



Executive Summary

Renewal of Licensure American University in the Emirates

November 19-22, 2017

A Re-Licensure Review Team (hereafter RLRT) visited the American University in the Emirates (AUE) from 19 to 22 November 2017 to evaluate the *Self-Study* for Renewal of Licensure (hereafter the *Self-Study*). The exit interview was held on November 22, 2017.

AUE is a private institution of higher education originally licensed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in 2006, with the name American College of the Emirates. In 2008, the institution adopted its current name with the approval of the Commission. The institution received Initial Licensure in 2007, Re-Licensure in 2012 and is applying for Re-Licensure in 2017.

The University has seven faculties: College of Business Administration, College of Media and Mass Communication, College of Fine Arts and Design, College of Law, College of Computer and Information Technology, College of Education, and College of Security and Global Studies. It occupies seven floors in two blocks, in the Dubai International Academic City campus, Dubai. The total number of full-time faculty members is 111, of whom 80 have a doctorate degree (10% have terminal degrees from the USA).

The University offers 35 undergraduate programs and graduate programs at the Masters level; all programs are accredited by the CAA. The current total enrollment is 2279 students, of which 52% are UAE nationals. The largest single program area is in the College of Business Administration (39%) followed by the College Law (26.3%) and the College of Media and Mass Communications (19.4%).

Through its consideration of AUE's *Self-Study* submitted for re-licensure, examination of other documentation, and interactions with faculty, students, alumni and others, the RLRT identified several strengths. These include the following:

- The enthusiastic students who freely expressed their opinions;

- The culturally diverse faculty, students, and staff, who enrich the university environment; and
- The new initiatives to encourage and support research which will ultimately enhance the stature and competitiveness of the university.

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

- Full and Complete Separation between Investors and Institutional Administration. AUE continued to violate Section 1.4.1 of the *Standards*. The *Standards* is clear that owners and investors in an institution do not hold executive positions and are not involved in its day-to-day operations.
- Course Files and Closure of the Continuous Improvement Cycle. None of the course files examined during the visit meets the requirements of Stipulation 7 of the *Standards*. All syllabi for current and prior offerings of the courses contained within the course files are deficient, i.e., do not meet the requirements of Stipulation 5 of the *Standards*. Issues include a lack of correlation between the CLOs and PLOs, and lack of alignment between the assessment tools and CLOs. Additionally, the Instructor Course Evaluations included in the course files are generally perfunctory and do not provide any meaningful or insightful feedback on how future offerings of the courses can be enhanced. The course files show that the course-level continuous improvement cycle is not being implemented or appropriately documented. There is no indication that improvements suggested in prior course offerings, if any, have been evaluated, approved, or implemented. Actions must be taken to ensure that course files meet the requirements of the *Standards*, and that the Continuous Improvement Cycle is closed and appropriately documented.
- Faculty Workload and Qualifications. The workload for many faculty members, including some research-active faculty and administrators, is excessive. While the 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 effectively deliver their courses while engaging in research. Hence, the university's ability to attract and retain research-active faculty will be adversely impacted. Additionally, many faculty members do not have terminal degrees, and some faculty are assigned teaching responsibilities outside their areas of expertise. AUE must ensure that programs have sufficient faculty with appropriate qualifications to effectively deliver the programs while allowing faculty to engage in research and scholarly activities.
- Documentation. As noted above, course syllabi do not meet the requirements of the *Standards* and must be revised. Additionally, while the *Self-Study* report is organized and sufficiently detailed, many analyses required by the Procedural Guidelines for Renewal of Licensure (*PGRL*) have not been performed or included in the documentation. Among others, these include: (1) identification of peer institutions

against which benchmarking is performed; (2) assessment of the university's risk management plan; (3) analysis of the effectiveness and appropriateness of preparatory and remedial programs offered by the university; (4) assessment of the effectiveness of research-related policies; and (5) assessment of the effectiveness of cooperative relationships for research, scholarship, and other creative activity. These analyses and documents must be prepared and submitted to CAA.

- Plagiarism. Actions taken so far to address the plagiarism issue have not been effective in reducing the extent of the problem. None of the 2016-2017 course syllabi reviewed during the visit refers to, or includes a summary of, the university's Policy on plagiarism. Generally, faculty and students are not fully cognizant of the Policy; they must fully understand the Policy and the process, and be able to consistently apply the stipulations. There is a need for expert training and development for both faculty and students in interpretation of the reports from Turnitin. Additionally, enforcement actions to be taken against violators of the Policy must be uniformly and consistently applied.

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 AUE to attain re-licensure.