
Sheila Needham
Interim Chief Executive
British Accreditation Council (BAC)
Fleet House, 5th Floor, 8-12 New Bridge Street
London EC4V 6AL
United Kingdom

Dublin, 18 March 2015

Subject: External review of BAC and decision on membership

Dear Ms Needham,

I am pleased to inform you that, at its meeting of 6 March 2015, the Board of ENQA agreed that BAC met the necessary requirements for being granted ENQA Full membership for five years from that date.

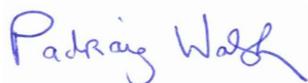
The Board's decision was based on the review report and the report scrutiny. The Board also considered the contents of the letter from BAC to ENQA dated 16 February 2015 and the oral report from the ENQA Secretariat in relation to the matters discussed within that letter.

Though the ENQA Board concluded that BAC is in substantial compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines, the Board noted some areas for development and was particularly concerned by the lack of collegiality of panels, and hence not ensuring representativeness of stakeholders. In order not to jeopardise the outcome of the next external review, your Agency is therefore urged to make the necessary arrangements in those areas.

The Board expects a follow-up report to be based on the recommendations in the review report (as outlined in the attached annex) within two years of the decision, i.e. by March 2017.

Please accept my congratulations to BAC for the positive review outcome and I look forward to a fruitful future cooperation.

Yours sincerely,



Padraig Walsh
President of ENQA

ANNEX: AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the panels' recommendations listed in the review report, the Board would like to draw the Agency's attention to the following areas for development:

ENQA Criterion 1– Activities (ESG 3.1, 3.3)

In light of the evidence contained in the report on ESG Part II, this criterion is considered by the Board of ENQA as substantially met.

ESG 2.4 Processes fit for purpose

The panel argues: *"All of these checks prove that BAC is fulfilling its aim to monitor institutions at all times"* (page 26)

"The panel finds that BAC fulfils most of elements in this particular ESG. However, the panel found the following important deficiencies that needs special attention: student involvement, international involvement and systematic evaluation of fitness for purpose" (page 27).

"Regarding systematic assessment of fitness for purpose the panel found that BAC indeed has certain elements in place [...]" (page 29)

→ Regarding this standard, the Board's judgement differs from that of the panel. The Board noted a discrepancy between the conclusion of the review panel and the evidence brought forward in the report. Non-compliance was reported whereas some requirements of this criterion are obviously met. Therefore, the Board regards this standard as partially met. BAC is urged to systematically and regularly involve students and international experts (see panel's recommendation for ESG 3.7).

ENQA Criterion 3 – Resources (ESG 3.4)

The instability of staff, especially at management level, and the current very high workload due to lack of additional appropriately qualified professional staff in the central administration may undermine BAC's capacity to run its activities in an effective and efficient manner.

→ As recommended by the panel, BAC should strategically consider the sustainability of its small central administration and the appropriate blend of expertise required to meet its objectives. BAC is requested to clarify this situation and report to ENQA in the follow-up report.

ENQA Criterion 6 – External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the members (ESG 3.7)

According to ESG 3.7, external quality assurance processes are normally expected to include [...] an external assessment by **a group of experts** [...].

On page 39, the report reads: *"The downside of BAC's inspection is the approach to use only one or two inspectors and limited inclusion of other experts including international experts, students or other stakeholders or representatives"*.

→ The Board is concerned by the lack of collegiality of the panel (either one or two inspectors are nominated depending on the size of the institution), and agrees that such design of the whole assessment procedure is not in line with the current ESG.

ENQA Criterion 7 – Accountability procedures (ESG 3.8)

The panel reports that *“BAC does not have a published comprehensive policy on assurance of quality for itself and does not perform systematic periodic self-evaluation”*.

→ The Board concurs with the panel to suggest BAC to develop a coherent policy on its own quality assurance and to apply it systematically.