

Approval of the Application
by Foundation for International Business Administration
Accreditation (FIBAA)
for Renewal of Inclusion on the Register

Register Committee
07/02/2022

Ref. RC/A17
 Ver. 1.0
 Date 2022-02-08
 Page 1 / 6

Application of:	2020-09-18
Agency registered since:	2009-04-08
External review report of:	2021-11-20
Review coordinated by:	European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ENQA)
Review panel members:	Fiona Crozier, (chair), Karin Järplid Linde, Maria del Mar Campins (academic), Joshua Weygant (student)
Decision of:	2022-02-07
Registration until:	2026-10-31
Absented themselves from decision-making:	None
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. External Review Report, 2021-10-20 (separate file) 2. Minuted clarification call with FIBAA, 12/01/2022

1. The application of 2020-09-18 adhered to the requirements of the EQAR Procedures for Applications.
2. The Register Committee confirmed eligibility of the application on 2020-10-05.
3. The Register Committee considered the external review report of 2021-10-20 on the compliance of FIBAA with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015 version).
4. The Register Committee invited FIBAA to clarify a number of matters regarding the nature of some activities on 12/01/2022. The Register Committee considered FIBAA's clarification during its meeting on 07/02/2022.

Analysis:

5. In considering FIBAA's compliance with the ESG, the Register Committee took into account:

Register Committee

07/02/2022

(1) Programme Accreditation:

- *Programme accreditation in accordance with the rules of the GAC (awarding the GAC's seal).*
- *Programme accreditation outside the competence area of the Accreditation Council (to obtain FIBAA's quality seal for programmes).*

Ref. RC/A17

Ver. 1.0

Date 2022-02-08

Page 2 / 6

(2) Institutional Accreditation:

- *System accreditation in accordance with the rules of the GAC (to obtain the GAC's seal).*
- *Institutional Audit Austria ("certification") in accordance with the rules of the Austrian Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (HS-QSG) (to obtain the FIBAA quality seal Institutional Audit Austria).*
- *Institutional Accreditation according to the Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector (HFKG).*
- *Institutional Accreditation in accordance with the FIBAA quality standards (to obtain the FIBAA quality seal 'Institutional Accreditation').*
- *Institutional Accreditation: Strategic Management in accordance with the FIBAA's quality standards (to receive the FIBAA quality seal Institutional Accreditation: Strategic Management).*

(3) Certification of Continuing Education Courses:

- In accordance to the FIBAA quality standards, FIBAA certifies further education courses which do not lead to an academic degree but are offered at HEI level. They lead to the award of the FIBAA quality seal for further education courses.

6. At the time of FIBAA's eligibility check the Register Committee understood 'Evaluation Procedures According to Individual Objectives' (EPAIO) to be an activity within the scope of the ESG as far it concerns teaching and learning in higher education and follows a set of partially defined external QA processes. From the self-evaluation report the Committee understood that FIBAA might consider the activity outside the scope of the ESG and more as a consultancy service defined in close consultation with the client who sets the objective of the evaluation. The external review report of FIBAA presented the activity within the scope of the ESG, in line with the tripartite Terms of Reference. As the Register Committee aims to follow the agency's classification of external QA activities as long as it is within reason, FIBAA was asked to clarify the nature of the activity.

7. FIBAA explained (see minuted call of 12/01/22) that it did not consider this evaluation an activity within the scope of the ESG and that it intended to carry it out as a service/consultancy given to higher education institutions.

8. The Committee therefore concludes that this activity is not within the scope of the ESG and, thus, not pertinent to the registration on EQAR, except with regard to its clear separation from FIBAA's external quality assurance activities (see also under ESG 3.1).

9. The Register Committee found that the report provides sufficient evidence and analysis on FIBAA's level of compliance with the ESG.

10. With regard to the specific European Standards, the Register Committee considered the following:

ESG 2.4 – Peer-review experts

11. The panel noted that FIBAA uses several videos and Power Point presentations to provide training for the experts, but critically remarked that there is not a face-to-face training and no clear obligation for experts to undertake such a training (or supervision on it) prior to an accreditation or certification procedure. The training is done on a voluntary basis. The review panel also underlined that the training materials for the English-speaking experts may not be as comprehensive as those received by German-speaking experts.

12. In its analysis the review panel also noted that the number of international experts in the pool of experts to be rather limited given FIBAA's international profile and that there is minimal rotation and renewal among the experts.

13. Considering the above mentioned shortcomings, the Register Committee cannot follow the panel's conclusion on (substantially) compliant but finds that FIBAA complies only partially with ESG 2.4.

ESG 2.6 – Reporting

14. In its last decision, the Register Committee noted that a number of programme accreditation reports have not been published by FIBAA and concluded that the agency at that time complied only partially with ESG 2.6. In response to the recommendation made in the previous review, the Register Committee learned that FIBAA is now publishing both the positive and negative reports on accreditation and certification processes from national as well as international activities, on its website.

15. The Register Committee therefore agreed with the panel's conclusion, that FIBAA complies with standard 2.6.

ESG 2.7 – Complaints and appeals

16. In its last decision, the Register Committee underlined the panel's observation that there is no clear indication on whether higher education institutions can issue a complaint regarding the course of the procedure.

The Committee also remarked at that the appeals procedure is documented only rudimentarily, with little or no explanation on the issues that could be raised under the appeal, no provision on the expected timeline to process a complaint, publication policy etc.

17. In its review report, the panel stated that higher education institutions may submit complaints about the conduct of the process writing an email to FIBAA and that FIBAA has established a procedure for appeals.

18. The Register Committee learned that FIBAA's appeals procedure only applies to the procedures where the agency is awarding its seal and it does not cover the reviews where GAC is the decision-making body. Since higher education institutions may have concerns related to the application of the criteria and the judgments also in the reports prepared for the GAC, these should equally be subject to appeal in line with the standard.

19. The Register Committee further noted that FIBAA's appeals procedure date back to December 2016, and has not been updated since the agency's last review. The Committee found it surprising that the review panel has not addressed any of the issues the Committee raised in its last decision regarding the rudimentary nature of FIBAA's appeals procedure and only commented on the wording of the process for complaints and appeals (that should be clarified).

20. In light of the above observations the Register Committee cannot follow the panel's judgement of (substantially) compliant, but find that FIBAA complies only partially with the standard.

ESG 3.1 – Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

21. The panel found that in general stakeholders are involved in the work of the agency, but commented that there is no student representative on the Foundation Council and that FIBAA should consider broadening its stakeholders to include, for example, members of committees from outside of FIBAA's circle of 'customers'.

22. The panel also remarked that FIBAA does not have a periodic and multi-annual Strategic Plan but that the strategic goals are considered during the Council's last meeting in the year. The review panel noted that the consideration of strategic matters takes place as and when necessary, but still in a highly informal process. The Committee concurs with the view of the panel that the current strategic planning process, should be further developed to ensure that it also considers the medium to long term future of the agency.

23. While the review panel confirmed that FIBAA has in place a strict separation between its consultancy services and external QA activities within the scope of the ESG, the Register Committee noted that this separation was not clear in the case of FIBAA's *Evaluation Procedures According to Individual Objectives* (see also point 5 above).

24. The Committee underlined that agencies are expected to take appropriate precautions to prevent any conflicts of interest arising from the

consultancy activities they carry out, as indicated in Annex 2 to the EQAR Policy on the Use and Interpretation of the ESG.

25. Considering the shortcomings of involving students in FIBAA’s governance and the lack of a comprehensive Strategic Plan and the separation of consultancy and external QA procedures, the Committee cannot follow the panel’s conclusion of (substantial) compliance but finds that FIBAA complies only partially with standard 3.1.

Register Committee
07/02/2022

Ref. RC/A17
Ver. 1.0
Date 2022-02-08
Page 5 / 6

ESG 3.4 – Thematic analysis

26. The panel critically remarked that FIBAA does not seem to collect in a systematic way information on programmes and institutions and that the agency does not produce an overview of the outcomes of its external QA activities.

27. The panel also noted that workshops on topics related to quality assurance and resulting studies are mainly organised by FIBAA Consult. While the panel is of the view that FIBAA should reconsider the assignment of such activities to FIBAA Consult, the Register Committee disagrees and underlines that the standard does not limit the carrying out of thematic analysis by a unit of the agency or the possibility to subcontract this work to an external body.

28. The Register Committee however agrees with the panel’s conclusion that FIBAA should ensure a structured approach and allocate more resources to the planning and carrying out of thematic analysis on a systematic basis.

29. Considering the limited work in producing thematic analysis, the Committee concurs with the panel’s conclusion that FIBAA complies only partially with ESG 3.4.

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

Conclusion:

31. Based on the external review report and the considerations above, the Register Committee concluded that ??? unknown field: applications_rid_shortcode demonstrated compliance with the ESG (Parts 2 and 3) as follows:

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

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

Register Committee
07/02/2022

Ref. RC/A17
Ver. 1.0
Date 2022-02-08
Page 6 / 6

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

33. The Register Committee therefore approved the application and renewed FIBAA's inclusion on the Register. FIBAA 's renewed inclusion shall be valid until 31/10/2026 ¹.

34. The Register Committee further underlined that FIBAA 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.

Application by Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) for Renewal of Registration

Minutes of Telephone Conversation

Register Committee

Ref. A101
Date 2022-01-13
Page 1 / 1

Date of the conversation:	12/01/2022
Representative of FIBAA:	Diane Freiburger, Weronika Stefanska
Representative of EQAR:	Melinda Szabo, Colin Tück

1. FIBAA has submitted on 18/09/2020 an application for renewal of registration on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).
2. In order to prepare the consideration on the application by FIBAA's, EQAR contacted FIBAA via a Zoom call to clarify the nature of the activity *Evaluation Procedures According to Individual Objectives (EPAIO)*.
3. EQAR explained that EPAIO seemed at the time of the application to be an activity within the scope of the ESG, as it concerned teaching and learning in higher education and followed partially predefined external QA processes. From the additional information available now it appeared that EPAIO might also be classified as consultancy service, as the activity is planned and defined in close consultation with the client, who sets the objective of the evaluation.
4. There was some confusion in the understanding of the activity as the self-evaluation report indicated that FIBAA might consider the activity outside the scope of the ESG, while the external review report of FIBAA presented the activity within the scope. As the Register Committee tries to follow the agency's classification of external QA activities as long as it is within reason, FIBAA was asked to clarify the nature of the activity.
5. FIBAA explained that the activity was developed under its consultancy unit back in 2016 and that it was intended to be carried out as a service/consultancy given to higher education institutions. FIBAA therefore clarified that it did not consider this evaluation an activity within the scope of the ESG. FIBAA further added that it intended to clarify the distinction between this activity and its activities within the scope of the ESG on FIBAA's website and other publications.
6. FIBAA also reaffirmed that currently there was no procedure carried out under the EPAIO activity.