

**Approval of the Application
by Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating (IAAR) for
Inclusion on the Register**

Register Committee

Ref. RC19/A34

Ver. 1.0

Date 2017-06-26

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Application of:	12/01/2016
External review report of:	February 2017
Review coordinated by:	ENQA
Review panel members:	Peter Findlay (Chair), Andrejs Rauhvargers (Secretary), Rositsa Doneva (academic), Janine Wulz (student)
Decision of:	20 June 2017
Registration until:	28/02/2022
Absented themselves from decision-making:	N/A
Attachments:	1. Confirmation of eligibility, 02/02/2016 2. External review report, February 2017 3. Request to the review panel 25/04/2017 4. Clarification by the review panel 06/05/2017

1. The application of IAAR adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee confirmed eligibility of the application on 02/02/2016.
3. The Register Committee considered the external review report of February 2017 on the compliance of IAAR 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 the chair of the review panel.

Analysis:

5. In considering IAAR's compliance with the ESG, the Register Committee only took into account '*Institutional accreditation of educational institutions*' and '*Specialised accreditation of study programmes*'. '*Research on rankings of educational institutions and study programmes*' and other related project works (studies, research etc.) are not within the scope of the ESG and, thus, not pertinent to the application for inclusion on the Register.

6. The Register Committee found that the report provided sufficient evidence and analysis on IAAR's level of compliance with the ESG.
7. With regard to the specific European Standards and Guidelines, the Register Committee considered the following:

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ESG 2.1: Consideration of internal quality assurance

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The panel noted that IAAR had extended its development of standards and guidelines to include accreditation of schools implementing international education, accreditation of medical programmes, MBA and DBA programmes as well as adult education programmes (review report, p. 9). The Register Committee was unclear on whether IAAR used specific sets of standards for the above-mentioned accreditations and, if so, whether the panel had addressed their compliance with Part 1 of the ESG. The Committee therefore requested the panel to clarify this matter (letter of 25/04/2017).

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In its clarification letter (of 06/05/2017) the panel stated that IAAR had developed detailed sets of standards that follow a similar framework as in the case of IAAR's regular accreditation procedure. The panel added that while the review did not permit a full enquiry into the variations of the field specific standards the panel was satisfied that the procedure was similarly implemented across all sets of standards and that they were published.

The panel added that the standards relating to '*accreditation of schools implementing international education*' were designed for the accreditation of secondary education institutions, not higher education. The Register Committee therefore underlined that this activity is not within the scope of the ESG.

Having considered the clarification, the Register Committee was able to concur with the panel's conclusion of compliance.

ESG 2.2: Designing methodologies fit for purpose

The panel's analysis showed that while IAAR involved a range of stakeholders in the ongoing review of the agency's methodology, the panel found no evidence that student representative bodies had been consulted. The panel added that student involvement in IAAR's relevant consultative and decision-making bodies was minimal. The panel recommended that IAAR strengthen the involvement of students (see also ESG 3.1).

In the light of the panel's expressed reservations, the Register Committee was unable to concur with the conclusion of "substantial compliance" and concluded that IAAR only partially complies with standard 2.2.

ESG 2.7: Complaints and appeals

The panel noted that IAAR established a commission to handle appeals and complaints in late 2015 that consists of a number of members representing national representatives of employer bodies. The review panel formed the view that the membership of the Commission was not well aligned with its role and purpose, having the focus almost exclusively on employer representatives. The panel further added the potential conflict of interest considering the overlapping membership of the Appeals Commission that of the Accreditation Council.

The panel recommended the broadening of the Commission's membership and a separation from the members of the Accreditation Council.

The Register Committee therefore concurred with the conclusion of the panel that IAAR only partially complies with standard 2.7.

ESG 3.1: Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

The panel noted that IAAR carries out consultancy activities to assist institutions in the development of their internal quality assurance and to prepare them for accreditation (review report p. 8). While the panel stated that such activities were separated from the external quality assurance activities of IAAR (review report p. 10), no further analysis was provided on how that separation is ensured. The Committee therefore asked the panel to further elaborate on this issue.

In its response (letter of 06/05/2017) the panel explained that consultancy activities take the form of seminar-trainings initiated at the request of the institution. According to the agency's regulation on the External Expert Commission, the staff and external experts involved in the training cannot be part of the accreditation process at the same institution.

Following the panel's clarification showing that IAAR ensures a clear separation of its staff and experts between its training and accreditation procedures the Register Committee was able to concur with the panel's conclusion **of compliance with standard 3.1.**

The Committee nevertheless underlined that the clear separation of external quality assurance and consultancy required ongoing careful attention with a view to ruling out conflicts of interest.

8. For the remaining standards, the Register Committee was able to concur with the review panel's analysis and conclusion without further comments.

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Conclusion:

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

Register Committee

Standard	Review panel conclusion	Register Committee conclusion
2.1	Substantially compliant	Compliance
2.2	Substantially compliant	Partial compliance
2.3	Substantially compliant	Compliance
2.4	Fully compliant	Compliance
2.5	Fully compliant	Compliance
2.6	Fully compliant	Compliance
2.7	Partially compliant	Partial compliance
3.1	Substantially compliant	Compliance
3.2	Fully compliant	Compliance
3.3	Fully compliant	Compliance
3.4	Substantially compliant	Compliance
3.5	Fully compliant	Compliance
3.6	Substantially compliant	Compliance
3.7	(not expected)	Compliance (by virtue of applying)

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10. The Register Committee considered that IAAR only achieved partial compliance with some standards. In its holistic judgement, the Register Committee concluded that these are specific and limited issues, but that IAAR complies substantially with the ESG as a whole.
11. The Register Committee therefore approved the application for inclusion on the Register. IAAR's inclusion shall be valid until 28/02/2022¹.
12. The Register Committee further underlined that IAAR is expected to address the issues mentioned appropriately and to resolve them at the earliest opportunity as well as to inform EQAR through Substantive Change Reports where required.

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

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Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating (IAAR)

Alina Zhumagulova, Director

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Kazakhstan

Brussels, 02 February 2016

Confirmation of Eligibility: Application for Inclusion on the Register

Application no. A34 of IAAR 12/01/2016

Dear Ms Zhumagulova,

We hereby confirm that the application by IAAR for inclusion on the Register is eligible.

Based on the information and terms of reference provided, the external review coordinated by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) fulfils the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.

We confirm that the following activities of IAAR are within the scope of the ESG:

- Institutional accreditation of educational institutions;
- Specialised accreditation of study programmes.

Please ensure that IAAR self-evaluation report covers all the aforementioned activities.

We confirm that the activity "Research on rankings of educational institutions and study programmes" and other related project works (studies, research etc.) are not within the scope of the ESG. While these activities are not relevant to your application, it is IAAR's choice – in agreement with the review coordinator – whether those activities should be commented upon by the review panel.

We kindly ask you to forward this letter to ENQA as the coordinator of the external review and request that ENQA inform the review panel, so as to ensure that all these activities are analysed by the panel.

This confirmation is made according to the relevant provisions of the EQAR Procedures for Applications. IAAR has the right to appeal this decision in accordance with the Appeals Procedure; any appeal must reach EQAR within 90 days from receipt of this decision

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EQAR Founding Members:



Yours sincerely,



Colin Tück
(Director)

Cc: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
(ENQA)

Brussels, 25 April 2017

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Application by Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating (IAAR) for inclusion on EQAR

Dear Peter,

IAAR has made an application for inclusion on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

We are contacting you in your capacity as chair of the panel that prepared the external review report of February 2017 on which IAAR's application is based.

The EQAR Register Committee's rapporteurs have been considering the application and the external review report. We would be obliged if you could clarify, in consultation with the panel members, as necessary, some matters in order to contribute to the consideration of IAAR's application:

1. The panel notes that IAAR carries out consultancy activities to assist institutions in the development of their internal quality assurance and prepare them for accreditation (review report, p. 8). The panel further notes that such activities are clearly separated from the external quality assurance activities of IAAR (review report p. 10). As we found no further documentation or analysis on this matter could you please elaborate on how IAAR ensures a clear separation between quality assurance activities and consultancy services?
2. The panel notes that IAAR has extended its development of standards and guidelines to include accreditation of schools implementing international education, accreditation of medical programmes, MBA and DBA programmes as well as adult education programmes (review report, p. 9). Could you please clarify whether specific sets of standards were developed for the above-mentioned accreditations and, if so whether the panel has addressed their compliance with Standard 2.1, in particular referring to the standards in Part 1 and any related aspects to Part 2?

We be would grateful if it were possible for you to **respond by 8 May 2017**, and we would appreciate if you get in contact with us should that not be feasible.

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Please note that EQAR will publish this request and your response together with the final decision on IAAR's application. We, however, kindly ask you to keep information related to the application confidential until the final decision has been published.

We acknowledge that it might not be possible to clarify all of the above. However, we appreciate your assistance and I shall be at your disposal if you have any questions in relation to this request.

Kind regards,



Colin Tück
(Director)

Cc: ENQA
IAAR

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Dear Colin

IAAR Kazakhstan

Thank you for your letter asking for clarification on two points identified by the EQAR Register committee. I am pleased to do this and appreciate the care taken by EQAR in raising these questions.

1. With regard to the question of consultancy activities and a possible conflict of interest regarding the different areas of activity carried out by the agency, this was a matter pursued by the panel. It was discussed with members of the agency, with review panel members and with institutions. The panel heard from all three groups that there was no shared membership or interaction between those involved in the consultancy activity and those carrying out the accrediting activity.

The consultancy activity takes the form of seminar training at the request of the institution, mainly concerned with exploring and explaining the ESG and their requirements in terms of institutional processes, including self-evaluation. The training is not in any way a part of the external accreditation procedure. It is carried out completely separately and governed by a separate contract with IAAR. Institutions are not required to take part in the training in order to enter into the accreditation procedure.

In order to any avoid conflict of interest, both the IAAR staff member and the external expert who provided the training are debarred from any involvement in the accreditation process, including of course the on-site visit. This requirement is regulated by article 13 of the IAAR regulations on the External Expert Commission, which reads as follows (in the English translation):

“13: - the expert and the IAAR staff who previously were involved in a training seminar on self-certification report preparation for employees of the educational organisation, cannot be included in the EEC body [=external expert commission] of this educational organisation”

Institutional leaders met by the ENQA panel expressed positive appreciation and valued the support of the agency in advising on the accreditation requirements and process. Taking into account the relatively recent introduction of external quality assurance in Kazakhstan and perhaps also a consequently less well developed understanding of European standards in its higher education sector, the ENQA panel took the view that this advisory consultancy function was a valuable contribution made by IAAR.

The ENQA panel therefore concluded that on the evidence of the formal procedural regulation and also the statements heard in the panel meetings, there was a sufficient safeguarding to avoid conflict of interest.



2. Regarding the question of IAAR sets of standards for different aspects of higher education provision (medical, business-related, adult education) and the extent of the ENQA panel's consideration of these relative to Part 1 and Part 2 of the ESG.

The ENQA panel confirmed that IAAR has developed detailed sets of standards for these specific and detailed areas; these are published on its website and hard copies were received by the ENQA panel. The IAAR analysis of conformity of these with the ESG, for each of these areas, is attached for the information of the Register Committee. The important point to note here, is that the various IAAR sets of standards all follow a very similar framework, based on compliance with the ESG.

The ENQA panel found that the standards relating to schools were designed for the accreditation of secondary education institutions, not higher education, and thus fell outside the scope of the ESG. The remaining sets of standards were clearly developed as slight variants of the main higher education standards of IAAR, with the medical and business related standards being designed in particular to provide a basis for international comparability and future accreditation by international professional bodies.

The ENQA panel discussed these standards (Medical, Business MBA and DBA, and adult education) with the Chairs of the relevant IAAR subject related committees, and it learned that the processes and procedures were closely similar to those used for the standard higher education institutions. The scope of the ENQA review did not permit a full enquiry into the evidence for compliance with Part 1 and 2 of the ESG with regard to each one of these slightly variant sets of standards, but the panel took the view that give the close similarity of standards and procedures across all of the variants, the evidence gathered for the central IAAR procedures would also cover these variants. The panel was therefore satisfied that its enquiry and the resulting report adequately addressed all of the closely related sets of standards and procedures developed by IAAR.

I trust that this account will meet the needs of the Register Committee, giving clarification and assurance regarding the questions raised, and I shall of course be pleased to help should there be any further information required.

On behalf of the ENQA Panel for IAAR,

With all best wishes

Peter Findlay
Panel Chair

ESG Standarts	Evaluation criteria of SA of MEI
1.1 Policy for quality assurance	Standard 8. Management and administration : 8.4.3
1.2 Design and approval of programmes	Standard 2. Educational program: 2.1.1-2.1.5, 2.5.5, 2.6.1, 2.6.4 , 2.7.2 -2.7.4, 2.8.1
1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment	Standard 2. Educational program: 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 2.6.4 Standard 3. Evaluation of students: 3.1.1-3.1.5, 3.2.1-3.2.6 Standard 4. Students: 4.11.1, 13.5.1
1.4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	Standard 1. Mission and outcomes: 1.1.1, 1.4.1-1.4.10 Standard 2. Educational program: 2.5.1- 2.5.9, 2.6.1, 2.8.3 Standard 3. Evaluation of students: 3.2.1-3.2.6, 4.3.5, 4.3.6 Standard 4. Students: 4.1.1 – 4.1.613.2.4,
1.5 Teaching staff	Standard 5. Academic Stuff/Teachers: 5.1.1 -5.1.5, 5.2.1-5.2.7
1.6 Learning resources and student support	Standard 4. Students : 4.3.2, 4.3.2, 4.3.3 Standard 6 Educational resources: 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 6.2.1, 6.3.1, 7.1.5
1.7 Information management	Standard 1 Mission and outcomes: 1.1.9, 7.1.1, 7.2.1
1.8 Public information	Chapter 7 «Principles of formation of specialized accreditation standards» 7.3 Standard 1. Mission and outcomes:1.1.10
1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes	Chapter 9 « Following procedures » 9.3 Standard 1. Mission and outcomes: 1.4 Educational outcomes Standard 3. Evaluation of students: 3.2.4 Standard 6. Educational resources: 6.2.4, 6.6.4 Standard 7. Educational program evaluation: 7.1, 7.4 Standard 8. Management and administration : 8.3, 8.4, 8.5 Standard 9. Continuous improvement: 9.1.11 - 9.1.15
1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance	Standard 9. Continuous improvement: 9.1.1, 9.1.3

ESG Standarts	Evaluation criteria of IA of MEI
1.1 Policy for quality assurance	Standart 17 "Governance and administration": 17.5.3
1.2 Design and approval of programmes	Standart 10 "Mission and outcomes": 10.5 10.5.8, 10.5.9, 10.5.10 Standart 11 "Educational programme": 11.2.1-11.2.5, 11.8.2, 11.8.3, 11.8.4, 11.9.1, 11.9.2, 11.9.3
1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment	Standart 11 "Educational programme": 11.2.3-11.2.5, 11.7.4, 11.8.2, Standart 12 "Assesment of students": 12.2.1-12.2.5, 12.2.8, 12.3, 12.3.6 Standart 13 "Students": 13.4.1, 13.5.1 Standart 16 "Programme evaluation": 16.3
1.4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	Standart 10 "Mission and outcomes":10.5 Standart 13 «Students»: 13.2.1, 13.2.4, Standart 12 "Assesment of students": 12.3.5, 12.3.6, Standart 16 "Programme evaluation": 16.1, 16.2.1, 16.2.7, 16.4 Standart 18 "Continuous renewal": 18.2.7, 18.2.14
1.5 Teaching staff	Standart 14 "Academic Staff/Faculty": 14.2.1, 14.2.5, 14.3.1 -14.3.7
1.6 Learning resources and student support	Standart 15 "Educational resources": 15.2.1, 15.2.2, 15.2.3, 15.4.1, 15.5.1, 15.5.2, 15.5.4, 15.5.5, 15.6.6, 15.7.3., 15.7.4.
1.7 Information management	Standart 15 "Educational resources": 15.5.3, Standart 16 "Programme evaluation": 16.2, 16.3.1, 16.3.2, 16.4
1.8 Public information	Standart 10 "Mission and outcomes": 10.2.10 Standart 13 «Students»: 13.1.1 Standart 16 "Programme evaluation": 16.5.3
1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes	Standart 16 "Programme evaluation": 16.2, 16.2.1- 16.2.8, 16.3.1, 16.3.2, 16.5.1-16.5.5
1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance	Standart 18 "Continuous renewal": 18.2.1

Analysis
Compliance with the standards of program accreditation of business education
(MBA, DBA) ESG Part 1

ESG Standards	Evaluation criteria of standards MBA, DBA
1.1 Policy for quality assurance	Standard 7 "Management of the educational program of business education»: 7.2.1, 7.2.2, 7.2.3, 7.2.4.
1.2 Design and approval of programmes	Standard 8 "Development and approval of educational programs»: 8.2.3, 8.2.4, 8.2.5, 8.2.6, 8.2.7, 8.2.9, 8.2.11, 8.2.13, 8.2.17, 8.2.19, 8.2.23, 8.2.26, 8.2.27.
1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment	Standard 9 "Student-centered learning, teaching and progress assessment»: 9.2.1, 9.2.2, 9.2.3, 9.2.5, 9.2.10, 9.2.11, 9.2.12.
1.4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	Standard 10 "Learners»: 10.2.2, 10.2.4, 10.2.5, 10.2.6, 10.2.8, 10.2.10, 10.2.11, 10.2.13, 10.2.18.
1.5 Teaching staff	Standard 11 «Teaching staff and effectiveness of teaching»: 11.2.2, 11.2.3, 11.2.7, 11.2.8, 11.2.13, 11.2.16, 11.2.19, 11.2.20
1.6 Learning resources and student support	Standard 12 "Educational resources and student support system»: 12.2.1, 12.2.2, 12.2.3, 12.2.4, 12.2.6, 12.2.7, 12.2.13.
1.7 Information management	Standard 13 «Management of information and reporting»: 13.2.1, 13.2.4, 13.2.5, 13.2.8, 13.2.12, 13.2.15.
1.8 Public information	Standart 14 «Public information»: 14.2.1, 14.2.2, 14.2.3.
1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes	Standard 7 "Management of the educational program of business education»: 7.2.6, 7.2.7 Standard 8 "Development and approval of educational programs»: 8.2.3, 8.2.7, 8.2.8, 8.2.9, 8.2.17, 8.2.21, 8.2.22 Standard 9 "Student-centered learning, teaching and progress assessment»: 9.2.9
1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance	Standart 14 «Public information»: 14.2.7.

The analysis of the conformity of the IAAR Accreditation Standards of Supplementary Education Organizations For Adults with ESG Part 1

ESG Standards	Evaluation Criteria of the Institutional Accreditation	Evaluation Criteria of the Specialized (Program) Accreditation
1.1 Policy for quality assurance	Standard 8 «Efficiency of management and leadership»: 8.2.13, 8.2.14	Standard 7 «Management of educational programme»: 7.2.22.
1.2 Design and approval of programmes	Standard 9 «Educational programs»: 9.2.1, 9.2.2, 9.2.6, 9.2.9, 9.2.22.	Standard 8 «Specifics of educational programme»: 8.2.2, 8.2.4, 8.2.11, 8.2.14, 8.2.15, 8.2.16, 8.3.6.
1.3 Student-centered learning, teaching and assessment	Standard 9 «Educational programs»: 9.2.3, 9.2.10, 9.2.17, 9.2.20, 9.2.21, 9.2.25 Standard 10 «The composition of students and the effectiveness of training»: 10.2.5, 10.2.15, 10.2.18	Standard 8 «Specifics of educational programme»: 8.3.1, 8.3.2, 8.3.3, 8.3.4, 8.4.1, 8.5.1 Standard 9 «The composition of students and the effectiveness of training»: 9.2.5
1.4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	Standard 9 «Educational programs»: 9.2.24 Standard 10 «The composition of students and the effectiveness of training»: 10.2.17 Standard 11 «Students»: 11.2.1, 11.2.4	Standard 9 «The composition of students and the effectiveness of training»: 9.2.16 Standard 10 «Students»: 10.2.1, 10.2.3, 10.2.7, 10.2.10.
1.5 Teaching staff	Standard 10 «The composition of students and the effectiveness of training»: 10.2.2, 10.2.12	Standard 9 «The composition of students and the effectiveness of training»: 9.2.1, 9.2.4, 9.2.6, 9.2.12.
1.6 Learning resources and student support	Standard 9 «Educational programs»: 9.2.13, 9.2.14, 9.2.26 Standard 14 «Resources: material, technical and information»: 14.2.1, 14.2.4, 14.2.5	Standard 8 «Specifics of educational programme»: 8.2.12, 8.2.14, 8.3.5 Standard 11 «Resources available to educational programmes»: 11.2.2, 11.2.3, 11.2.4, 11.2.9,

		11.2.10
1.7 Information management	Standard 8 «Efficiency of management and leadership»: 8.2.1, 8.2.7, 8.2.11, 8.2.16, 8.2.18, 8.2.21.	Standard 7 «Management of educational programme»: 7.2.12, 7.2.17, 7.2.21, 7.2.24, 7.2.28.
1.8 Public information	Standard 8 «Efficiency of management and leadership»: 8.2.15 Standard 9 «Educational programs»: 9.2.7 Standard 10 «The composition of students and the effectiveness of training»: 10.2.3	Standard 7 «Management of educational programme»: 7.2.5, 7.2.23 Standard 8 «Specifics of educational programme»: 8.2.12 Standard 9 «The composition of students and the effectiveness of training»: 9.2.5 Standard 11 «Resources available to educational programmes»: 11.2.11, 11.2.15
1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes	Standard 9 «Educational programs»: 9.2.12, 9.2.18, 9.2.21 Standard 12 «Educational-methodical, scientific-methodical, research and innovative activity»: 12.2.12.	Standard 7 «Management of educational programme»: 7.2.6, 7.2.16, 7.2.19 Standard 8 «Specifics of educational programme»: 8.2.2, 8.2.4, 8.2.5, 8.2.7.
1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance	Standard 8 «Efficiency of management and leadership»: 8.2.24	Standard 7 «Management of educational programme»: 7.2.31