



BUSINESS  
GRADUATES  
ASSOCIATION

LEADERS NEVER STOP LEARNING

# BGA ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

# CONTENTS

- **PREAMBLE** 4
- **INSTITUTION DEFINITION – ELIGIBILITY** 5
- **CONTINUOUS IMPACT MODEL – THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS** 6
- **THE BGA CHARTER** 8
- **CRITERIA** 9

# PREAMBLE

Business Graduates Association (BGA) accreditation is a holistic and rigorous institutional accreditation with a focus on responsible management, impact and lifelong learning. This gold-standard quality mark is awarded to institutions that can clearly demonstrate continuous improvement and an increasing impact on their stakeholders and communities over a measurable period, using BGA's Continuous Impact Model (CIM), which assesses the improvement in impact across a range of metrics.

BGA accreditation is designed to provide impact-driven quality assurance and quality enhancement mechanisms for institutions worldwide, in order to ensure the value of business and management qualifications for potential students, graduates, employers and society. Accreditation plays a key role in informing prospective students and employers about the quality of the institution and its programmes.

BGA accreditation criteria are used as a benchmark for assessing the overall quality of an institution. BGA accreditation recognises the need to compare international standards while taking into consideration local legislative and cultural differences.

The criteria used for BGA accreditation are based upon the BGA Charter (page 4), and outline the standards that institutions are expected to meet, in order to be awarded accredited status by BGA. The criteria will be used to inform recommendations of accreditation by the peer review assessment team, and the award of accreditation by the BGA Accreditation Advisory Board (BAAB). They are intended to be used in a holistic way to assess the overall quality and values of an institution, rather than adopting a tick-box approach.

# INSTITUTION **DEFINITION**

An 'institution' is classified as any degree-awarding organisation or subset thereof, such as a business school, university, or similar entity at which the business or management degree is regionally or nationally recognised. The institutional unit is expected to predominantly offer management qualifications and a clear and distinct identity from any other units that may exist within a wider organisational framework. The final scope of accreditation will be determined by the BAAB in consultation with the school and its mentor.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Institutions must be fully paid BGA members in order to apply for accreditation and are expected to offer at least one degree-level programme in a business or management field, and as such, possess degree-awarding powers. In cases where degree-awarding powers are not possible to attain, the school will need to provide a strong reasoning for such, as well as to showcase its market reputation through recommendation letters from accredited business school partners.

Business schools must also demonstrate that they have been able to run continuously for at least five years, showing healthy financial stability and growth during those years.

Alongside this, the business schools must have graduated at least three student cohorts from at least one of its programmes in its current portfolio.

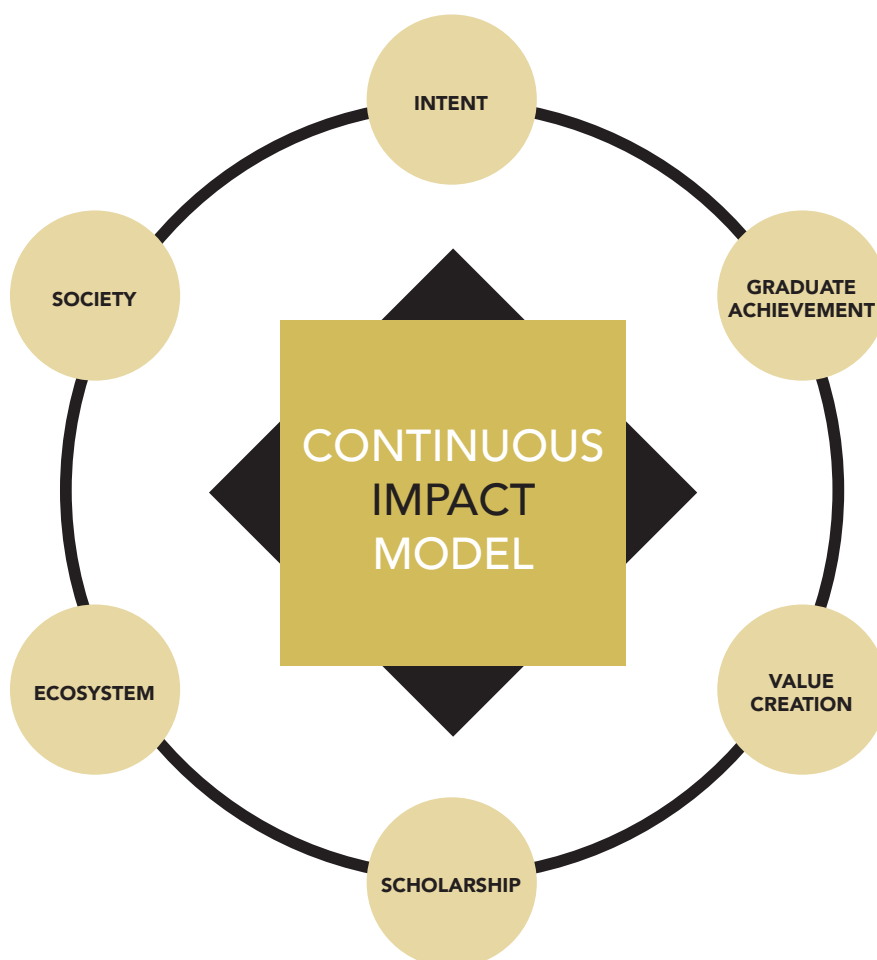
Institutions do not need to be BGA validated in order to apply for accreditation, although this interim stage is designed to support institutions towards a successful accreditation journey.

# CONTINUOUS IMPACT MODEL

The Continuous Impact Model (CIM) is designed to help institutions develop an understanding of their impact across a wide range of areas on stakeholders and society, measure the changes of impact variables over time, and establish evidential feedback loops to improve the quality of the institution and its activities in a continuous improvement process.

An institution will work with its academic mentor to develop appropriate metrics and ensure an effective feedback loop is established over time. Every institution wishing to initiate the BGA accreditation process is required to complete the CIM.

The areas covered during the process are encompassed in the CIM diagram. They are intended to be used in a holistic way to assess the overall quality and values of an institution, rather than adopting a tick-box approach.



### The accreditation process

These are time estimates for institutions undergoing the accreditation process. For a more detailed view of the steps involved in each stage, please see the document 'BGA Accreditation Guidance', which can be found on the BGA website. Alternatively, email [bga-accreditation@amba-bga.com](mailto:bga-accreditation@amba-bga.com) for more information.



# THE BGA CHARTER

- |          |   |          |  |
|----------|---|----------|--|
| <b>1</b> | Meeting demands of the economy, contributing to economic growth and development and driving social transformation | <b>2</b> | The principles of corporate social responsibility (CSR), ethics and sustainability |
| <b>3</b> | Good governance, institutional sustainability and integrity   | <b>4</b> | Generating value by building tangible connections with other academic institutions |
| <b>5</b> | Continuous improvement  | <b>6</b> | Impact, innovation and excellence  |
| <b>7</b> | Involvement, inclusion and respect of all stakeholders  | <b>8</b> | Principles of equality and diversity   |
| <b>9</b> | Graduate employability and corporate relations  |          |  |

## The BGA Charter explained

The BGA Charter forms the foundation to the accreditation principles found on the following page. Each criterion contains a direct link to one of the Charter principles (outlined in square brackets in the following criteria [#]), and helps clarify the intent of each accreditation principle.

Institutions are expected to uphold the principles of the BGA Charter regardless of whether they are educational members, validated, or accredited.

# CRITERIA

## The five key accreditation criteria:

### 1. **THE INSTITUTION:**

its mission and strategy, leadership, diversity, connectedness, responsible management, and available resources

### 2. **FACULTY:**

strategy, research and teaching, and diversity

### 3. **STUDENTS:**

marketing, recruitment, and diversity

### 4. **PROGRAMMES:**

level, design, feedback, learning outcomes, innovation, assessment, delivery, and responsible management

### 5. **IMPACT:**

careers, alumni, lifelong learning and value creation



# 1. THE INSTITUTION

## Mission/vision/strategy

- 1.1 The institution is expected to have an appropriate mission, which is explicitly expressed and regularly reviewed, and which reflects its key strengths and market positioning. [3]
- 1.2 The institution should have a well-defined, credible and coherent strategy, realistically reflecting its resources and constraints as well as its stated mission. [3]
- 1.3 The institution should, through its mission and strategy, demonstrate a commitment to sustainability, good governance and continuous improvement, underpinned by well-defined and implemented policies. [3]
- 1.4 The mission and strategy should take into account the role of the institution in meeting the demands of the economy (whether local, national, regional or global), and the way that this contribution drives social transformation. [1]

## Leadership and governance

- 1.5 The institution should have a sound leadership structure, which allows for effective but controlled decision-making, ethical governance and succession planning, and an effective and integrated organisation for the management and leadership of activities, with a significant degree of autonomy and control over its future. [3]

- 1.6 There should be appropriate mechanisms that enable all stakeholders to have a suitable voice within the leadership and direction of the institution. This may include an advisory board, board of governors, faculty committee and staff-student committee. [7]
- 1.7 The institution should be able to demonstrate market legitimacy, secured financial viability and institutional continuity.

## Continuous Improvement

- 1.8 The institution should be able to demonstrate satisfactory outcomes from its own internal national (and possibly international) audit processes and should provide evidence that it has responded successfully to any recommendations resulting from these processes. [5]
- 1.9 The institution must be able to demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement, which is typified by actions and feedback loops from a variety of stakeholder inputs. [5]

## Diversity

- 1.10** The institution must have a transparent and demonstrably effective policy to ensure equality for all to promote diversity. The institution should play an active role in supporting equality and diversity in the workplace. [8]
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## Connectedness

- 1.11** The institution should be able to demonstrate value adding connections to its ecosystem, including – but not limited to – its wider parent institution, local organisations, government agencies and the regional environment. [4/7]
- 1.12** The institution should have a clearly articulated strategy for partnerships with other academic institutions, which demonstrably enhance internationalisation [4]
- 1.13** Employers should be formally involved in the governance of the institution, and also in the review of programmes, curriculum and learning outcomes, where appropriate. [7/9]

The institution must have a clearly articulated and effective policy with regards to its relations with the organisational and managerial world, including means of regular access to employer opinion and a well-developed customer orientation. [9]

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## Responsible management

- 1.14** The institution should have clear policies to address its position within – and impact on – society. It should have a clearly articulated policy with regards to its own positive impact on society, responsible management and ethical activity, with a means by which this is demonstrated through its activities and its programmes. [2/6]
- 1.15** The institution should have a clear understanding of its role in addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)\*, with a means to measure its progress in, and impact on, these elements. [2]

\* The United Nations Sustainability Development Goals can be accessed via: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

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## Resources

- 1.16** The institution should demonstrate that the level of overall resourcing is appropriate for its target audience. Library, computing, and research facilities should be of a professional standard and should be accessible, at least electronically, out of normal working hours and at weekends, providing access to industry standard hardware and software, business databases and literature search facilities. [6]
- 1.17** The institution should have effective policies and mechanisms to promote and support innovation, with sufficient resources dedicated to innovation and improvement. [6]
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## 2. FACULTY

### Strategy

**2.1** In order to provide suitably resourced and high-quality faculty available for all programmes, the institution is encouraged to have an explicit, impact-led faculty strategy as well as an efficient organisational structure. The teaching faculty should be of a size which can fully resource the provision of programmes offered with regard to the overall number of students. [7]

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### Research, scholarship and teaching

**2.2** The research and teaching strategy should be authentic, achievable, and linked to the mission of the institution. The institution should be able to demonstrate suitable levels of quality across its faculty as evidenced by relevant management research, scholarship and consultancy. [6/5]

**2.3** It is expected that a significant proportion of research output is relevant and demonstrably contributes to organisations and to society. [6/2]

**2.4** All faculty members, irrespective of designation and employment status, should have access to support for the development of their research and teaching skills, with a focus on continuous improvement and innovation. Faculty should be committed to innovating in the classroom and are expected to be supported in developing their teaching, research and scholarship by the institution. [5/6]

**2.5** Research and scholarship should have demonstrable impact on the wider community, including – but not limited to – the academic community. [6]

**2.6** Innovative approaches to the teaching of the importance of society and the environment in business are strongly encouraged. [6/2]

**2.7** The institution should formally address the issues of collegiality and integration of staff into the total teaching and learning environment of the institution, including part time faculty, faculty from another part of the institution, staff from other institutions and practitioners, where appropriate. [7]

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### Diversity

**2.8** The faculty mix should be appropriately broad and balanced, to include a range of qualified career academics, academics with prior or concurrent careers in the corporate world, and practitioners. All faculty are expected to be able to demonstrate an understanding of the way in which their field(s) impacts the world of contemporary business. [8]

**2.9** The institution should have a thorough and inclusive faculty development and recruitment policy to ensure that all staff are suitably diverse, innovative, reflect the institution's commitment to continuous improvement and continue to meet high standards. [8/5/6]

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## 3. STUDENTS

### Marketing

- 3.1** The institution should display an understanding of its core target markets, and have a developed sense of the market demand for its products. The marketing strategy should include targets based around the sustainability of the programmes and optimal numbers based on the pedagogical approach. [3/6]
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### Recruitment

- 3.2** Recruitment processes should be transparent, rigorous, consistent, and suitable for the type of programme applied for. Any pre-requisites for admission should be clearly identified and communicated. [3]
- 3.3** There should be an expectation on the part of the institution that the student will be able to fulfil the objectives of the programme and achieve the standard required for the award. Evidence will be required to show rigour in procedures and standards for admission, for example, standard testing and interviewing. [3]
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### Diversity

- 3.4** In order to create a dynamic learning environment and to ensure sustainability, the student population should be diverse and balanced where possible. [8]
- 3.5** Evidence of language proficiency will be required to a suitable standard for the level of award, where applicable. Mechanisms must be in place to ensure that students – especially international students – receive adequate pastoral care and support throughout their course of study. [8]
- 3.6** The institution should have a formal policy to support students with disabilities. All student policies should be clearly articulated. [8]
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## 4. PROGRAMMES

### Level

- 4.1** Programmes should be designed and delivered at the appropriate level, based on national or reputable international standards. [3]
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### Design

- 4.2** Sustainable academic leadership is important, regardless of the primary faculty teaching model. There should be clearly defined roles relating to the academic leadership and administrative responsibilities for each programme with individuals identified for each. Those assigned roles of academic leadership should be credible and committed to the programme. The institution should be able to demonstrate a level and quality of professional leadership and support, appropriate to the size of the programme portfolio. [3]
- 4.3** Programmes must be regularly reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the market, taking into account input from all stakeholders. The design and content of the programme should embrace a range of relevant theory, firmly linked to the practical world of sustainable leadership, business and management. Formal programme re-design is expected to take place on a cycle approximately every five years, based on a re-evaluation of the currency and achievement of learning outcomes. [6/7]
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### Curriculum

- 4.4** Programmes should be broadly designed to meet the stated title of the award. Where possible, even the most specialist programmes should be situated within the broader world of management and sustainability.
- 4.5** To ensure an international dimension to the programme, curricula should take care to incorporate an understanding of management styles and practices from different regions and cultures, and to include diversity in examples and/or case studies. Examples should encompass a range from prevalent international business standards to local norms and expectations. International study opportunities are to be encouraged where they enhance the student learning experience. [8]
- 4.6** Programmes should explicitly address the development and enhancement of a range of appropriate soft skills, in addition to the technical skills relevant to the programme title/award. [9]
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### Student feedback

- 4.7** Mechanisms must exist to ensure sufficient feedback and response to student reactions to course delivery and content. [7/6]
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### Learning outcomes

- 4.8** All programmes must have clearly stated aims, objectives and learning outcomes, which reflect the mission and strengths of the institution. Learning outcomes should be clear in describing what participants are expected to know and be able to do as a result of the programme. They should make clear the ways in which the institution recognises and assesses intellectual, analytical, personal and enterprise qualities as well as the specific knowledge developed by the programme. [5/6]
- 4.9** Learning outcomes should be mapped and measured against curriculum design and assessment, to ensure that the programme is cohesive and that all intended graduate outputs are achieved. [5/6]
- 4.10** All graduates should leave the institution with an appropriate understanding of the requirements of responsible management and ethics and how to apply the skills and knowledge into the workplace. [2]
- 4.11** Employers should be confident of recruiting and sponsoring ethical, responsible graduates. [7]

### Innovation

- 4.12** Innovation in programme design and delivery is strongly encouraged, particularly in the ways in which such developments enhance integration, sustainability, personal growth, and the sharing of experiences. [6/2]
- 4.13** Innovative approaches to the teaching of the importance of society and the environment in business are to be strongly encouraged. [6]

- 4.14** Employers should be involved in providing innovative, experiential learning for students where appropriate. [7/9]

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### Assessment

- 4.15** The key purpose of student assessment is to enable students to demonstrate that they have met the objectives and achieved the learning outcomes of the programme at the standard required for the relevant award. The assessment scheme should have detailed criteria and specify the range and relative weights of the various assessment methods used; it should be comprehensive and consistent across the various subject areas, and underpinned by a suitable assessment strategy. The assessment scheme should reflect the particular aims and characteristics of the course. A diverse approach to assessment methods is encouraged. [3]
- 4.16** Assessment should also be used to provide feedback to students in a consistent and timely manner and assist in subsequent individual and group learning. [6]

- 4.17** Evidence is required to demonstrate that steps are taken to ensure that the individual's own work is being assessed, with an explicit policy with regards to plagiarism. [6]

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### Internal feedback

- 4.18** Assessment standards should be consistently reviewed and applied at the appropriate level across the programme and the portfolio. This includes

instances when delivery and assessment is undertaken at partner sites and on student exchanges. [6]

- 4.19** While innovation in assessment methods is encouraged, particularly if new teaching and learning methods are being used, detailed evaluation by the institution of such innovations will also be assessed. [6]

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### Delivery

- 4.20** Delivery modes may range across a spectrum from traditional face-to-face through to fully online, with many blended variations in-between. Innovative approaches to design and delivery are welcomed if they enhance learning opportunities and can maintain the coherence and integrity of the course.

Some programmes may be designed to deliver a significant part – or indeed all – of the learning experience at a distance, from offering one section or module of the course online, to ‘blended learning’, to ‘online learning’ in its purest sense. In such cases, it is expected that all standards outlined in this document will continue to be met. Programmes delivered by such modes must ensure that students receive an equivalent learning experience to that of students studying on a face-to-face basis. Flexibility is an important feature but should not be to the detriment of the cohesive student learning experience. [6]

- 4.21** It is expected that all programmes will contain some element of support through an online platform which students can access off-campus and out-of-hours. [7]
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### Responsible management

- 4.22** Innovative approaches to teaching of the importance of society and the environment in business are to be strongly encouraged. All faculty members are expected to be able to understand the importance of ethics, sustainability and responsible management within their subject areas, and to bring these to bear on their teaching and research. [2]

- 4.23** All programmes should explicitly address an understanding of the impact of sustainability, ethics and risk management on business decisions and performance, and on society as a whole; as well as the impact of environmental forces on organisations, including: legal systems; demographics; ethical, social, and technological change issues. [2]
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## 5. IMPACT

### Careers

- 5.1 Facilities should exist to assist in employment for students at the conclusion of their studies, with career development opportunities available irrespective of seniority, delivery mode and employment status. [9]
- 5.2 The institution should consider the wider role of society in providing valuable employment opportunities for its students and graduates. [1/9]

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### Alumni & lifelong learning

- 5.3 A well-established and active alumni body is expected, with appropriate governance structures and funding, to provide tangible networking opportunities for its members. [7]
- 5.4 Mechanisms should exist (usually through an alumni association) to ensure that alumni have access to the latest developments and innovations in management through lifelong learning opportunities. [7/6]
- 5.5 Through its service offering, the alumni association should be a conduit to support the continued employability of graduates as well as that of current students. [9/5]
- 5.6 Alumni are also expected to understand and champion the principles of equality and respect for diversity. [8]

### Value creation

- 5.7 The institution should be able to tangibly demonstrate the positive contribution that its activities make to economic development, including (but not limited to): job creation, new value creation, and graduate careers and salaries. The institution should be explicit about the ways in which it impacts positively on the environment and society in a sustainable manner. [9/6/2]
- 5.8 The institution should have appropriate mechanisms to regularly review the long term success and impact of its graduates, and to evaluate the currency and achievement of programme learning outcomes. [6]
- 5.9 An institution should be able to provide evidence of significant impact and return on investment for its graduates and other stakeholders. The views and experiences of appropriate alumni, employers and sponsors will be sought. The transfer of learning from the programme to the place of work will be evaluated, and evidence that these outcomes are being met by graduates in the workplace is expected. An inclusive view of the measurement and articulation of impact and the return on investment of programmes is encouraged, taking into account contribution to society and value creation. [6]



- 5.10** The institution should have a tacit and measurable understanding – both academic and professional – of its impact on all stakeholders (faculty, students, alumni, employers, society), with tangible feedback loops to ensure continuous improvement as a result of this analysis.  
[5/6/7]
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