



**Executive Summary**  
**Renewal of Licensure**  
**Liwa College of Technology**  
**(Formerly: Emirates College of Technology)**  
**Abu Dhabi**

**September 9-12, 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 Liwa College of Technology (LCT) from 9 to 12 September, 2019, to evaluate the College's Application for Renewal of Licensure (hereafter the *Application*) which had been received at CAA on 29 April, 2019. The exit interview was held on 12 September, 2019.

LCT is a private higher education institution that was founded in 1993 as the Emirates Institute of Technology. The Institute received initial licensure through the CAA in 2006 and full licensure in 2009. Renewal of Licensure was gained in 2014. Up to 2016, the College was a sole proprietorship commercial establishment but this status changed to a Limited Liability Company with expansion of the number of shareholders to three in 2016. This change did not affect the College's academic provision and was approved by the CAA.

Until recently, LCT operated from multiple campuses: A main campus in downtown Abu Dhabi (Hamdan Street); the other in the Al Bateen district of Abu Dhabi. LCT received approval (22 January, 2019) from CAA of an Application for Substantive Change to relocate both campuses to a single site; Baniyas Tower B, located in central Abu Dhabi. Relocation took place in spring 2019. The planned relocation was accompanied by various Applications for Initial Accreditation to expand the College's portfolio of programs beyond business and media programs and a small provision in health information management, to include clinical health science and engineering programs. These Applications were approved by CAA the week before the ERT visit.

The College reported that at the end of the 2018-19 session it had 1,595 enrolled students, 59 faculty with a further six appointments pending, four language tutors, two counselors and 95 staff.

This review is predicated on the ERT's evaluation of LCT's *Self-Study* submitted for renewal of licensure, and supporting documentation provided during the campus visit. Additional evidence and verification of policy implementation has been provided by a tour of the campus facilities and interviews with a range of LCT stakeholders including faculty, staff, students, alumni and external representatives on the Faculty Advisory Boards and Board of Trustees (BoT). A number of positive attributes of the College have been identified including the following particular strengths:

- The new campus building in the heart of the city providing a spacious and well-equipped learning environment and bringing the advantages of a single consolidated location for the College and potential benefits in the management of human and physical resources.
- Significant financial commitment to the College made by the owners.
- A comprehensive Corporate Strategic Plan which is being actively pursued in four key thematic areas. Of particular note are the efforts to expand the portfolio of study programs and the progress being made to encourage and enhance faculty research activity.
- A diverse cadre of faculty members who are accessible to students and enthusiastic in supporting the learners in their studies and overall development.
- Modes of program delivery in day-time, evenings and weekends that are suited to the market needs of working students and thus serve the national plan for a knowledge-based economy.
- A full program of professional development activities arising out of faculty evaluation processes and embracing the strategic needs of the College, including aspects of research.

The ERT has identified matters in which the College is out of compliance with the *Standards* and the principle areas of concern can be clustered under the following thematic headings: Governance, Monitoring of Performance and Effectiveness, Policy Review and Implementation, Faculty Workload and Profile. Key areas of concern within these themes are as follows:

- Governance: The formal business conducted by the BoT needs to be recorded in such a way that is clear that all responsibilities of the BoT, as specified in the By-Laws, are evidently covered in the annual cycle of meetings. It is unclear from BoT minutes that important decisions have been made and approvals granted. Examples include approval of the budget, formal evaluation of the President/CEO, changes to the organizational structure, and formally approving the award of degrees.  
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.
- Monitoring of performance and effectiveness: The ERT identifies a critical lack of detailed monitoring and reporting on the achievement of targets within the LCT's

comprehensive Corporate Strategic Plan (2017-22). The failure to develop suitable monitoring software has resulted in inadequate reporting of progress, not least to the BoT who should be keeping oversight on actions taken and timeliness in achieving targets. A solution to this situation is a matter of extreme urgency.

If LCT is to be successful in tackling the challenging areas of increasing student enrolment, reducing student attrition, recruiting sufficient numbers of suitable qualified faculty, enhancing research activity and outputs, and building collaborative links with other institutions, professional bodies and other external organizations, the College must evaluate the effectiveness of all academic and non-academic units. Some surveys have been conducted but the feedback mechanisms are generally weak and little, if any, analysis and evaluation of effectiveness is evident. All units must function optimally if there is to be any impact on the KPI targets set within the Strategic Plan.

- Policy review and implementation: There has been some improvement in policy management since the last Licensure review but it remains a work-in-progress. The review dates are generally unclear in the documentation and, with so many structural changes in the organization and programs, the review of policies and maintaining their currency is vital to ensure consistent protocols and procedures that are in line with international best practice. Attention is needed in areas such as plagiarism and academic integrity, advanced standing, planning and evaluation, risk management, course files, independent study policy, faculty workload, student records and others.
- Faculty workload and profile: The ERT identified non-compliance issues with respect to faculty teaching loads, which were often above the limits stipulated in the *Standards*. Faculty deployed to teach on major courses within some programs were found to be lacking a terminal degree in the relevant discipline. The ERT also has concerns with the appointment of Heads of Departments at the rank of assistant professor which will not bring the requisite level of experience to this critical role, particularly in curriculum fields that are new to the College portfolio. The LCT faculty profile is heavily skewed towards the lower ranks which will not serve the College's ambition to deliver postgraduate programs or be recognized as a university.

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 LCT.

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 LCT in its desired objective to develop an institution that will achieve its stated mission and vision.