



Executive Summary
Renewal of Licensure
Abu Dhabi University
Abu Dhabi

April 28 – May 2, 2019

A Re-Licensure Review Team (hereafter RLRT) visited Abu Dhabi University (ADU) from April 28 to May 2, 2019, to evaluate the *Self-Study* for Renewal of Licensure (hereafter the *Self-Study*). During the visit, the RLRT reviewed relevant documents, toured the main campus in Abu Dhabi, visited Al Ain campus and the Al Dhafra campus on 30 April 2019, and had extensive discussions with university officials and faculty regarding the institution and its programs. The exit interview was held on 2 May 2019.

ADU was established in 2003 as a private institution of higher education by a group of prominent citizens of the United Arab Emirates, under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Hamdan Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The founders envisioned an institution that would be among the best of its kind in the United Arab Emirates, the Arabian Gulf region and throughout the world.

The University commenced its operation with 850 students in two campuses with the main campus located in Abu Dhabi and the branch campus in Al Ain. In 2017, ADU launched a new branch campus in Dubai. In 2018, ADU established the Al Dhafra Center in the Al Dhafra Region.

ADU has four degree-granting Colleges: The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), College of Business (COB), College of Law (COL), and College of Engineering (COE). Additionally, General Education courses are administered by ADU's University College.

The total faculty number of ADU (including Military) at the time of the visit is 271 (222 ADU and 49 Military) of whom 49 are part-time (Military has no part time faculty). The University offers 29 undergraduate programs (26 ADU and 3 Military), 2 postgraduate diploma programs and 16 master's programs (14 ADU and 2 Military). ADU also offers one program at the doctorate level in Business Administration (DBA). The total ADU student enrolment (excluding Military) in the Spring 2018/2019 is 5,899 students, of whom 73% are in the main campus in Abu Dhabi, 22% are in the Al Ain campus, 4% are in the Dubai campus and 1% are

in the Al Dhafra Campus. In addition to the ADU students, the Military programs have a total enrolment of 1,494 students, of which, 25% are enrolled in the Joint Command and Staff College (JCSC), 72% are enrolled in Zayed Military College (ZMC) and the remaining 3% are enrolled in the main campus. The student to full-time faculty ratio of ADU is 33:1.

Through its consideration of ADU's *Self-Study* submitted for renewal of Licensure, examination of other documentation, tours of university facilities at Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, and Al Dhafra, and interactions with faculty, students, and others, the RLRT identified many strengths, including the following:

- The University's emphasis on international accreditation which brings added credibility to the University and its programs.
- The effective deployment of IT hardware and software with technical support, training, and orientation opportunities for students, faculty, and staff.
- The enthusiastic and dedicated Student Services staff who endeavour to meet the needs of students despite the "freezing" of several vacancies.
- The articulate and enthusiastic students with whom we met.
- The new campus in Al Ain, which when completed, will enhance the educational experience of students at that location.
- The ample facilities available at the Al Dhafra location, which provide opportunities for future expansion.

However, there are numerous issues which need be addressed to bring the institution into full compliance with the *Standards*. Many of these issues mirror those identified in recent program reviews. Here, five significant issues are highlighted.

- Inadequate Staffing Levels: There is a clear need to hire additional faculty for many programs at different campuses as evidenced by the high faculty workloads, the high student-to-faculty ratios, and in some cases, the overreliance on part-time faculty. The persistent and pervasive nature of these shortfalls represent a major threat to the future of the University. Additional faculty must be hired to ensure effective delivery of all programs offered at all campuses, while meeting the limits specified in the *Standards* for faculty workload and fraction of part-time faculty. It is recognized that addressing these shortfalls for all programs at all campuses will require significant time and resources. Nevertheless, it is CAA's expectation that all programs at all campuses will be in compliance with the *Standards* as soon as possible, depending on the specific needs of each program. Hence, ADU is required to: provide timed and resourced action plans for the hiring of additional faculty; demonstrate that such plans will bring all programs at all campuses into compliance with the *Standards*; and provide to CAA annual progress reports demonstrating steady progress toward reaching the targets specified in the action plans.
- Non-Equivalence of Students' Educational Experience at all Campuses: The small number, or lack of, resident faculty at branch campuses and the absence of adequate

facilities, and appropriate *Campus Coordination Manual* raise concerns regarding the equivalency of students' educational experience at branch campuses compared to that for students enrolled in Abu Dhabi. Of particular concern is the lack of a systematic mechanism for confirming the parity of assessment instruments for courses simultaneously offered at different campuses. Additional concerns include the small number of resident faculty at Al Ain who teach most courses in their respective programs (e.g. two Bachelor of Architecture program faculty), which limits the students' access and exposure to the wide range of expertise and perspectives offered by the significantly larger number of faculty at the Abu Dhabi campus; the lack of some important program-specific facilities and professional technical development opportunities outside the classroom; and the lack of resident or local emergency counseling service for students in Al Dhafra and Dubai. ADU must comply with the *Standards* in ensuring that students attending any campus receive an equivalent educational experience and achieve the same learning outcomes.

- **Physical Safety Concerns:** Several safety issues were observed during the campus tour. These include: Inadequate access to (and rapid egress from) some teaching facilities and laboratories for disabled students in wheelchairs; obstructed signage for access to safety equipment in one laboratory; unsupervised, open-access, gymnasium facilities which may lead to injury from inappropriate use; eyewash stations in some laboratories located within cubicles, which may not be quickly located in an emergency; numerous trip hazards on entry into teaching spaces; and the general absence of safety telephones or emergency pull-cords in laboratories to raise alarms and summon assistance. ADU is required to conduct a safety audit by an experienced safety professional to identify and correct all physical safety concerns.
- **Inadequate Document Control:** ADU documents its Policies and Procedures in several Manuals: The *ADU Policy Manual* as per CAA Stipulation 1A; the *Academic and Student Policy Manual*; and the *Human Resources, Admin, and Finance Manual*. Many of the policies contained within these *Manuals* have not been reviewed according to the stated review dates. Additionally, the *Manuals* are out of date and do not reflect many of the policy additions and/or revisions implemented since the last re-licensure review. While there is overlap between the three *Manuals*, there are policies which do not appear in any of them (e.g. the *University Publications Policy* and the *Records Retention and Disposal Policy*), as well as policies not included where one expects to find them (e.g. the Policy on Academic Integrity does not appear in the *Academic and Student Policy* manual). There are also inconsistencies between the policies stated in these *Manuals* and those in other institutional documents, e.g. the *Faculty Handbook*, as well as internal references to non-existent policies, e.g. the Faculty Overload Procedures. ADU is required to review and revise its policies and procedures, ensuring that they are up-to-date and appropriate for the institution's current needs and aligned with all other institutional documentation.

- Publications: Many errors and inconsistencies have been identified during the review. Of particular concern is the ADU website that inaccurately portrays concentrations within accredited programs as if they are independent programs. ADU is required to immediately revise the website, ensuring that the titles of all academic programs are accurately recorded and inform the CAA once this has been done. Additionally, the *Self-Study* was not prepared to a high standard and in many areas did not provide information, analyses, or reflections that are required by the Procedural Guidelines for Renewal of Licensure (*PGRL*) and the *Standards*. As a consequence, many requirements of the ERT would have been unnecessary had the *Self-Study* been carefully prepared.

The RLRT makes its Requirements and Suggestions in a spirit of constructive engagement, with the aim of ensuring that the *Standards* are met, and to aid ADU to receive Re-Licensure. The ERT requirements and suggestions can, and should, be viewed as “Opportunities for Improvement” as ADU progresses towards excellence in education, research, and service.