



Executive Summary

Renewal of Institutional Licensure Fatima College of Health Sciences (FCHS) Abu Dhabi

12-16 February 2024

An External Review Team (hereafter ERT) formed by the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) performed an onsite visit to Fatima College of Health Sciences (FCHS) during the period of 12-16 February 2024 to evaluate the *Self-Study* for the *Renewal of Institutional Licensure* (hereafter the *Self-Study*). The exit briefing was held on the 16 February 2024.

FCHS was founded in 2006 as one of the colleges of the Institute of Applied Technology (IAT), which was established by the Abu Dhabi Government in 2005, to provide career-based technical education at both the secondary and tertiary levels. IAT also operates 14 schools and the two Abu Dhabi Polytechnic campuses. Oversight of IAT is maintained by the Abu Dhabi Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ACTVET) which was founded in 2010. FCHS has its main campus in Al Mafraq, Abu Dhabi. It specializes in healthcare programs at the diploma and baccalaureate level, predominantly for Emirati women. In addition to Abu Dhabi, FCHS has campuses in Al Ain, Ajman, and Al Dhafra. The new Ajman campus has been recently commissioned with new state-of-the-art facilities and a simulation center. FCHS also offers baccalaureate and diploma programs in pharmacy, nursing, midwifery, paramedics, physiotherapy, psychology, and radiography and diagnostic imaging.

The total enrollment in FCHS as of the Academic Year 2023-2024, was 2591 students distributed between Abu Dhabi (912), Al Ain (869), Ajman (594), and Al Dhafra (216). Currently, FCHS employs 44 full-time terminally qualified faculty members (59.5% of whom are female) distributed between Abu Dhabi (23), Al Ain (9), Ajman (10), and Al Dhafra (2). The ratio of students to full-time terminally qualified faculty is 35:1.

The ERT has thoroughly reviewed the *Self-Study* submitted by FCHS. The ERT expects the *Self-Study* to outline a description and analysis of the *Standards* and *Stipulations* required for the renewal of institutional licensure as per the *PMRIL*. Although the ERT has found some evidence of compliance with the *Standards* during the visit, the submitted *Self-Study* lacked analytical narrative, self-evaluation, and evidence-based claims.

During the onsite visit, the ERT met with FCHS administration and some IAT administrators, faculty, students, alumni, and members of the advisory boards of the various departments, as well as with clinical preceptors involved in FCHS students clinical training in both Abu Dhabi and Ajman campuses. Moreover, the ERT has visited the various laboratory and teaching facilities as well as the library learning resources on both campuses.

The ERT has identified several positive aspects that warrant mentioning, including:

- FCHS management and faculty aspiration to promote a culture of effective learning, teaching, and research, in addition to promises of emerging support by IAT for research and scholarly activities of faculty and students.



- Student enthusiasm and eagerness for learning with utmost vigor to become healthcare practitioners and health promoters.
- Excellent simulation facilities for nursing, midwifery, emergency medicine, and medical imaging at the Abu Dhabi Campus and for nursing at the Ajman Campus.
- Extensive availability of library resources to students and faculty.

However, the ERT has identified areas for improvement which can be categorized under the following themes:

Governance and Management

- The ERT acknowledges that IAT contributes financial and human resources to FCHS. The esteemed Governing Body of IAT functions as the BoT for FCHS. However, FCHS lacks critical autonomy as a Higher Education Institution.
- The current Organization Chart of FCHS leaves a lot to be desired. It ignores the Al-Dhafra campus. It does not include all expected positions (filled and unfilled) and does not provide a realistic picture of the FCHS structure. It is encouraging that the OC includes mention of admissions and registration, financial and human resources capacities at the institutional level. The ERT was presented with proposed Organization Charts for FCHS and its campuses that are more befitting and academically more relevant.
- Most of the updated and new FCHS policies and procedures are still drafts; many still need updating, and some are missing.
- There are inconsistencies among the versions of the same policies and procedures. More critically, many of these policies and procedures need to be redrafted to reflect the status of FCHS as a higher education institution. It is expected that FCHS will develop and implement FCHS-specific versions of BoT approved policies that are aligned with the *Standards*, especially as pertaining to faculty recruitment, workload, and promotion.

Quality Assurance and Continuous Quality Improvement

- FCHS lacks a functional QA system with an adequately staffed QA Unit and with satellite capacities on the campuses, according to a well-designed organization structure.
- FCHS needs to develop and implement a *QA Manual* and a professional development program for QA staff development that adheres to the *Standards*.
- FCHS needs to demonstrate robust and coherent continuous quality improvement processes. which are currently lacking.

Research and Scholarships

- The current FCHS budget does not allocate the required 5% of its annual expenditure for research and scholarly activities.
- A proposed comprehensive research policy has not been approved yet.

Financial

- FCHS needs to demonstrate autonomy in spending its allocated budget.

Documentation and Publications

- There are numerous inconsistencies in FCHS documents and publications including the website, the factbook, and the submitted *Self-Study*.
- FCHS documents will benefit from a robust document and version control system.



Community Engagement

- Although there are program advisory committees, FCCHS has no active industrial advisory board at the institutional level, which is crucial for community engagement and facilitating graduate employment and clinical placements and can aid in sound management and governance.

The ERT makes its recommendations in a spirit of constructive engagement, with the aim of ensuring that the *Standards* are met, and to aid FCCHS in its desired objective to renew the licensure of the institution.