



**2023  
Monitoring  
Report**

**Islamic Sciences Accreditation Agency**

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## **1. Introduction**

**Islamic Sciences Accreditation Agency** : Established in 2018, the Islamic Sciences Accreditation Agency (IAA) was founded to conduct program accreditation in Faculties of Theology and Islamic Sciences. IAA has been authorized by Turkish Higher Education Quality Council (THEQC) for accreditation activities during the periods 15.09.2019 - 11.09.2021, 15.09.2021 - 15.09.2023, and 15.09.2023 - 15.09.2025. The agency operates both nationally and internationally and has established two councils to carry out accreditation processes. Within IAA, the International Accreditation Council (IAC) has been formed to conduct international accreditation activities. Members of this council are from Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, Libya, Qatar, Oman, Jordan, Tunisia, and Syria. In accordance with the participation principle in the guidelines for accrediting institutions, international cooperation efforts have been initiated. In this context, during the Board meeting of the Islamic World Quality Assurance Agencies Union (IQA) held on June 22, 2021, IAA's membership application was evaluated and it was accepted as a full member with 27 votes.

## **2. Evaluation Regarding the Criteria**

### **a. Public Information**

IAA shares its activities, regulations, reports, promotional materials, training, and program accreditations with the public on its website. The agency has only published the accreditation reports of two programs that received accreditation, and it has not published the accreditation reports of two programs completed in 2023. Feedback surveys are collected, but it is recommended to make them more comprehensible..

### **b. Compliance with Ethical Rules**

IAA complies with ethical rules. Principles are outlined on the website, and evaluators involved in accreditation activities are reported to sign confidentiality and ethics declaration forms.

### **c. Objection Procedures**

IAA has a guideline on the objection process. According to this guideline, the objection commission consists of three principal and one alternate member. The commission evaluates objections regarding accreditation decisions made under the Program Accreditation conducted by the IAA Board and submits the results to the Board. Complaint mechanisms exist for accreditation decisions, monitoring reports, or dissatisfaction with personnel involved in the process. Objections are stated to be submitted in writing or electronically with valid reasons and evidence. So far, accreditation activities have been conducted for two undergraduate programs; one has been completed while the other is ongoing. No complaints have been received, so the objection mechanisms have not been activated.

#### **d. Consistency Committee Practices**

Article 10 of the IAA Evaluation and Accreditation Implementation Guidelines details consistency and report writing controls. In 2023, the consistency reviews of Istanbul University Faculty of Theology's first and second shifts were completed, resulting in accreditation. Additionally, consistency work continues for 10 programs.

#### **e. Archiving Practices**

The agency has an archiving guideline providing detailed information on classification and storage of all documents. In 2023, IAA conducted accreditation at Istanbul University Faculty of Theology. No additional archiving activity has been performed, but during interviews, it was understood that IAA values archiving.

#### **f. Physical and Technical Infrastructure and Personnel**

In addition to the two programs accredited in 2022, IAA completed the accreditation evaluation process for two programs in 2023. The number of evaluators is relatively low. The agency published its 2023 financial statement online. IAA still does not have a full-time employee. Since it conducts international accreditation, it does not employ a translator. The agency does not have an independent office. Although the registered office is in Kütahya, where most members reside and where the agency was founded, the web page shows an office at Cevizli Mah. Fil Yokuşu Sok. Karalar Plaza No: 18, 2nd Floor, Maltepe, Istanbul. The payment method for the office rent is unclear and not included in the financial statement. There is also no office phone number.

#### **g. Evaluation of Thematic Analysis Reports**

IAA has a thematic report for 2022, but has not prepared one for 2023. It is recommended that the agency conducts thematic report analysis.

### **3. Evaluation of the Activity Report**

#### **a. Evaluation of Activities**

National accreditation decisions are made by the Islamic Sciences Accreditation Board (IAK), while international accreditation decisions are made by the International Accreditation Council (IAC). TAA conducts accreditation processes through national and international evaluators, with over 100 national and more than 30 international evaluators. Despite an increase in accreditation applications, the number of evaluators has not increased compared to previous years. The evaluator pool includes students and representatives from the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Presidency of Religious Affairs (DIB). It is recommended to include undergraduate students as evaluators. IAA accredited two programs in 2022 and two programs in 2023, totaling four internationally accredited programs. Field monitoring was conducted for four international and six national programs in 2023, with the process nearing completion. Additionally, accreditation is ongoing for seven international and 24 national programs. IAA's main regulations for accreditation processes are the IAA Working Regulations, IAA Program Accreditation and Monitoring Guidelines, and the IAA Program Accreditation and Monitoring Manual. In 2023, TAA held seven informational meetings, but no evaluator training or workshops were conducted.

## **b. Evaluation of Performance Criteria**

There are 60 Faculties of Theology, including one foundation university, with some offering second-shift and programs in Arabic or English. As the Council of Higher Education will stop enrolling students in second-shift programs starting in 2024-2025, it is recommended that IAA limit its activities to first-shift programs. There are 34 Faculties of Islamic Sciences, including three foundation universities. It is understood that IAA uses the same criteria for both Faculties of Theology and Islamic Sciences. IAA conducts program accreditation under five main headings: Quality Assurance System, Education and Training, Research and Development, Social Contribution, and Management System, covering 22 criteria and 58 sub-criteria. This system is derived from a previous version used by (THEQC). The agency has aligned its criteria system with (THEQC)'s accreditation and external evaluation processes. IAA's graded evaluation key rates each sub-criterion on a scale of 1-5 based on maturity levels in planning, implementation, checking, and corrective actions (PDCA cycle). The accreditation process, including application, formation of evaluation team, reading self-assessment reports, preliminary preparation, field visits, report writing, consistency committee meetings, and Board decision, takes 240 days. While (THEQC) conducts institutional accreditation, IAA performs program accreditation. Therefore, it is recommended that IAA develops an evaluation system specific to programs. Since (THEQC)'s evaluation criteria are ESG-compliant, IAA uses the same criteria for both national and international accreditations. As IAA is not accredited by an international agency, no distinction exists between national and international accreditation. It is recommended that IAA identify differences among programs and develop program-specific criteria.

## **4. Evaluation of Program Accreditation Field Practices**

### **a. Field Visits**

No (THEQC) observers attended IAA's field visits in 2023.

### **b. Evaluation of Program Accreditation Feedback Forms**

IAA conducted accreditation at Sakarya University and Istanbul University. Accreditation at Sakarya University Faculty of Theology, first and second shifts, has been completed. No objections have been filed. Feedback is collected from administrators, academic and administrative staff, and evaluation team members. Evaluators confirmed their participation via surveys. However, these surveys are difficult to understand and the color schemes are not harmonized. Feedback is taken into account in improvement activities.

## **5. Conclusion**

IAA's monitoring took place online on June 25, 2024, from 13:30 to 16:30. Meetings were held sequentially with the Chair of the Board, Board members, and all focus groups. Participants demonstrated knowledge of accreditation processes, regulations, guidelines, and manuals, and provided necessary explanations. It is understood that IAA conducts its activities according to regulations, guidelines, and

implementation principles. However, no clear distinction exists between national and international accreditation criteria. Activities are performed within planned timelines. Although the number of completed accreditations is low, processes are conducted as scheduled. Recommendations include speeding up accreditation activities, conducting evaluator training, increasing the number of evaluation teams, improving office conditions, employing full-time staff, hiring translators/interpreters, and providing accessible communication tools.

**a. Strengths**

1. A dedicated team willing to conduct and develop accreditation processes
2. Conducting informational activities
3. Receiving many accreditation applications
4. Presence of international evaluators
5. Publishing accreditation reports

**b. Areas for Improvement**

1. Limited institutional diversity in the Executive Board
2. Absence of a Thematic Analysis Report
3. Lack of Strategic Plan
4. Lease contract not provided for office rent
5. No insured staff and lack of contact information
6. Absence of translators/interpreters for international accreditation
7. Low number of completed accreditation programs
8. No evaluator training conducted in 2023
9. Same criteria used for national and international accreditation
10. Not accredited by an international accreditation agency
11. Committee members serving on multiple committees