

**Approval of the Application
by the Danish Accreditation Institution (AI)
for Renewal of Inclusion on the Register**

Register Committee

Ref. RC18/2016

Ver. 1.0

Date 3/12/2016

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Application of:	13/1/2016
External review report of:	September 2016
Review coordinated by:	ENQA
Review panel members:	Achim Hopbach (chair), Karin Järplid Linde (secretary), Jacques Lanarès (academic), José Dias (student), Marita Aho (employers rep.).
Decision of:	3 December 2016
Registration until:	30 September 2021
Absented themselves from decision-making:	Julio Pedrosa
Attachments:	1. Confirmation of eligibility, 26/1/2016 2. External Review Report, September 2016

1. The application of the Danish Accreditation Institution (AI) adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee confirmed eligibility of the application on 26/1/2016.
3. The Register Committee considered the external review report of September 2016 on the compliance of ESG with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015 version).

Analysis:

4. In considering AI's compliance with the ESG, the Register Committee only took into account the *accreditation of higher education institutions* and *accreditation of higher education programmes*.
5. The Register Committee found that the report provides sufficient evidence and analysis on AI's level of compliance with the ESG.
6. With regard to the specific European Standards and Guidelines, the Register Committee considered the following:

ESG 2.1: Consideration of internal quality assurance

7. In its decision of inclusion Register Committee noted that it should receive attention how AI takes into account the effectiveness of institutional quality assurance arrangements in relation to study programmes and has therefore flagged this matter.
8. The Register Committee noted that since its last review, AI has shifted from performing programme reviews to institutional accreditations and that the accreditation of programmes is expected to fade out by 2019. Since a positive outcome of institutional accreditation means that the institution is mature enough to take the responsibility for the quality assurance of the programmes they offer, **the Register Committee concluded that through institutional accreditation AI now takes into account the effectiveness of internal quality assurance and has therefore addressed the flag.**

ESG 2.2: Designing methodologies fit for purpose

9. While the panel finds that in general AI's methodologies are designed to ensure quality and relevance for all higher education institutions, it underlined that the agency does not give recommendations following a positive programme accreditation or a negative decision for institutional accreditation.
10. The panel further noted that *"methods are defined and designed to ensure that the aims and objectives for external quality assurance are achieved methodologies are fit for purpose"* and that *"AI put more emphasis on the developmental dimension of external quality assurance."*
11. Considering the analysis of the panel the Register Committee formed the view that the developmental dimension of external quality assurance has been sufficiently well integrated in AI's external quality assurance procedures.
12. The panel stated that AI doesn't have a proactive role in the involvement of stakeholders in the design of new procedures. As stakeholder involvement is nevertheless ensured in the consultations on new procedures initiated by the Ministry and Accreditation Council, the Register Committee concluded that this requirement of the standard is met.
13. **The Register Committee was therefore unable to concur with the panel's conclusion of partial compliance and concluded that AI complies with ESG 2.2.**

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ESG 2.4: Peer review experts

14. In its decision of inclusion Register Committee flagged the involvement of external experts in initial accreditation.
15. The Register Committee noted that the accreditation panels of AI now include at least three members and consist of professional experts with higher education experience and a student for each procedure.
16. **The Register Committee therefore concluded that AI has addressed this flag.**

ESG 2.6: Reporting

17. In its decision of inclusion the Register Committee flagged the readability and usefulness of accreditation reports for students and general audiences.
18. The review panel noted that the agency still needs to improve the readability of reports and while the structure and format of AI reports are in general clear and concise they mostly serve the purpose of the accreditation decision.
19. While the agency is compliant in terms of accessibility and publication of reports, the Register Committee noted that the readability of reports is limited to a specialised audience.
20. **The Register Committee therefore concluded that the flag has been only partly addressed.**

ESG 3.1: Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

21. The Register Committee flagged in its decision of inclusion the effectiveness of the Accreditation Institution's activities to engage with its stakeholders.
22. The Committee noted that the involvement of stakeholders is generally ensured through consultations by the Ministry and the Accreditation Council (Review Report, p. 29), while AI's only formalised form of stakeholder involvement is related to the thematic analysis of reports.
23. The Committee concurred with the panel's conclusion that AI should further develop stakeholder involvement in its governance and work in order to meet the agency's objectives of enhancement and further development of quality assurance.
24. **The Register Committee therefore concurred with the review panel's conclusion and considered that AI only partially complies with ESG 3.1**

ESG 3.3: Independence

25. In its decision of inclusion of 18/11/2010 the Register Committee noted that *“the Ministry defines in detail the criteria applied by the Accreditation Institution”* and that the *“independence-related impact of this situation in the long term should receive particular attention”*.
26. The panel commented that even though the minister lays down the rules of procedure for both institutional and programme accreditation, the level of detail and number of criteria has improved allowing AI to further elaborate on its own criteria.
27. The panel stated that the Executive Director of AI is appointed by the minister following the recommendation of the Accreditation Council. The panel’s view is that this is an appropriate solution since AI does not have any governing board or other bodies to fulfil this function.
28. The outcomes of AI’s quality assurance processes are the responsibility of the Accreditation Council. The panel noted that the members of the Accreditation Council are appointed by the minister of Higher Education on the basis of recommendations from relevant organisation. The minister also appoints the Executive Director of AI on the recommendation of the Accreditation Council.
29. The review panel considered that similarly to AI, the Accreditation Council is not subject to the power of instruction from the Minister of Higher Education concerning accreditation and therefore the minister cannot affect or reverse any of the Councils accreditation decisions.
30. **While the Register Committee concurred with the panel’s conclusion that AI complies with ESG 3.3 it has further underlined AI’s limited ability in defining its own rules of procedure and criteria.**

ESG 3.5: Resources

31. The Register Committee flagged in its decision of inclusion (ESG 2005: standard ESG 3.4) AI’s capacity to sustain and develop the capacities and qualifications of its professional staff.
32. The panel’s findings showed that human resources have steadily increased and that AI offers seminars and courses for staff members. The panel also commended the yearly individual meetings with staff whereby considerations are given to workload and possible needs for competence development.
33. **Having considered the analysis of the panel the Register Committee concluded that the requirements of the standards were met and the flag was addressed.**

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Conclusion:

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

Standard	Review panel conclusion	Register Committee conclusion
2.1	Substantially compliant	Compliance
2.2	Partially compliant	Compliance
2.3	Substantially compliant	Compliance
2.4	Fully compliant	Compliance
2.5	Fully compliant	Compliance
2.6	Substantially compliant	Compliance
2.7	Partially compliant	Partial compliance
3.1	Partially compliant	Partial compliance
3.2	Fully compliant	Compliance
3.3	Fully compliant	Compliance
3.4	Fully compliant	Compliance
3.5	Fully compliant	Compliance
3.6	Substantially compliant	Compliance
3.7	Irrelevant	Compliance (by virtue of applying)

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

36. The Register Committee therefore renewed AI’s inclusion on the Register. AI’s inclusion shall be valid until 30/09/2021¹.

37. The Register Committee further underlined that AI is expected to manage the issues mentioned appropriately and resolve them at the earliest opportunity.

38. As the decision making body of AI, the Accreditation Council is part of this registration and the resulting rights and obligations, therefore, also extend to it.

¹ Inclusion is valid for five years from the date of the external review report, see §4.1 of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.