

**Approval of the Application
by Academic Information Centre (AIC)
for Inclusion on the Register**

Register Committee
[5-6 December 2018]

Ref. RC22/A60

Ver. 0.1

Date 2018-12-12

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Application of:	31/08/2017
Agency registered since:	N/A
External review report of:	21/06/2018
Review coordinated by:	ENQA - European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education
Review panel members:	Heli Mattisen (chair), Roger King (academic), Blazhe Todorovski (student), Karena Maguire (Secretary)
Decision of:	06/12/2018
Registration until:	30/06/2023
Absented themselves from decision-making:	Anita Līce
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirmation of eligibility, 13/09/2017 2. External Review Report, 21/06/2018

1. The application of 31/08/2017 adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee confirmed eligibility of the application on 13/09/2017.
3. The Register Committee considered the external review report of 21/06/2018 on the compliance of AIC with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015 version).

Analysis:

4. In considering AIC's compliance with the ESG, the Register Committee took into account:
 - *Accreditation of groups of study programmes in Latvia (Accreditation of study directions).*
 - *Licensing (initial accreditation) of new programmes in Latvia.*
 - *Institutional evaluation in Latvia.*
 - *Assessment of feasibility on changes in study programmes.*
5. The Register Committee found that the report provides sufficient evidence and analysis on AIC's level of compliance with the ESG.

6. With regard to the specific European Standards and Guidelines, the Register Committee considered the following:

ESG 2.7 Complaints and appeals

The Register Committee noted that higher education institutions can file appeals for the decision taken by the AIC committees on the accreditation of study directions (CAS) and the licensing of study programmes (CLSP). In such cases the chairperson of the agency's board reviews the conclusions of the Appeals Committee and takes the final decision on the appeal (review report p. 57). The Committee found that as long as the final decision may be changed by the chairperson of AIC, the integrity of the appeals process might be affected.

In case of the institutional accreditations carried out by AIC, the Register Committee noted that appeals can be filed only against the Ministry of Education and Science's (MoES) decision, in a court of law, following the Latvian Administrative Procedure and not against AIC's report and review processes. The Register Committee considered that external quality assurance processes should always include an internal possibility to appeal with the responsible body that carried out the review itself. The Register Committee found that this possibility is not provided by AIC to higher education institutions in case of institutional accreditation.

Considering the above mentioned issues the Register Committee could follow the review panel's conclusion that AIC only partially complies with ESG 2.7.

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

Conclusion:

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

Standard	Review panel conclusion	Register Committee conclusion
2.1	Substantial compliance	Compliance
2.2	Substantial compliance	Compliance
2.3	Full compliance	Compliance
2.4	Full compliance	Compliance
2.5	Substantial compliance	Compliance
2.6	Substantial compliance	Compliance
2.7	Partial compliance	Partial compliance
3.1	Substantial compliance	Compliance

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3.2	Full compliance	Compliance
3.3	Substantial compliance	Compliance
3.4	Substantial compliance	Compliance
3.5	Full compliance	Compliance
3.6	Full compliance	Compliance
3.7	(not expected)	Compliance (by virtue of applying)

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9. The Register Committee considered that AIC only achieved partial compliance with one standard. In its holistic judgement, the Register Committee concluded that this is a specific and limited issue, and that AIC complies substantially with the ESG as a whole. Given the recent establishment of the agency, the Register Committee underlined the panel's recommendation on further following-up the implementation of processes and procedures, e.g. introducing plans for developing a comprehensive thematic analysis track, monitoring the effectiveness of its internal quality system etc..
10. The Register Committee therefore approved the application for inclusion on the Register. AIC's renewed inclusion shall be valid until **30/06/2023**¹.
11. The Register Committee further underlined that AIC 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 §4.1 of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.

Andrejs Rauhvargers,
Valņu iela 2

LV 1050 Riga
Latvia

Brussels, 13 September 2017

Confirmation of Eligibility: Application for Inclusion/Renewal of Inclusion on the Register

Application no. A60 of 31/08/2017

Dear Andrejs,

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

Based on the information and draft terms of reference provided, the external review coordinated by ENQA fulfils the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.

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

- *Accreditation of groups of study programmes in Latvia (Accreditation of study directions).*
- *Licensing (initial accreditation) of new programmes in Latvia.*
- *Institutional evaluation in Latvia.*

In the application form, AIC stated that it did not consider *assessment of feasibility on changes in programmes* to be within the scope of the ESG. EQAR contacted AIC on 05/09/2017 to clarify the nature of these activities.

We considered the information provided and came to the conclusion that the activity is relevant to the ESG as the assessment carried out by the agency regularly addresses issues related to the quality of teaching and learning, e.g. changes in the content of the programme, or changes in the total number of teaching staff. When the changes relate to the same issues addressed in accreditation, the activity can be considered as part of the follow-up process within the normal accreditation/re-accreditation cycle, and not necessarily as a separate activity in itself.

Please ensure that AIC's self-evaluation report covers all the aforementioned activities, including the *assessment of feasibility on changes in programmes*.

We confirm that the following activities are not within the scope of the ESG:

European Quality Assurance
Register for Higher Education
(EQAR) aisbl

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VAT BE 0897.690.557

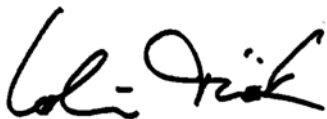
- *Recognition of qualification.*
- *Projects.*

While these activities are not relevant to your application, it is AIC's choice – in agreement with the review coordinator – whether those activities should be commented upon by the review panel.

We will forward this letter to ENQA in its capacity of the coordinator of the external review. At the same time we underline that it is AIC's responsibility to ensure that the coordinator and review panel take account of the present confirmation, so as to ensure that all activities mentioned are analysed by the panel.

This confirmation is made according to the relevant provisions of the EQAR Procedures for Applications. AIC 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.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Tück'.

Colin Tück
(Director)

Cc: ENQA

Application by AIC - Academic Information Centre (AIC) for Inclusion on the Register

Register Committee

Minutes of Telephone Conversation

Ref. A60
Date 2017-09-06
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Date of the conversation:	5 September 2017
Representative of AIC:	Andrejs Rauhvargers
Representative of EQAR:	Melinda Szabo

1. AIC has submitted on 31/08/2017 an application for inclusion on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).
2. In order to prepare the deliberations of the Register Committee on the eligibility of the application and AIC's activities within the scope of the ESG, EQAR contacted AIC via telephone to clarify the matter(s) below.
3. AIC agreed to clarify the following matter by means of a telephone conversation.
4. The activity "*assessment of feasibility on changes in programmes*" was considered by AIC to be outside the scope of the ESG. The agency explained that the activity was not a cyclical activity, and that it mostly dealt with changes in the name of the programme, the content of a programme or in the number of teaching staff and thus AIC considered the activity to be outside the scope of the ESG.
5. An expert was assigned to carry out a site visit except when small changes were required i.e. amendment to the accreditation form, changes in the name of the programmes or institution.
6. AIC confirmed that the reports of the assessment of feasibility on changes in programmes are published if a site visit is carried out.
7. AIC added that the Accreditation Committee was responsible in approving or rejecting the changes requested by higher education institutions.