deputy Chief Executive.
8. **The Register Committee took note of the changes and expects that the next review analyse whether they have have a substantial impact on stakeholders' sufficient involvement in the agency's governance and work (ESG 3.1), and on the agency's independence and autonomy (ESG 3.3).**

### Register Committee

**Ref.** RC43/C124

**Ver.** 1.0

**Date** 2024-07-03

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## EQAR Substantive Change Report

<b>Agency #1</b>	British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education
<b>Agency acronym</b>	BAC
<b>Expiry date #1</b>	28/02/2025
<b>Contact #1</b>	Hayley Boyes
<b>Phone #1</b>	0300 330 1400
<b>Email #1</b>	<a href="mailto:hayley.boyes@the-bac.org">hayley.boyes@the-bac.org</a>
<b>Other organisations?</b>	No
<b>A. Has the organisational identity of the registered agency changed?</b>	No
<b>B. Has the organisational structure changed?</b>	No
<b>C. Changes in EQA activities</b>	2. Substantive changes carried out to one or several existing external QA activities (e.g. changes to their methodology, criteria or procedures)
<b>Description new/changed</b>	<p>BAC has revised the Independent Higher Education scheme last year to ensure that it remained fit for purpose and to make some minor amendments to the wording used in the scheme. The IHE standards and key indicators have not changed in substance, but in some places were streamlined and made clearer.</p> <p>The standards were looked at internally in 2022-2023 and in summary the small changes made were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Removal of key indicators where there was duplication.</li><li>2. Simplification of the wording used in some key indicators. For example, those that were long</li></ol>

and potentially complicated. This was done to make it clearer.

3. Changes in terminology to ensure it remained up to date – for example removing the use of terms such as ‘library’ and replacing it with ‘learning resources’.

4. Making it more explicit in the scheme by adding the term ‘internal quality assurance’ to make it clear that the institution’s own internal quality assurance processes were being assessed. This was implicit previously but was amended to incorporate recommendations from the previous ENQA review.

5. An addition of a single key indicator around accessibility of the premises. This is to ensure that it was aligned with the other accreditation schemes.

As a result, the IHE scheme document was updated, although the only changes were as above, in the standards section. The document was then published on the BAC website in September 2023.

The eligibility, criteria and processes have remained the same and therefore none of the procedural elements are significantly different. The standards continue to be mapped to the ESG 2015 and we have made provision to do a full review of the scheme when the ESG is updated in 2026/27.

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## 2. Changed EQA activity

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1

Accreditation of higher education institutions

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ESG 2.1

The small revision to the scheme has not changed the overall content of the standards as the activity remains the same. The standards and key indicators of the IHE scheme use the

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institution's own internal quality assurance activities to determine if they are met. The scheme's standards have been mapped against the ESG 2015. The document is attached to demonstrate this.

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**ESG 2.2**

The changes to the scheme were small scale and did not involve a full review of the scheme. As these revisions were largely changes in terminology, re-wording and editing of the key indicators there was no involvement of stakeholders as this was done internally.

When a full review of a scheme is undertaken by BAC the process involves formation of a focus group with stakeholders including accredited institutions, an open consultation period and approval from the independent Accreditation Committee.

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**ESG 2.3**

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<https://www.the-bac.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/IHE-Scheme-2023-FINAL.pdf>

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**ESG 2.4**

This remains the same as before.

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**ESG 2.5**

Same as before with the accreditation of higher education institutions

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**ESG 2.6**

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Same as before

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**D. Activity outside the scope of the ESG**

No

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**File #1**

[IHE-Scheme-ESG\\_Mapping.pdf \(55 KB\)](#)

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**File #2**

[IHE-Scheme-2023-FINAL.pdf \(510 KB\)](#)

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Agency acronym	BAC
Expiry date #1	28/02/2025
Contact #1	Hayley Boyes
Phone #1	+44 (0)300 330 1400
Email #1	<a href="mailto:hayley.boyes@the-bac.org">hayley.boyes@the-bac.org</a>
Other organisations?	No
A. Has the organisational identity of the registered agency changed?	No
B. Has the organisational structure changed?	Yes
Description	<p>BAC updated the Terms of References (ToRs) for BAC's committees. A review of the governing documents of the charity, as well as the practicalities and procedural aspects of the Council and its committees demonstrated that a refresh of all of the ToRs was required. Particular focus was given to ensuring consistency across the documents, improving the clarity of the language used, simplifying the documents where possible and removing or revising items that are out of date or no longer required. The ToRs are reviewed on an annual basis by each Committee and are presented to the Council at the first meeting of the year.</p> <p>We have also had a change in the composition of the Audit Committee by the addition of an independent financial expert in May 2024. We have also have the new Deputy Chief Executive role within the BAC team.</p>

<b>C. Changes in EQA activities</b>	4. Not applicable, no new activities/no changes
<b>D. Activity outside the scope of the ESG</b>	No
<b>File #1</b>	<a href="#">Standing_Committee_Terms_of_Reference_V1.0_2023.pdf (255 KB)</a>
<b>File #2</b>	<a href="#">Audit_Committee_Terms_of_Reference_V1.0_2023.pdf (236 KB)</a>
<b>File #3</b>	<a href="#">Council_Terms_of_Reference_V2.0_2023.pdf (310 KB)</a>
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<b>Phone #1</b>	03003301400
<b>Email #1</b>	<a href="mailto:hayley.boyes@the-bac.org">hayley.boyes@the-bac.org</a>
<b>Other organisations?</b>	No
<b>A. Has the organisational identity of the registered agency changed?</b>	No
<b>B. Has the organisational structure changed?</b>	No
<b>C. Changes in EQA activities</b>	2. Substantive changes carried out to one or several existing external QA activities (e.g. changes to their methodology, criteria or procedures)
<b>Description new/changed</b>	<p>1.BAC strengthened the decision-making process for the type of inspection to be carried out (hybrid, online, physical). At our last review, the option for online/hybrid was already operational, with the pandemic prompting the need for sharper criteria given the increased occurrence of online/hybrid inspections.</p> <p>2.BAC streamlined and simplified practices within our accreditation processes to ensure they remain fit-for-purpose and that they continue to not place undue burden on providers. As such we have reduced the number of supporting documents that institutions are required to submit at the re-accreditation application stage and have</p>



instructed inspectors to scrutinise these documents via the visit arrangements. This means that the process is less front-loaded and that relevant documents are not inspected twice, once by BAC staff and then by the team of inspectors, placing better onus on the expertise of the inspectors appointed to the task.

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## 2. Changed EQA activity

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1

Accreditation of higher education institutions

ESG 2.1

A mapping was carried out as included in the appendix of our SAR. See uploaded file. There have been no changes to this mapping as a result of the changes listed above.

ESG 2.2

The revisions were directly influenced by feedback from both providers and inspectors.

We do have criteria for a full review which involves stakeholders in the development of processes and criteria but in these cases, we were responding to the needs and feedback of stakeholders by strengthening the criteria for deciding the type of inspection and streamlining the re-accreditation application process. By doing so, we are ensuring our processes are fit-for-purpose.

ESG 2.4

This remains the same as before.

ESG 2.5

This remains the same as before.

D. Activity outside the scope of the ESG

No

File #1

[Annex\\_1\\_IHE-Scheme-ESG\\_Mapping.pdf \(55 KB\)](#)

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