



Executive Summary

Renewal of Licensure Ajman University

February 24-28, 2019

A Relicensure Review Team (hereafter RLRT) visited Ajman University (AU) from 24 to 28 February 2019 to review AU's Self-Study for the Renewal of Licensure. The exit briefing was held on February 28, 2019.

Ajman University, initially called Ajman University College of Science and Technology (AUCST) was established by His Highness Sheikh Humaid Bin Rashid Al-Nuaimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Ajman in June 1988 as a private institution of higher education. The university accepted the first group of students in September 1988. AUCST first changed its name to Ajman University of Science and Technology (AUST) and in October 2016, the university assumed its current name Ajman University (AU).

AU currently offers 20 undergraduate, 9 graduate, and a Professional Diploma in teaching program through its 8 degree granting colleges. The programs are designed to provide the community with competent graduates capable of meeting the demands of an ever-changing job market and of supporting the overall development and prosperity of the UAE.

There were 8,304 students enrolled at the University during the academic year 2017-2018. Male students represented 42%, while female students represented 58% of the total student population. In fall 2017, 311 full time faculty were employed at Ajman University. Of these 60 were at the Fujairah campus.

In support of its application for Re-Licensure, AU has submitted a comprehensive Self-Study covering all sections required by the PGRL with appropriate supporting documentation. Through its consideration of AU's self-evaluation, examination of other documents, and interactions with faculty, staff, students, alumni and others, the RLRT identified several strengths. These include the following:

- The university's commitment to community service including provision of free medical and dental care and counseling services to members of the community, and support of student volunteer activities within and outside UAE,

- The clear accountability of the university's leadership in achieving the university's strategic goals articulated in the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, and
- The new Student Hub building housing Student Services which provides a 'one stop' facility, libraries, and social spaces to enhance the students' educational experience and their opportunity for success.

Major issues that must be addressed in order to bring the university into full compliance with the Standards can be grouped into three thematic areas:

- Faculty Workloads. Current workload for many faculty members are excessive. While workloads generally meet the limits specified in the *Standards*, they are counter to the university's goal of increasing its research output and visibility, inasmuch as it affects the faculty's ability to engage in research and the university's ability to attract and retain outstanding research-active faculty. Faculty members simply do not have the time to be innovative, develop new teaching methods and learning materials; prepare comprehensive course files; provide meaningful advice to students, and engage in effective research. Additionally, in some cases, faculty are required to teach outside their specific areas of expertise. AU must ensure that programs have sufficient faculty to deliver them effectively while allowing faculty to engage in research and scholarly activities.
- Course Files and Closure of the Course-Level Continuous Improvement Cycle. A review of samples of course files for several programs, including general education courses, indicate that many course files do not meet the requirements of Stipulation 7 of the Standards. In many cases, the instructor review of the course is simply perfunctory, lacks appropriate and constructive reflection and provides no insight as to how future offerings of the course can be improved. Most important, there is no evidence that the course-level continuous improvement cycle is being closed, and appropriately documented. AU must ensure that all course files meet the requirements of the Standards. It is important to keep in mind that maintaining course files is not an "end in-and-of itself;" instead, it is the means by which the University can ensure that continuous improvement at the course level is systematically implemented
- Documentation. While the Self-Study report is well organized, numerous errors and inconsistencies were found in the supporting documents. Of particular concern are the errors and inconsistencies in the requirements and program descriptions presented in the Catalogs, and the inconsistent listings of the University's Strategic Goals and Objectives in various documents including the "AU Initiatives to Outcomes" document which presumably tracks progress in implementation of such goals. Additionally, course syllabi included within some of the reviewed course files do not meet the requirements of Stipulation 5 of the Standards. AU must review and, as necessary, revise its documents to ensure their accuracy and consistency.

The RLRT makes its requirements and offers its suggestions in a spirit of constructive engagement, with the aim of ensuring that the *Standards* are met, and to aid AU to receive Re-

licensure. Our requirements and suggestions can, and should, be viewed as “Opportunities for Improvement” as AU progresses towards excellence in education, research, and service.