



Executive Summary
Renewal of Licensure
European University College

March 7 - 11, 2021

An External Review Team (hereafter ERT) formed by the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) has performed an onsite review, with participation of distance international reviewers, of the Self-Study of the Renewal of Institutional Licensure (hereafter the *Self-Study*) of European University College in Dubai (hereafter the EUC) during the period of 7th – 11th of March 2021 as a part of a combined Institutional Licensure - Institutional Audit visit. The exit interview was held on 11th of March 2021.

EUC is a private institution that is owned by its founder (Dr. Nicolas). It has its origins as the Nicolas & Asp Postgraduate Institute which was established in collaboration with Malmö University, Sweden, and received licensure in November 2006. The Master of Science in Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics (MS ODO) is the only currently active program offered by EUC. The program received initial accreditation and was approved in February 2007 although its current name was approved in 2014. The first batch of nine graduated in 2010. Initial accreditation of a master's degree and postgraduate diploma in oral implantology followed in October 2007 with graduation of the first batch in 2008.

In February 2008, there was a name change from Nicolas & Asp Postgraduate Institute to Nicolas & Asp College of Postgraduate Dentistry. In August 2009, the name changed from College of Postgraduate Dentistry to the Nicolas and Asp University College. A master's degree program in pediatric dentistry, another in endodontics, and a two-year advanced education in general dentistry diploma program received initial accreditation in 2010. In 2011, the College was renamed again to European University College and the, then titled, Master of Science in Orthodontics was re-accredited. In 2012 an Associate Degree in Dental Assisting received initial accreditation.

In more recent times, EUC has reduced its portfolio of programs in response to decreased sponsorship of students by government agencies, and competition resulting other postgraduate dental school located in Healthcare City, Dubai. The Oral Implantology program became inactive in 2011, the Advanced Education in General Dentistry Diploma program in 2016, the Pediatric Dentistry program in 2017, and the Endodontics program in 2018. As of March 2018, the Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics program is the only master's program offered by EUC. Admission of students to this program was changed from annual to biennial in 2016.

At the time of the visit in March 2021, EUC has an enrolment of 25 students in the MS ODO program, in addition to a new batch of 4 newly admitted students who are expected to start their studies soon. The current orthodontics faculty is composed of 4 full-time members, one of whom started employment in the first day of the visit. The College has other staff, some of which serve the student and private clinics.

Through its consideration of EUC's *Self-Study* submitted for Renewal of Licensure, examination of other documentation, and interaction with faculty, students, and others, the ERT identified the following:

- The bond between EUC's students and alumni is strong where the learning experience of students and the continued support offered to former students indicates a caring and compassionate organization striving to support the needs of learners. The connection between clinical opportunities and academic learning are well established and the connections to Malmö University, as well as local library facilities, ensures students are adequately supported for academic resources.
- The ERT is concerned over the blurred boundaries between ownership and control, particularly in relation to the inputs into academic decision making by BoT members who sit on academic committees of the College. The physical proximity of the Nicolas & Asp private clinic which sits within the operational confines of the College, means a congested physical space where there is an intermingling of commercial enterprise and academic learning. This prohibits the sense that EUC is a fully fledged academic institution. There is very little scope for expansion which the ERT consider a critical constraint on the programs EUC intends to re-launch or seek approval for.
- In teaching and learning there are some good practices demonstrating compliance with international standards. The ERT do however have concerns over the absence of appropriate assessment rubrics and the lack of international and national comparability in the thesis element of the master's program.
- Another major constraint is the significant dependency on the Dean whose workload is excessive by any international comparison. This also places the institution at significant strategic risk because of the Dean's high reputational profile and lack of institutional planning around faculty succession planning. Although there is sufficient faculty to serve the single operational program with small numbers of students, the supervision of theses is already stretched and not helped by appointing recent EUC graduates to become faculty members and an over-reliance on part-time faculty.
- Research remains mostly focused upon the outputs of a very small number of faculty and on the conversion of theses into published articles. The absence of a clear strategic plan for research and a minimalist budget that is rarely used, indicates a lack of strategic direction for research. This is a significant problem for a graduate level institution. This is likely to be compounded further in the future under more stringent expectations of the 2019 *Standards*.
- Much of the future financial success of EUC is predicated on a budgetary projection that is best considered optimistic. The College would be unable to service many of its planned master's degree programs based on its existing faculty and their qualifications. There is thus significant risk that the College could be unable to maintain its status based on its single operational program. In much the same way, although the College has strong and well-established links with Malmö University, any disruption in that relationship combined with its lack of international accreditations leaves the College strategically vulnerable.

- Finally, the documentary control procedures at EUC were sometimes poor with multiple variations in some documents, including those with the names of EUC's former iterations. This made the review task unnecessarily complex.

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