



Executive Summary
Renewal of Licensure
Rochester Institute of Technology, Dubai

December 16- 19, 2018

A Renewal of Licensure Review Team (RLRT) visited the Rochester Institute of Technology Dubai (RITD) from 16 to 19 December 2018 to evaluate the *Self-Study* for Renewal of Licensure (hereafter the *Self-Study*). The exit interview was held on December 19, 2018.

Formed on June 9, 2008 by an agreement between Rochester Institute of Technology and Dubai Silicon Oasis Authority, RITD is an independent not-for-profit university. RITD offers the same curriculum offered at RIT New York. Under this joint venture set up, students in Dubai and New York are allowed to take courses at either campus and meet their degree requirements.

Since its establishment in 2009, RITD has grown into an institution that currently offers 10 Bachelor's Degrees in Business Administration, Marketing, Accounting and Finance, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Information Security and Forensics, Applied Networking and System Administration and Applied Arts and Sciences and 6 Master's Degrees in Finance, Human Resource Development, Business Administration, Service Leadership and Innovation, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, and Networking and System Administration.

Currently RITD enrolls 569 undergraduate students of whom 73% are male. Non-Emiratis make 88% of the undergraduate student population. The current graduate student population is 157. Male students (67%) and non-Emiratis (60%) account for the majority of the graduate student population. RITD employs 86 people including 34 full-time and 15 part-time faculty members.

There is much at RITD to commend. There is an excellent sense of collegiality, morale among faculty is good, its students and alumni are positive and enthusiastic, and the level of engagement is high. Evidence of community engagement, through the advisory board and contact with business and industry is impressive.

As a branch campus, there is always a risk that the relationship with the home campus is strained and partial. However, the RLRT found RITD to be well integrated with RIT New York, and that there is evidence of good practice flowing in both directions.

Among a number of specific issues, the general areas which require attention are as follows:

1. *The Self-Study.* As was the case for the MDA Program, the *Self-Study* was not prepared as well as might have been expected. Although the document was structured according to the guidelines (the PGRL), some analysis was not provided, or was provided only in part. The ERT has identified some requirements that are simply requests for evidence that might well have been provided as part of the Application. RITD should note that the PGRL are *guidelines* for preparing a *Self-Study* that meets the *Standards*. In particular, the absence of guidelines for a sub-standard does not imply that it is not required. For example, sub-standard 4.15 – which covers graduate assistants – should have been provided.
2. *Policies and Procedures.* There is a need to review policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the *Standards*, but also to ensure that what is currently custom and practice is properly formalized.
3. *Quality Assurance.* Staffing this function is a major concern. At present there is only one person responsible for this area. This is wholly inadequate. As a point of comparison, finance is covered by four members of staff. The quality project is at least as demanding as finance, yet the current staffing does not reflect the scale of the project – if not more.
4. *Planning.* The version of the Strategic Plan provided lacks detail. Performance indicators, targets, timelines or deadlines, ownership for implementation, and resources, need to be clear. More specifically, there is a lack of evidence of operational planning. As discussed below, sub-strategies – such as those covering research and community engagement, need to be aligned with the institutional strategy.
5. *Program Effectiveness.* In order to ensure future success with program accreditation reviews, a project to review and improve course syllabi is needed. Similarly, the on-line course files – while largely satisfactory – will benefit from careful review and remedial action where this is needed. Moreover, in addition to descriptions of the approach, evidence that this is actually operationalized is needed. This will be of even greater importance for future program reviews.
6. *Faculty.* Loads and the number of preparations required are generally high. There is some evidence of teaching overload – which must not become structural. There is also some evidence of non-compliant teaching allocations that are not compliant with the *Standards* regarding faculty qualifications. The proportion of part-time to full-time faculty is high. The RLRT understands the particular circumstances of a branch campus, and RITD is advised to discuss and agree its approach of using some local adjunct faculty as well as using some full-time RIT faculty from New York to support the delivery of the programs.
7. *Learning Resources.* At present staffing levels in the library are not adequate.

8. *New Campus.* This is an exciting project. RITD should work closely with the CAA as these progresses and submit a substantive change application prior to moving to the new location. The details required for this application should be agreed in advance.
9. *Documentation.* The institutional handbooks are not prepared to a high standard. The Student Handbook and Faculty Handbook, for example, are largely undigested selections of policies and procedures from the Policies and Procedures Manual – which is, itself, incomplete. Most institutions create tailored handbooks with polices presented in a manner that suits the audience. Through this, they also ensure that the handbooks contain what is required by the *Standards*.
10. *Research.* Clarification and elaboration of the research strategy and associated policies and procedures are needed. Evidence of operationalization is needed, and it needs to be aligned with the institutional strategic plan.
11. *Community Engagement.* Similarly, the community engagement strategy needs to be a clear elaboration of the institutional strategy. It needs to be complete, with indicators, targets, owners and deadlines – and there needs to be evidence that this policy is actually implemented.

The RLRT makes its recommendations in a spirit of constructive engagement, with the aim of ensuring that the Standards are met, and to aid RITD in achieving renewal of licensure.