

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

Register Committee

26 – 27 June 2025

Ref. RC47/C142

Ver. 1.0

Date 2025-07-11

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Decision of:	2025-06-27
Result:	Take note
Report received on:	2025-05-08
Agency registered since:	2015-01-31
Last external review report:	2025-02-24
Registration until:	2030-02-28
Absented themselves from decision-making:	n/a
Attachments:	1. Substantive Change Report, 2025-06-08 2. Clarification by BAC, 2025-05-06

1. The Register Committee considered the Substantive Change Report of 2025-04-09.
2. The Register Committee learned from the substantive change report that BAC has designed and piloted the *scheme for accreditation of micro-credential providers*, an activity considered to be outside the scope of ESG by BAC. The scheme is intended for providers offering short learning provisions that do not lead to a full degree (i.e. micro-credentials). The new scheme is a tailor-made activity for providers that do not meet the eligibility criteria of BAC's other accreditation schemes.
3. In the clarification call (Annex 2), the agency explained that it does not yet have a clear plan regarding the further implementation and development of this scheme.
4. The Register Committee took note of the new scheme and underlined that, should BAC proceed with updating the methodology of the scheme to align with the ESG, it is expected to submit a Substantive Change Report explaining the changes made.

EQAR Substantive Change Report

Agency #1	British Accreditation Council
Agency acronym	BAC
Expiry date #1	28/02/2025
Contact #1	Lucy Fox
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Other organisations?	No
A. Has the organisational identity of the registered agency changed?	No
B. Has the organisational structure changed?	No
C. Changes in EQA activities	4. Not applicable, no new activities/no changes
D. Activity outside the scope of the ESG	Yes
Context	<p>BAC has an ongoing commitment to supporting quality assurance across a broad spectrum of education providers, using principles aligned to those of the ESG. Recently we introduced a pilot scheme to explore the institutional accreditation of micro-credential providers.</p> <p>Drawing on our experience of working with a range of providers, both in the UK and internationally, and given our long-standing history of accrediting providers that deliver short courses, including those that do not lead to formal qualifications, as well as our experience from chairing the ENQA Working Group on the Quality Assurance of Micro-credentials, BAC has a valuable insight into how micro-credentials are developing.</p>

BAC decided to develop a specific scheme designed to provide a quality assurance framework for providers of short, modular courses that are structured, assessed, and based on clear learning outcomes and offered their provision as a micro-credential.

We have been piloting the scheme that is particularly relevant for providers offering flexible learning opportunities that do not meet the eligibility criteria for BAC's existing accreditation schemes, especially where advanced-level learning is delivered outside the traditional higher education system and offer courses that fall outside traditional academic programmes, such as professional development, industry led, and standalone modules focused on specific skills or competencies.

The pilot of accreditation for micro-credentials follows our established methodology as used across all schemes, but tailored specifically for micro-credential provision...

... and focuses on the provider's capacity to design, develop, deliver and review its micro-credentials provision, maintain their currency, validity and accuracy, or initiate timely closure procedures, as necessary. The scheme does not result in a discipline- or subject-specific evaluation, and no judgement on the discipline or subject content is issued.

To date, two providers have completed the pilot phase and BAC is now reviewing the outcomes in detail. Interest in this scheme is limited compared to the interest in our other schemes. We may choose not to proceed with the scheme, or to significantly revise its scope and eligibility based on the results of the pilot.

As part of our review, we are considering whether further refinements to the eligibility criteria are necessary to ensure the scheme is appropriately positioned in relation to higher education provision.

Any future decision to integrate the scheme into our suite of schemes will be made with a clear understanding of the implications. We will complete further EQAR substantive changes forms as our work progresses.

Submit form?

I am ready to submit the change report form

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

Ref. A162

Date 2025-05-07

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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.