



Executive Summary
Renewal of Licensure
Emirates Institute for Banking and Financial Studies

September 22-25, 2019

An External Review Team (ERT) appointed by the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) of the Ministry of Education (MOE) of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) visited the Emirates Institute for Banking and Financial Studies (hereafter EIBFS) on September 22 -25, 2019 to evaluate the Institute's request for Renewal of Licensure. The exit interview was held on 25th September, 2019.

EIBFS is a private higher education institution that was founded in 1983 as the Emirates Banking Training Institute. The present name was adopted in 1997. EIBFS began offering Diploma programs in 1990 and Bachelor's degree programs in 2012. The Institute offers programs at the Bachelors level, professional certificates and customized training, involving local and international partners. EIBFS has three campuses; the original campus is in Sharjah (1983 and 2002), and campuses in Abu Dhabi (2000) and Dubai (2014). At the time of the visit the Institute had just relocated to a new Sharjah campus facility in Sharjah University City. All three Campuses were recently visited by an ERT. Thus, this ERT limited its visit to the Dubai Campus and the Sharjah Campus.

EIBFS offers the following academic programs: BSc in Banking and Finance, BSc in Banking and Finance with Accounting Specialization, and Banking Diploma Program, Islamic Banking Diploma Program. The total student enrollment in Spring 2019 was 514 students. EIBFS employs 22 faculty teaching full-time or part time. EIBFS also offers short term training programs which were not part of this academic review. Allegedly, the short training programs have 200 participants per day.

This review is based on the ERT's evaluation of EIBFS' *Self-Study* submitted for Renewal of Licensure, and supporting documentation provided during the onsite visit. Additional evidence and verification of policy implementation has been provided by touring the facilities in two of the three campuses, and from interviews with a range of EIBFS stakeholders including faculty, staff, students, alumni and external representatives. A number of positive attributes of the Institute have been identified including the following particular strengths:

- The new campus buildings in Dubai and Sharjah providing spacious and well-equipped

learning environments, with creative classroom designs and technology that will cater for different modes of student centered learning.

- Strong professional links with the Finance and Banking sector facilitated through its extensive training program provision.
- A comprehensive Strategic Plan which is being actively pursued in relation to the 15 initiatives identified under the new strategic directions for EIBFS.
- A diverse cadre of teaching staff who are accessible to students and enthusiastic to support students in their studies and overall development.
- Modes of program delivery in relation to full-time, evenings and weekend that is suited to the market needs of working students and to serve the national need to develop the workforce.

The ERT has identified matters in which the Institute is out of compliance with the *Standards* and the principle areas of concern can be clustered under the following thematic headings: Governance and Organizational Structure; Policies, Procedures and Institutional Strategies, Faculty Workload and Profile; and Institutional and Program Effectiveness. The principal areas of concern within these themes are as follows:

Governance and Organizational Structure

The high-level governance of EIBFS is divided in terms of essential responsibilities between the BoD and the General Assembly. Clarification is sought as to the locus of particular duties and the formal reporting and approval of major items of business such as the annual budget and revisions to the Mission. Assurance is also required as to compliance with the *Standards* and *Stipulation 3* regarding the composition of the BoD. The Student Council is active socially but not engaged in any aspects of decision-making in the institution through committee representation, thus the *Standard* regarding student governance is not currently met. The organizational chart demonstrates a distinctive structure resulting from the Institute's major commitment to professional training with relatively few academic programs that are accredited by the Commission. However, the structure and representation in the chart needs to show the position of the academic program delivery and the associated faculty and their line managers. Appointment to the central academic leadership position and other vacant positions in the organization is also of concern to the ERT. Clarity is also required in identifying the active standing committees of EIBFS and their reporting lines.

Policies, Procedures and Institutional Strategies

The development and documentation of institutional policies is a work in progress. The *P&PM* is incomplete with many policies requiring further detailing and presenting in a standard format that will facilitate their easy reference and indicating who is responsible for implementation and policy review. The task of completing the Manual and conducting the cycle of reviews would be speeded up with more personnel in the QE Team who currently manage and disseminate policies. Particular strategic areas in EIBFS require detailed documentation to guide future development and achievement of goals. These include Risk Management, Research Strategy and Community Engagement.

Faculty Workload and Profile

The ERT identified non-compliance issues with respect to faculty teaching loads, which were mostly above the limits stipulated in the *Standards*. Many faculty deployed to teach on major courses within the Bachelor degree programs were found to be lacking a terminal degree in the relevant discipline. Additional teaching staff with appropriate qualifications will be needed to bring the Institute into compliance with the *Standards*. Without this action the ERT cannot see that the Institute will achieve its mission and its aspirational vision to increase research activity and develop higher level programs of study. It may be relevant for the Institute to seek approval from the Commission for some of the existing faculty who have extensive industry experience but no terminal degree, to be considered for 'exceptions' (*Standard Stipulation 8*).

Institutional and Program Effectiveness

The ERT identified a number of instances at institutional level and in the programs where the assessment of effectiveness is not being tackled systematically and in a sustainable framework to facilitate a cycle of continuous improvement. These areas in need of attention include academic advising, program performance, IT and other support services, auxiliary services and the effectiveness of the research and community engagement strategies.

The ERT is confident that the above issues of concern in the four thematic areas can be resolved with good planning, effective financial management, monitoring and review of progress as served by a quality assurance system that closes the 'quality loop' and informs a process of continuous improvement to all academic and non-academic units at EIBFS.

The ERT makes its recommendations and suggestions in a spirit of constructive engagement with the aim of ensuring that the *Standards for Licensure and Accreditation* are met, and to aid EIBFS in its desired objective to develop an institution that will achieve its stated mission and vision.