

Approval of the Application by British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education (BAC) for Renewal of Inclusion on the Register

Register Committee
26-27 June 2025

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Application of:	2024-02-20		
Agency registered since:	2015-01-31		
Type of review:	Targeted	Site visit:	2024-09-25
External review report of:	2025-02-24	Submitted:	2025-03-19
Review coordinated by:	European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ENQA)		
Review panel members:	Ana Gvritishvili, Harry Michael Williams, Simona Lache, Ulf Hedbjörk		
Decision of:	2025-06-27		
Registration until:	2030-02-28		
Absented themselves from decision-making:	n/a		
Attachments:	1. External Review Report, 2025-02-24 2. Clarification by BAC, 2025-05-06 3. Clarification by the Review Panel, 2025-05-23		

1. The application of 2024-02-20 adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee confirmed eligibility of the application on 2024-03-19.
3. The Register Committee considered the targeted external review report of 2025-02-24 on the compliance of BAC with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015 version).
4. The Register Committee sought and received clarification from BAC on 2025-05-06 (Annex 2) and the chair of the review panel on 2025-05-23 (Annex 3).

Analysis:

5. In considering BAC's compliance with the ESG, the Register Committee took into account *Accreditation of higher education institutions*.

6. *Accreditation and inspection of non-higher education institutions and Non-accreditation activities* are not within the scope of the ESG and, thus, not pertinent to the application inclusion on the Register.
7. The Register Committee found that the report provides sufficient evidence and analysis on BAC's level of compliance with the ESG.
8. With regard to the specific European Standards, the Register Committee considered the following:

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ESG 2.6 – Reporting

9. Since the registration on EQAR (in 2015-01-31), BAC has been found partially compliant due to concerns on the quality of its reports and lack of publication of negative reports. In the last decision for renewal of registration (of 2020-11-02), the Register Committee noted that the reports provided insufficient qualitative insight and lacked clear and consistent inclusion of evidence, analysis, and findings. Additionally, BAC still have not had published any negative reports and decisions.
10. The Register Committee learned from the panel analysis that while BAC has revised its report template in order to provide more references to evidence and analytical content, the concerns on the quality of reports remained pertinent. As noted by the panel, while inspectors analyse a substantial amount of evidence, this is not always reflected in the inspection reports.
11. The Register Committee also learned from the panel analysis that, although the agency has changed its policy to publish negative reports and decisions, they have not had any negative reports in practice since their last review.
12. **The Register Committee acknowledged the actions taken by the agency towards ensuring publication of all of its reports. The Committee, however, considered that the quality of reporting, including the insufficient evidence in the inspection reports, persists to be an issue. Following this, the Committee concurred with the panel that the agency is partially compliant with the standard.**

ESG 3.4 – Thematic analysis

13. In its last decision for renewal of registration (of 2020-11-02), the Register Committee found the agency to be partially compliant with the standard due to the limited thematic analysis, both regarding volume and content of the report. At the time, the agency had produced only one thematic analysis, which was descriptive and summarised the contents of inspection reports.
14. The Register Committee learned from the review report that BAC had not produced any thematic analysis since the last external review. Nevertheless, the Committee found that the agency had started working on a new approach to writing thematic analysis and had included stakeholders in the process.

15. The Register Committee therefore concurred with the panel that the agency only partially complies with standard and emphasised the panel's recommendation to urgently develop precise plans for conducting thematic analysis and start conducting them.

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Conclusion:

16. Based on the external review report and the considerations above, the Register Committee concluded that BAC demonstrated compliance with the ESG (Parts 2 and 3) as follows:

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Standard	Previous decision (2020-11-02)	Review panel conclusion	Register Committee conclusion
2.1	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.2	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.3	Compliance	<i>inherited</i>	<i>Inherited</i>
2.4	Compliance	<i>inherited</i>	<i>inherited</i>
2.5	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
2.6	Partial compliance	Partial compliance	Partial Compliance
2.7	Compliance	<i>inherited</i>	<i>inherited</i>
3.1	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
3.2	Compliance	<i>inherited</i>	<i>inherited</i>
3.3	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance
3.4	Partial compliance	Partial compliance	Partial Compliance
3.5	Compliance	<i>inherited</i>	<i>inherited</i>
3.6	Compliance	<i>inherited</i>	<i>inherited</i>
3.7	Compliance	(not expected)	Compliance (by virtue of applying)

17. The Register Committee considered that BAC only achieved partial compliance with some standards. In its holistic judgement, the Register Committee concluded that these are specific and limited issues, but that BAC continues to comply substantially with the ESG as a whole.

18. The Register Committee therefore renewed BAC's inclusion on the Register. BAC's renewed inclusion shall be valid until 2030-02-28¹.

19. The Register Committee further underlined that BAC is expected to address the issues mentioned appropriately and to resolve them at the earliest opportunity.

¹ Inclusion is valid for five years from the date of the external review report, see §3.25 of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.

Application by BAC for Renewal of Registration

Clarification provided by the BAC

Register Committee

Date of the conversation: 2025-05-06

Representatives of BAC: Lucy Fox, Janet Bohrer

Representatives of EQAR: Giorgi Munjishvili, Aleksandra Zhivkovikj

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1. BAC has submitted an application for renewal of registration on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).
2. In order to inform the Register Committee's consideration and decision making, EQAR contacted the BAC to clarify the matter(s) below.
3. BAC agreed to clarify the matter(s) by means of a Zoom call.
4. BAC has designed and piloted a scheme for accreditation of micro - credential providers, including independent providers of further and higher education and vocational training courses. Two procedures have been completed at the beginning of 2024. BAC explained that the two evaluations were part of the testing phase of the activity
5. The reports are published on the agency's website.
6. The agency did not have a clear plan regarding whether and how to proceed with the next stages of the pilots, nor had a specific timeline for its official launching.
7. The agency further explained that it considers terminating the pilot activity and continue with some of its currently established schemes which are applicable to micro-credential providers, due to lack of demand from the education providers.

Application by BAC for Renewal of Registration

Clarification provided by the Panel

Register Committee

Date of the conversation: 2025-05-23

Panel members: Ulf Hedbjörk

Representative of EQAR: Giorgi Munjishvili

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1. BAC has submitted on 2024-02-20 an application for renewal of registration on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). On 2025-03-19, BAC submitted the external review panel's report of 2025-02-24.
2. In order to prepare the deliberations of the Register Committee on BAC's compliance with the ESG, EQAR contacted the panel for clarification on the agency's scheme for accreditation of micro-credential providers, referred to in the report as recently developed and piloted, but not included as part of the review.
3. EQAR representatives asked for clarification on the scope and status of implementation of the activity at the moment of the site visit and how the agency employed its multiple-scheme system for assessing the eligibility of institutions for the right scheme.
4. The panel explained that the review focused on the *Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions*, which is the agency's sole activity within the scope of the ESG, as outlined in the Terms of Reference. Furthermore, the panel elaborated that the BAC's self-assessment report referenced a scheme for the accreditation of micro-credential providers, developed by the agency in 2022-2023 as a pilot; however, based on interviews, the panel understood that no further steps have been taken by the agency to transform the pilot into an actual methodology.
5. The agency had only conducted two pilot procedures, and in the panel's understanding, the piloted institutions were not higher education institutions but other education providers. Therefore, this activity was not considered by the panel within the scope of the review. The panel further explained that, while the agency could still include the activity in the review by choice, it was not the case.
6. The panel also added that BAC's process for assessing the eligibility of applicants involves a preliminary meeting with the institution to discuss accreditation, along with a review of the scheme document, terms and conditions, and the BAC enquiry form. The panel added that while BAC has published all its schemes publicly, only the scheme employed in the

Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions was analysed considering the above-mentioned scope of the review.

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