



Executive Summary
Renewal of Licensure
Al Dar University College

September 14-17, 2014

An External Review Team (hereafter ERT) visited Al Dar University College (ADUC), previously the Computer College (CC), from 14 to 17 of September 2014 to evaluate the Application for Renewal of Licensure (hereafter the *Self-Study*). The exit interview was held on September 17, 2014.

Founded in 1993, ADUC has historically offered diplomas and associate degrees. With a history of offering morning, evening, and weekend classes, ADUC has catered to students who work part or full-time while also attending College. Prior to the introduction of Bachelor programs, the preponderance of the faculty was credentialed at the master's level. ADUC offers a significant array of non-credit executive education programs.

Last year, ADUC moved to a new four floor premises in Al Garhoud with a total area of 65,000 square feet. ADUC enrolled its first-degree students in 2009. In August 2013, the College inaugurated its first Bachelor programs. The College offers three Associate Diploma and two Bachelor programs, in addition to a new program in Mass Communication (in Arabic) at the Bachelor level that is launched in fall 2014. In April 2014, an external review team evaluate the College's Application for Initial Accreditation for MBA with concentration in HRM and Marketing. The spring 2014 enrollment for AUDC is 931, of which 61% are Emirati. The total number of faculty members in the College during spring 2014 is 20, of which 12 are with non-terminal degree holders.

The College was first licensed by the Commission in 2001 with a subsequent re-licensure in 2009 followed by the current Application for Re-Licensure. The Application for Re-Licensure was reviewed in two stages with a document review performed by an external reviewer and an onsite review team visiting the campus in the first week of fall of 2014.

Through its consideration of ADUC's *Self-Study* in support of its Re-Licensure Application, examination of other documentation, and interactions with senior leadership personnel, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and others, the ERT identified several strengths in the current Application. These include the following:

- The availability of space to provide ample room for significant growth and expansion of existing and new programs;

- The College’s ambitious plans to expand its program offerings and re-brand itself to meet the needs of the higher education market; and
- The well-established Executive Education program which expands the reach of the College within the professional community and enhances its reputation and the opportunities for its graduates.

Matters which need addressing to bring ADUC in full compliance with the *Standards* can be grouped into five thematic areas:

1. Student-Related Issues. There are three primary issues in this group.

- Students must meet all the admission criteria, including English proficiency, before they are allowed to enroll in their respective programs. The ERT examined a large, randomly selected, sample of student files. In the majority of cases, there was no evidence that the students had successfully met the required English language proficiency level before being allowed to enroll in their respective programs. This was confirmed through interviews with current and former students – satisfactory completion of the English proficiency requirement is, in some cases, viewed as a “graduation requirement” rather than an “admission requirement.” This is a serious violation of the *Standards* and the College’s own policies. Therefore, the ERT require that ADUC review each and every student file and document the date of first registration, the date when the English language requirements were successfully met, and a list of courses in their academic program, if any, which were taken before the English proficiency requirement was met. This information must be submitted to CAA as a part of ADUC’s response to this review.
- The second student-related issue pertains to the wide-spread practice of plagiarism. The ERT reviewed eight reports submitted by students as final reports on their internships as well as three reports from the Software Project course (CSC 251). All eleven reports contained plagiarized material; the majority of which were very substantial (namely, continuous pages of material copied from internet sources). This is a very serious Academic Integrity problem that must be addressed through in-service training of all faculty; remedial education on academic integrity for all students; embedding of academic integrity education within the general education portion of all programs; and within the orientation program for all incoming students.
- The third student-related issue pertains to student records. The ERT examined the hard copy student files maintained by the registrar and was dismayed to find that many of them are stored in ordinary (rather than fire-proof) file cabinets. In some cases, the files were difficult to locate. Many of the files inspected were disorganized and not up to date, i.e. they had not been updated at the end of each semester as procedurally required. Given the apprehension regarding the current state of IT infrastructure, the ERT is also concerned regarding the security of electronic student records. ADUC need to assure the security of all official and original student records as required by the *Standards*.

2. Faculty-Related Issues. There are two primary issues in this group:

- Faculty Workloads which in many cases are well above the limits specified by the *Standards*. It is important to recognize that while faculty are compensated for overloads, the limits specified by the *Standards* do not depend on whether the faculty are or are not compensated for overloads. The limits were established to make sure that faculty can effectively deliver the courses they teach and still have the time to do the other things they are required to do such as research.
- The second faculty-related issue pertains to Faculty Qualifications -- a large fraction of the current faculty does not have terminal degrees. The *Standards* require faculty who teach in baccalaureate and graduate degree programs to have terminal degrees. The *Standards* also require faculty who teach in Associate Degree programs offered in conjunction with baccalaureate degrees to have terminal degrees. The College must expand the size of its faculty and reduce the fraction of faculty without a terminal degree to less than 10% as required by Stipulation 8 of the *Standards*. The current student-faculty ratio is excessive and well beyond international norms.

3. Curriculum-Related Issues. There are three main issues in this group.

- The first curriculum-related issue pertains to Substantive Changes in the Associate Degrees' curricula which were not submitted for prior approval by CAA. A large set of courses in the ACS program are now treated as equivalent to a different set of courses in the BIT program. In some cases, the courses are identical, but most of them are different, i.e. have different syllabi and learning outcomes. For example, MAT 101 "*Discrete Mathematics*" which is required by the ACS Program and BIT 103 "*Mathematics and Statistics for IT*" which is required by the BIT program are treated as equivalent and were, in fact, simultaneously taught as BIT 103 during the Spring 2013-2014 semester. The rationale behind this is that the BIT program has been designed to provide an exit route leading to an Associate level qualification after two years. However, replacement of the current, CAA-approved, ACS Program curriculum by courses from the BIT Program leads to significant problems. First, students in the current ACS program will have misleading transcripts – their transcript will say that they have completed a course in discrete mathematics, when they actually studied a syllabus covering statistics. More important, the decision to deliver the "equivalent" BIT courses rather than the "actual" ACS courses has substantially changed the ACS curriculum – a substantive change that was not submitted to, or approved by, CAA. A similar situation exists with regard to the ABA Program and the BBA Program. ADUC is required to prepare and submit to CAA detailed applications for Substantive Changes in its affected Associate Degree Programs.
- The second curriculum-related issue pertains to Course Delivery. Examination of the teaching loads of individual faculty showed that in some cases, faculty members were assigned to simultaneously teach courses with different course numbers, titles, and content. Examples include: BUS 207 *Information Systems in Business* being taught with BUS 210 *Management Information Systems* and BUS 106 *Principles of Economics* being taught with ECON 204 *Macroeconomics*. These courses were treated as equivalent. It is understood that in other cases, the courses being simultaneously taught differ only in number, e.g., BIT 101 *Computer Applications*; CSC 111 *PC Operations and Applications*; and CST 110 also entitled *PC Operation and Applications*. Nevertheless, ADUC must demonstrate that simultaneous offering

of differently numbered courses is done, if and only if, the contents and syllabi of the courses are identical.

- The third curriculum-related issue pertains to the General Education requirements. Concerns include: consistency of requirements within a program; ensuring that prerequisites are correct and achievable; consistency between programs at the same level; clarifying the relationship between essentially the same courses at two different program levels; ensuring that the requirements for Associate degree programs cover all areas required by the *Standards*; clarifying the relationship between the general education requirements at the Associate and Baccalaureate degree levels; establishing separate general education program-level outcomes and relating the courses to such outcomes; and, finally, demonstrating that the general education requirements meet the appropriate level within *QFEmirates*. ADUC is required to review and, if necessary, revise the General Education requirements for all its programs.
4. Issues Related to Continuous Quality Enhancement. The specific concern here deals with closing the loop for the course level and program level evaluations. There is no evidence that the quality improvement cycle is being closed at either the course level, or at the program level. Issues are not systematically identified, recommended improvements are not documented and acted upon, and follow-up evaluations are not performed to demonstrate issue resolution and performance improvement. The ERT has learned that the periodic four-year reviews for the Associate Degree programs were not performed because ADUC was overloaded with work arising from the launch of the Bachelor programs.
 5. Documentation-Related issues. Our review has revealed numerous errors and inconsistencies in many ADUC documents. Examples include out-of-date organizational charts with the wrong titles and reporting relationships; listings of senior administrative personnel roles and responsibilities that do not match reality; errors in committee membership listings; variations and inconsistencies in the names of the three Schools; the minimum number of Board of Directors meetings per year (some documents say three, while others say four); the length of faculty contracts (some documents say two years, while others say three), etc. These errors and inconsistencies have propagated into many documents, including the *Policies and Procedures Manual*, the *Faculty Handbook* and the *Staff Handbook*. ADUC is required to review all its documents and revise them as necessary to assure their accuracy and consistency.

The ERT 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 ADUC in its desired objective to be granted Re-Licensure.