e—LEARNING STANDARDS FOR LICENSURE AND ACCREDITATION

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Commission for Academic Accreditation
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
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Preface

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The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research takes very seriously its responsibility to assure the quality of all higher education opportunities available to students in the United Arab Emirates whether they study on-campus or on-line. *e*-learning courses and programs have an expanded role in higher education and a new significance. They provide new opportunities for students in a world in which education now knows no borders.

I am therefore pleased to introduce these *e-Learning Standards for Licensure and Accreditation* that have been developed by the Commission for Academic Accreditation. These standards broaden the scope of accreditation and quality assurance to include the latest technologies and forms of distance delivery of higher education programs. In establishing these *Standards*, we hope to provide students in the United Arab Emirates the opportunity to earn credits and degrees through *e*-learning programs with the assurance that they are of a level of quality equivalent to that established for more traditional forms of learning. The same high expectations for faculty, curriculum, learning resources, integrity, and support for students that we expect from on campus programs are reflected in these *Standards*.

By providing *Standards* for *e*-learning, we recognize the importance of ensuring access to high quality education regardless of how it is delivered. We also recognize that through *e*-learning students in the United Arab Emirates have expanded the possibilities for learning and interacting with students from around the world. Students who are successful in *e*-learning programs of recognized quality demonstrate their motivation and independence as learners, learn how to interact with faculty and peers in a virtual environment, and strengthen their skills of accessing, evaluating, and using information through technology. These are important skills for many endeavors.

Through fair and universal application of these *Standards*, the United Arab Emirates ensures that its colleges and universities deliver instructional programs that match internationally recognized standards of content and quality, now through *e*-learning as well as in more traditional formats. Students, graduates, families, and employers can be confident that licensed institutions and accredited programs deliver the high quality of education that they expect and deserve.

Nahayan Mabarak Al Nahayan
Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research

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Introduction

In the United Arab Emirates the authority to license non-national educational institutions to grant degrees and other academic awards and to accredit their programs rests with the U.A.E. Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (the Ministry). Any institution located in the U.A.E. that provides regular, theoretical, practical, or applied curricula of one academic year or longer beyond the U.A.E. Secondary School Certification (or the equivalent) and that leads to an academic degree, certificate, or diploma, must be licensed and have its programs accredited in order to be officially recognized by the Ministry[1]. Within the Ministry the Commission for Academic Accreditation (the Commission) is responsible for these quality assurance processes. The standards that guide these processes and the criteria that institutions **must** meet are specified in this Commission publication available both in print and on the Commission's website, http://www.caa.ae/

The standards, policies, and procedures adopted by the Ministry to establish and operate institutions of higher education and to accredit academic programs are designed to promote high quality institutions and to assure prospective students, their families, and other interested parties that licensed institutions meet standards of quality consistent with current international practice and professional judgment. Licensed institutions demonstrate that they adhere to standards of performance covering all aspects of academic life, follow principles of continuous improvement, and provide evidence of student learning.

Licensure applies to the entire institution and all its activities. In order to be licensed, the institution must meet ten standards and their criteria that cover all major institutional activities. The licensure requirements and the *Standards* specify a number of documents for institutions to develop and keep current for various audiences. These documents and the requirements for their content are described in Appendix A: *Required Documents.*

Only after being granted *licensure* may an institution apply for *accreditation* for an academic program, which must be obtained before the institution may advertise that program and recruit and enroll students. Criteria for each of the ten standards determine whether the institution fulfills that standards, and each criterion must be met to achieve licensure. The first of these standards, *Mission and Institutional Effectiveness*, relates to all other standards and is at the heart of the Commission's determination to assure and enhance high quality and the Ministry's award of licensure.

Licensure signifies that the institution has a mission appropriate to higher education and possesses the governance structure, by-laws, regulations, policies and procedures, physical and financial resources, academic programs, faculty and other personnel, and quality assurance measures sufficient to accomplish its mission. Licensure is initially granted for up to five years, after which the institution applies to renew its license, which must be done every five years. A licensed institution is required to identify its status as *licensed* or *recognized* by the Ministry in all documents and advertising and to comply with the Commission's requirement for reporting data annually.

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[1] One academic year applies to any combination of programs (diplomas, certificates, or courses) of any duration, if they yield the equivalent of a program of one academic year or longer.

Institutional Licensure

Institutional Licensure

Applying for Licensure

Any institution seeking initial licensure must follow these steps in order:

1. Meet with a member of the staff of the Commission to review the procedures and requirements for licensure and to assess the readiness of the institution to submit a formal application. Applicants should bring a completed "Application for Initial Licensure" form and a statement of the mission of the proposed institution to the initial meeting.
2. Apply for and obtain the approval of the relevant authority in the Emirate in which the institution is to be located, such as, for example, an Education Council.
3. Submit all required documents as described below. The Commission expects the documents that support the application to be both original and the product of those intimately involved with the institution.
4. Review the documents with a Commission staff member and an external consultant, if deemed necessary by the Commission, at one or more licensure review conferences scheduled by the Commission.
5. Submit any additional or revised documents as required by the Commission.
6. Arrange one or more on-site inspections of the temporary and/or permanent facilities for the proposed institution and a meeting with the architect, if requested.
7. Respect stated deadlines. The Commission reviews completed, accepted applications submitted by November 1 during the following spring semester; those submitted by May 1, during the following fall semester.
8. Support any visits the Commission considers necessary of commissioners or external consultants. The institution is responsible for the costs associated with such visits.
9. Pay the fees associated with licensure.

Licensure does not imply the *accreditation* of any programs. Accreditation is a separate process; each academic program must be accredited before the institution may admit students to it or offer its curriculum.

Incomplete applications or applications without the required documentation will be returned without comment by the Commission.

Initial Licensure

When applicants propose a new institution or seek licensure for an existing unlicensed institution, they submit to the Commission four copies of the "Application for Initial Licensure" form and each of the documents listed below, which must cover the topics indicated in Appendix A: *Required Documents.* The Commission considers only one campus of a proposed multi-campus institution at a time and requires a period of at least one year between the openings of two separate locations. Institutions considering offering *e*-learning courses or programs should specifically address how these fit into the institution's mission, organization, and academic programs. Documents to submit include:

1. a feasibility study, including a statement of financial resources;
2. a financial guarantee;
3. site approval and architectural plan;
4. a timed action plan;
5. an organization chart;
6. a policies and procedures manual comprising all institutional policies;
7. an institutional effectiveness manual;
8. the catalog;
9. student handbook;
10. faculty/staff handbook.

After reviewing the application, the Commission makes a recommendation to the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research (the Minister) who decides whether to approve or deny the application.

Approved: Licensure is granted for up to five years and the institution is permitted to offer accredited programs in the U.A.E. If the institution fails to offer programs and enroll students within two years of obtaining licensure, the Commission will revoke its license. The institution may receive unscheduled visits from the staff of the Commission to ensure that it continues to meet the requirements of the *Standards.* Failure to do so may result in loss of licensure, as determined by the Minister.

Denied: The institution is denied licensure. Those seeking licensure may not resubmit an application under the same institutional name or another name for at least one year from the date of the official letter of denial.

Renewing Licensure

Licensure is not renewed automatically. Licensed institutions must maintain the accreditation of all programs, continue to meet the *Standards* for licensure, comply with all reporting requirements of the Commission, and monitor the deadline to apply for renewal. A year before the end of the period of licensure, the institution applies for its renewal. The Self-Study Report and documentation described below demonstrate that the institution meets each *Standard* by fulfilling its criteria.

The applicant must submit to the Commission:
1. A letter from the chief executive officer or chair of the board requesting renewal of its licensure and verifying that the institution has maintained accreditation of its academic degree programs.
2. Four copies of a Self-Study Report and the accompanying documents listed in the Self-Study *Guidelines.*

After reviewing the report and documents, the Commission either accepts the application or returns it for additional information. If the application is accepted, the Commission schedules one or more meetings with representatives of the institution and on-site campus visits. The application review may involve the use of external consultant, if deemed necessary by the Commission. The institution is responsible for the cost of the review and the on-site visit. When these steps are complete, the Commission makes a recommendation to the Minister who decides whether to approve, delay, or deny licensure or to place the institution on probation.

Approved: Licensure is granted for up to seven years and authorizes an institution to continue to offer accredited programs in the U.A.E. The institution may receive unscheduled visits from the staff of the Commission to ensure that it continues to meet the requirements of the *Standards*. Failure to do so may result in loss of licensure, as determined by the Minister.

Delayed: The decision concerning licensure is delayed until the institution rectifies a problem, provides additional information, or resolves an issue. If the institution fails to satisfy the Commission's requirements within six months following notification, it will either be placed on probation or denied licensure.

Probation: An institution placed on probation must correct any deficiencies noted to the satisfaction of the Commission within a specified period of time. Should the deficiency warrant it, the institution may not be permitted to admit students to its programs. At the end of the probationary period, the Commission makes a recommendation to the Minister, which may result in the denial of licensure or approval for licensure renewal.

Denied: The institution denied licensure has its license revoked. It stops admitting students to any of its programs, stops offering its programs within a period of time specified by the Commission, and informs its students that its licensure has been denied. The institution must guide its students in gaining admission to other recognized institutions of higher education. Funds held as a financial guarantee will be used to assist students in completing their educational programs and to meet other institutional obligations.

e-Learning Standards
Introduction

The term *e*-learning includes the forms of instruction that use electronic technologies and in which the faculty and students are separated geographically. Such instruction might also be called "distance education," "on-line degree programs," "web-based instruction," or other terms.

Although *e*-Learning is not a unique form of higher education with distinct, fixed boundaries and uniform characteristics, it does have some basic features and special challenges that need to be addressed through criteria specific to it. The Commission requires that *e*-learning programs and courses be consistent with the institutional mission, governed by the normal institutional policies and procedures, designed and offered by faculty members who have the appropriate credentials and training, provide students with the support and consistency of offerings to allow for program completion, have learning outcomes and requirements consistent with on-campus offerings, and, like any other program or course, receive appropriate administrative oversight and budget support.

The Commission recognizes that the continuing development of *e*-learning and its worldwide acceptance depend upon rigorous quality assurance and diverse ways of ensuring comparability in learning outcomes with an on-campus experience. The criteria for *e*-learning included in these *Standards* address the expected standards for quality assurance by institutions of higher education in the U.A.E. that provide programs of study, courses, or modules by means of *e*-learning, whether in the U.A.E. or internationally.

Standards and Criteria
1. Mission and Institutional Effectiveness

The institution has a distinct and clearly articulated mission that is appropriate to an institution of higher education, focused upon its identity, its educational and other goals, and the students and communities it wishes to serve. The mission serves to distinguish the institution and aids in planning and resource allocation. The institution delivers academic programs and courses; it pursues other activities, such as service, research, and scholarship; it operates relevant academic, student, and administrative services. All these are consistent with the institution's mission.

The institution demonstrates institutional effectiveness. Systematically evaluating its academic programs and courses and its academic, student, and administrative services on the basis of evidence, the institution uses the results of that evaluation in planning, budgeting, establishing priorities, and improving its academic programs and services. The institution employs appropriate methods to assess its outcomes and objectives periodically and evaluates them on the basis of the evidence obtained; it can demonstrate how evidence-based planning has led to improvements in programs and services, to new programs and services, and to more effective use of resources.

Criteria

1.1   Mission. The institution:

   1.1.1 has a *mission statement* that:

      1.1.1.1 describes accurately and truthfully the institution, its distinguishing characteristics, the students and other stakeholders it seeks to serve, and its relationship to the wider community;

      1.1.1.2 is approved by the governing body (see *Standard* 2);

      1.1.1.3 is periodically re-evaluated to assess its currency and its usefulness in providing overall institutional direction;

      1.1.1.4 provides overall direction to institutional planning;

      1.1.1.5 is widely understood by the institution's constituencies;

   1.1.2 has *institutional goals* and *institutional objectives*; the objectives derive from the goals and are measurable;

   1.1.3 includes its mission (mission statement, institutional goals and institutional objectives) in appropriate publications.

1.2   Policies, Procedures and Documentation. The institution maintains a *Policies and Procedures Manual* that contains *all* the policies and procedures of the institution and meets specific Commission requirements as specified in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual*. The *Manual* includes all policies and procedures that concern its mission and institutional effectiveness. The institution implements these policies and procedures.

1.3   Institutional Effectiveness Manual. The institution maintains an *Institutional Effectiveness Manual* as specified in Appendix A: *Institutional Effectiveness Manual*. The *Manual* describes the institutional research unit and the program of institutional research and institutional planning, meeting the Commission's requirements. The institution implements the program of institutional research, evaluation, assessment, and planning activities that the *Manual* describes.

1.4   Institutional Effectiveness. The institution demonstrates institutional effectiveness—the interaction between *institutional research* and *institutional planning*—and has:

   1.4.1   service goals, service objectives, policies, and procedures for each of its academic, student, and administrative support units; the objectives derive from the goals and are measurable;

   1.4.2   program goals and program outcomes for each of its academic programs; the outcomes derive from the goals, are measurable, and are linked with the outcomes of the courses comprising the program;

   1.4.3   learning outcomes for each of its academic courses; the outcomes of each course are measurable and contribute to the outcomes of each program to which they contribute.

1.5   Institutional Research. The institution has:

   1.5.1   a well-designed *program of institutional research*. The research includes a variety of assessment tools to generate evidence and then evaluates that evidence to determine the extent to which:

    1.5.1.1 the objectives of each of the institution's academic, student, and administrative services are being met;

    1.5.1.2 the outcomes of each academic program are being met; the institution uses evidence that the outcomes of relevant courses are met together with evidence from other sources; it evaluates the effectiveness of those programs on the basis of that evidence;

    1.5.1.3 the outcomes of each academic course are being met; the institution uses evidence that students achieve these outcomes together with evidence from other sources; it evaluates the effectiveness of each academic course and the extent to which it contributes to the outcomes of the program(s) within which it appears.

1.5.2 an *institutional research unit* that is responsible for implementing the program of institutional research and that receives the necessary human and fiscal resources to realize its program of institutional research;

1.5.3 a mechanism to review the institutional research unit and its program of institutional research;

1.5.4 an *e*-learning strategy, programs, and courses that reflect:
- appropriate levels of resources available to students;
- the selection of technology to support the achievement of course learning outcomes;
- specific academic guidelines for *e*-learning programs and courses;
- appropriate interaction between faculty and students and among students;
- specific provisions for advising, admission, registration, and all other student services that are Required to support *e*-learning;
- specific provisions for library services, information technologies, and other academic services that are required to support *e*-learning;
- adequate technical support for students and faculty members, including software application training, technical advice, access to necessary equipment and software;

1.5.5 policies and procedures for evaluating and reviewing *e*-learning courses offered by other institutions if they are included as part of a program.

1.6 Institutional Planning. The institution:

1.6.1 has and updates both short-term plans and a longer-term strategic plan, which are mission-driven, periodically reviews those plans, and documents its planning policies and processes;

1.6.2 takes risk management into account in planning;

1.6.3 ensures that the results of institutional research are used to guide planning and resource allocation and to modify and improve resources, programs, and services;

1.6.4 involves its stakeholders, advisory panels, and international practitioners in its planning, where appropriate;

1.6.5 successfully executes its plans and realizes its mission.

1.7 The *e*-learning strategy. The *e*-learning strategy:

1.7.l reflects new technological advances;

1.7.2 is driven by the principles of open access, flexibility, and self-directed learning;

1.7.3   is reviewed on a regular basis.

2. Organization, Governance, and Leadership

The institution has a system of governance that facilitates the accomplishment of its mission, furthers institutional effectiveness, and clearly distinguishes the authority, roles, and responsibilities of its governing body (the *board*) and the chief academic and administrative officers and the relationship between the board and the administration.

The institution's board has the final responsibility for, and control over, the institution. The board organizes and governs itself in accordance with a set of by-laws. The by-laws provide specific regulation of membership and responsibilities. Effective leadership is established at all levels of the institution.

Criteria

2.1   Policies, Procedures, and Documentation. The *Policies and Procedures Manual* includes *all* the policies and procedures of the institution that concern organization, governance, and leadership and meet the Commission's requirements as specified in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual*. The institution implements these policies.

2.2   Organization Chart. The organization of the institution
    2.2.1   demonstrably reflects and supports its mission, facilitates its effective and efficient operation, and ensures effective leadership at all levels;
    2.2.2   is expressed in an *organization chart* that clearly delineates lines of authority and institutional relationships, and is published in appropriate documents;
    2.2.3   identifies the responsibility for the development, oversight, evaluation, and support of *e*-learning programs.

2.3   By-Laws. The board is subject to and operated according to by-laws; the by-laws are in line with the requirements specified in Appendix A: *By-Laws*; these meet the Commission's requirements.

2.4   Catalog. The institution maintains a *Catalog* that includes all the material specified in Appendix A: *Catalog*; this material is consistent with all other institutional documentation at the time of publication; the *Catalog* is considered to be a contract between the institution and its students.

2.5   The Board.
    2.5.1   The board includes representatives of the community, the majority of whom have no investment in the institution.
    2.5.2   The education and experience of board members, administrators, staff, and faculty members are appropriate to establish and maintain educational programs of a quality consistent with the institution's mission.
    2.5.3   Neither the board members nor the owner(s) are involved in the institution's day-to-day operation.
    2.5.4   The roles, functions, and membership of the board and of the administration and faculty are

sufficiently distinct to ensure appropriate separation and independence of board, administration, and faculty. Institutional policies note these distinctions.

2.5.5   The board appoints the chief executive officer of the institution and provides direction for the institution in terms of its mission and general policies, but delegates to the chief executive officer the responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the institution.

2.5.6   The board regularly evaluates its own effectiveness and the effectiveness of individual members.

2.6   Institutional Governance.

2.6.1   The chief academic administrator is qualified by an appropriate level of academic preparation and experience to direct the academic affairs of the institution.

2.6.2   Administrative officers possess the credentials, experience, and demonstrated competence appropriate to their areas of responsibility.

2.6.3   Academic officers hold appropriate credentials and are qualified for appointments at faculty rank.

2.6.4   An academic administrator is responsible for the overall oversight of *e*-learning programs and courses, including facilitating instructional and technical support, assuring the availability of the required information technologies and related support services, assuring the quality and comparability of programs and courses, marketing, legal compliance (including adherence to copyright law), and any contracts for outsourced materials or services.

2.6.5   Faculty members have sufficient opportunity to participate in governance.

2.6.6   All administrators, and academic officers, including the chief executive officer, are annually evaluated.

2.7   Multiple Campus Institutions. The governance structure, faculty and other personnel, facilities, services, and academic programs of multiple campus institutions ensure that students attending any campus receive an equivalent educational experience and achieve the same learning outcomes. Institutional policies ensure appropriate coordination among different campuses of the institution.

3. The Academic Program

The programs and courses offered by the institution are appropriate to its mission. International academic *Standards* are reflected in program design and composition, in teaching and instruction, and in the assessment of student achievement. The institution demonstrates that academic programs are assessed and continuously improved and that students meet the outcomes of its programs and courses.

Criteria

3.1   Policies, Procedures and Documentation. The institution maintains a *Policies and Procedures Manual* that includes *all* the policies and procedures of the institution that concern the academic program and meets the Commission's requirements, as specified in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual.* The institution implements these policies.

3.2   Credit-bearing Programs. The following characterize the institution's credit-bearing academic programs, whether degree, diploma, or certificate and whether on-campus or by *e*-learning.

3.2.1   The institution thoroughly assesses the need for any new program, determining job market analysis, competition in the sector, potential student interest, resource requirements, and financial implications.

3.2.2   Degrees are described in standard academic terms (see Appendix D: *Glossary of Terms*).

3.2.3   Credits are based on an expectation of a minimum of 15 hours of instruction time and 30 hours of out-of-class assignments for each course credit.

3.2.4   Each academic program has well-articulated goals and outcomes; the outcomes are derived from given goals and are defined in measurable terms; all program goals and outcomes are accurately described in appropriate publications.

3.3   The Curricula. Curricula:

3.3.1   comprise an appropriate sequence and mix of courses (such as major, general education, and electives; introductory and advanced with prerequisites);

3.3.2   include a number of credit hours consistent with international practice in the discipline and level of award;

3.3.3   are up-to-date in terms of content and practice;

3.3.4   are clearly described and published in the catalog and other relevant publications;

3.3.5   comprise a defined amount and quality of work of sufficient rigor.

3.4   Academic Courses. The institution:

3.4.1   employs instructional methodologies that are supported by appropriate technology and instructional tools and are appropriate to the subject being taught;

3.4.2   involves students actively in their own learning;

3.4.3   provides learning outcomes for each course that are:
- consistent with the institution's mission;
- consistent with current international *Standards* in the discipline and level of award;

- align with, and demonstrably meet, the program outcomes of every program in which the course appears;

3.4.4 uses a variety of appropriate assessment tools to ensure that students meet the specified learning outcomes;

3.4.5 prepares detailed syllabi for all courses, including those matters described in Appendix A: *Syllabus Guidelines*;

3.4.6 includes sufficient time for preparation, reflection, analysis and the achievement of learning outcomes for courses that are offered in concentrated time periods;

3.4.7 includes methods for monitoring and authenticating student work.

3.5 General Education. Institutions clearly define the learning outcomes for their general education program and demonstrate that the graduates of all undergraduate degree and diploma programs have attained:

3.5.1 measurable, effective skills in all areas of the English language, in mathematics, and in the use of computers;

3.5.2 knowledge and competency equivalent to completing one or more college-level courses in the areas of:

- Islamic studies, history, or culture;
- humanities or arts;
- English, Arabic, or other languages;
- natural or physical sciences;
- social or behavioral sciences.

3.6 Internship. The institution recognizes that an internship or practicum is a standard part of the curriculum in disciplines such as teaching, engineering, health sciences, and other applied fields. Any practicum or internship adheres to Appendix C: *Guidelines for Good Practice in Internships*.

3.7 Information Literacy. The institution ensures that its graduates have acquired sufficient knowledge of information technology and are competent in using technology to access, evaluate, organize, and communicate information.

3.8 Advising Services.

3.8.1 The institution provides new students at all degree levels with an appropriate orientation program and all students with an effective system of academic advising that is regularly evaluated.

3.8.2 Faculty members are properly prepared to advise student regarding career development, current employment opportunities in the field, student academic advancement, the curriculum, and, if relevant, the appropriate mentoring of graduate students.

3.8.3 Advisors have ready access to student records, and are responsible for a number of advisees that is commensurate with effective advising and their other responsibilities.

3.9 Preparatory or Remedial Courses and Programs. The institution:

3.9.1 may offer non-credit preparatory or remedial courses or programs to students who lack a sufficient academic background either for post-secondary work in one or more academic areas (such as English or mathematics) or for a graduate program (such as business courses for an MBA);

3.9.2 ensures that its preparatory program of courses has measurable learning outcomes that students achieve before enrolling full-time in credit-bearing courses;

3.9.3 permits enrollment in a preparatory program for a limited, specified period of time, after which students are either fully admitted or leave the institution;

3.9.4 allows no more than 15 credits of course work taken for credit while in a preparatory program towards an undergraduate degree.

3.10 Graduate Programs. The institution recognizes that graduate programs meet additional criteria.

3.10.1 The Institution. The institution offers graduate programs related to its mission; it:

3.10.1.1 demonstrates its capacity to offer graduate programs by having in place an appropriately qualified faculty, a research agenda, suitable workload and other policies and procedures, appropriate facilities, and library and other information resources, and sufficient financial support;

3.10.1.2 delegates the appropriate authority to the graduate faculty to develop the curriculum and determine degree and completion requirements;

3.10.1.3 includes graduate programs in its system of institutional research, differentiating measures of success from undergraduate programs and between master's and doctoral-level programs.

3.10.2 The Programs. The institution's graduate and professional programs:

3.10.2.1 meet international standards of content and mastery for post-baccalaureate academic work;

3.10.2.2 emphasize the development of high levels of competence in research and scholarship appropriate to the field and program level;

3.10.2.3 have a higher level of expectation for student learning from undergraduate programs;

3.10.2.4 if providing professional training, relate to current practice, to relevant licensing requirements, and to generally accepted academic standards;

3.10.2.5 include course content, credit hours, research, and a thesis or practice requirement that is appropriate to the level of the degree awarded;

3.10.2.6 require the equivalent of at least one year of full-time graduate study, if leading to a master's degree or higher diploma (or equivalent);

3.10.2.7 include at least one year of taught course work beyond the master's level, research skills and methodology, and a period for independent research or a major project, as appropriate to the field, if leading to a doctoral degree.

3.11   Continuing Education and Outreach.

3.11.1 The institution maintains appropriate control and oversight over all of its academic offerings, credit and non-credit, on-campus or off, and ensures that all programs meet their stated outcomes.

3.11.2 The institution ensures that credit-bearing courses offered in continuing education programs are not also taken as part of its accredited programs.

3.11.3 Any courses or program of studies taken on a non-credit basis may not later be awarded academic credit.

3.12   Program Effectiveness. All courses, programs, and instruction are regularly assessed in a variety of ways according to the institution's program of institutional research with the results analyzed to show that students meet the specified outcomes; the institution demonstrates that such evidence is used for course and program improvement, and for institutional planning.

3.13   e-Learning Programs and Courses. *e*-Learning programs and courses are consistent with the institution's role and mission in their organization, purposes, students served, and content.

3.13.1 Decisions concerning *e*-learning curricula and program oversight involve faculty qualified both academically and technically in *e*-learning skills.

3.13.2 Courses delivered both on campus and by *e*-learning require the equivalent amount and quality of work from students and lead to the same learning outcomes and credits.

3.13.3 The institution publishes a degree or study plan that illustrates how a student may access all courses required to complete the program and the time necessary to do so; any requirements that are not included in the *e*-learning program are clearly described.

3.13.4 The design of the program and the courses facilitates interaction (in real time or delayed) between faculty and students and among students.

3.13.5 The number of students assigned to any one *e*-learning course allows for the effective participation of all students and interaction between faculty and students and among students.

3.13.6 If an internship is part of the program's requirements, the institution develops and implements procedures in line with Appendix C: *Guidelines for Good Practice in Internships*, procedures that accommodate the *e*-learning student and insure the effectiveness of the internship, its supervision, and its evaluation.

3.13.7 The institution assures the integrity of student work in the *e*-learning environment; it demonstrates steps taken to limit the possibility of fraud and abuse, including residence requirements and proctored examinations, as appropriate; it requires authenticated student identification for all graded work and takes any other measures necessary to protect the integrity of its degrees and awards.

3.13.8 The institution is responsible for any *e*-learning course or services provided by partner institutions or other organizations.

4. Faculty and Professional Staff

The institution demonstrates that it has an appropriately qualified faculty and an administrative and technical staff of a sufficient number to meet all requirements of its programs, services, and activities and to achieve its mission. All faculty members and professional staff hold appropriate credentials; their preparation and qualifications are suited to the field and the level of their instructional assignments or field of activity. The institution has orderly, transparent processes and policies for recruiting, developing, evaluating, promoting, and retaining members of the professional staff and faculty members who exemplify diverse educational and cultural backgrounds.

Criteria

4.1 **Policies, Procedures and Documentation.** The institution maintains a *Policies and Procedures Manual* that includes *all* the policies and procedures concerning the faculty and administrative and technical staff and meets the Commission's requirements, as specified in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual.* The institution implements these policies.

4.2 **Faculty Handbook.** The institution maintains a *Faculty Handbook* that includes all the policies and procedures specified in Appendix A: *Faculty Handbook*; these policies and procedures are taken from the *Policies and Procedures Manual.* The institution implements these policies and procedures and distributes the *Faculty Handbook* to all faculty members.

4.3 **Staff Handbook.** The institution maintains a *Staff Handbook* that includes all the policies and procedures specified in Appendix A: *Staff Handbook*; these policies and procedures are taken from the *Policies and Procedures Manual.* The institution implements these policies and procedures and distributes the *Staff Handbook* to all members of the professional staff.

4.4 **Recruitment and Records.**
  4.4.1 The institution has effective polices and processes for advertising, recruiting, and appointing faculty and professional staff members and maintains records of these processes.
  4.4.2 The institution maintains a record for each full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and professional staff member, including attested academic transcripts of academic preparation, the signed contract, and all documents required by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in the U.A.E.
  4.4.3 If instruction is in English, the institution demonstrates that faculty members are competent in English.

4.5 **Faculty Preparation.** The preparation and qualifications of all faculty members, both full-time and part-time, are appropriate to the field and level of their assignments and to instruction in *e*-learning and meet the minimum qualifications required for each level, as specified in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual.*

4.6 **Graduate faculty.** The institution demonstrates that faculty members who instruct in graduate

programs or courses evidence a strong record of, or potential for, research and scholarly activity or have significant professional experience in applied fields as practitioners. The institution clearly defines eligibility requirements for faculty members teaching graduate courses, including those supervising theses.

4.7 **Staff Preparation**. The qualifications and experience of all professional staff members are appropriate to the level of their appointment and the duties to which they are assigned.

4.8 **The Role of the Faculty and Professional Staff.**
  4.8.1 The organization of the institution makes clear the reporting relationships of faculty and professional staff.
  4.8.2 Faculty members participate in institutional governance, the development of curricula, instruction, student support, research and scholarship, management, and administration.
  4.8.3 The institution makes clear its expectation that faculty and professional staff members will carry out their duties in a professional, ethical, and collegial manner that respects the culture of the U.A.E. and enhances the mission of the institution.

4.9 **Appointment, Compensation, Promotion, and Contract Renewal.**
  4.9.1 The institution provides faculty and professional staff members with contracts, letters of appointment, or other documents that clearly describe the terms and conditions of employment.
  4.9.2 The institution demonstrates that it offers adequate salaries and benefits to attract and retain highly qualified faculty of diverse cultural and educational backgrounds; salaries and benefits are sensitive to market demands and are at a level that is at least comparable to those offered faculty members employed in the U.A.E. in similar disciplines; it publishes salary ranges and criteria for each rank and for salary increases.
  4.9.3 The institution operates criteria and procedures for faculty promotion from one rank to another and for awarding an extended or rolling contract.
  4.9.4 The term of the contract offered after the probationary period provides a reasonable degree of security and fosters loyalty to the institution and its students.

4.10 **Professional Development.**
  4.10.1 The institution has policies and procedures providing faculty development activities that support teaching, research, and scholarship; these activities are regularly assessed to ensure they are appropriate and effective.
  4.10.2 The institution provides technical, design, and production support services and professional development and training programs for faculty members in a variety of instructional strategies and technologies in order to foster interactive student learning.
  4.10.3 The institution trains faculty in using application software related to their disciplines and other educational goals.
  4.10.4 As relevant to its mission, the institution demonstrates that faculty members receive adequate

opportunities and resources for research; for example, publishing or presenting research papers; organizing and participating in national, regional, and international conferences, workshops, seminars, or exhibitions; leave entitlement for sabbaticals and training.

4.10.5 The institution has policies and procedures providing professional staff development activities that support staff roles and improve performance; these activities are assessed to ensure they are appropriate and effective.

4.10.6 The institution provides adequate professional development opportunities for staff involved in providing services to *e*-learning students.

4.10.7 The institution provides an adequate budget allocation to support professional development of its faculty and professional staff.

4.11 Faculty Workload.

4.11.1 The institution employs a sufficient number of faculty members to deliver the programs it offers, both credit and non-credit, and to operate efficiently and effectively in line with its mission.

4.11.2 Workload assignments are equitable and reasonable and include the entire range of a faculty member's responsibilities, such as instruction, advising, committee work, guidance of student organizations, research, service, and curriculum development; assignments take into account the number of course preparations, course enrollments, subject matter, support from clerical and other staff or teaching assistants, and administrative responsibilities and adhere to the maximum teaching workload specified in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual.*

4.12 Evaluation.

4.12.1 The institution conducts periodic evaluations of the performance of all full-time, adjunct, and part-time faculty members, and professional staff members at all locations, using a variety of measures.

4.12.2 The criteria, methods, and procedures for faculty and professional staff evaluation are equitable and disseminated to all faculty and professional staff members.

4.12.3 The institution demonstrates that the results of annual faculty and professional staff evaluation form individual and collective professional development plans.

4.12.4 The institution assesses its faculty to ensure effective instruction, including such matters as, for example, the effective use of instructional strategies and technologies to engage students in learning, achievement in research, scholarship, or service, if pertinent to the institution's mission.

4.13 Disciplinary Actions and Appeals. standards for faculty conduct relate to the institution, the community and the culture in which it operates, and a faculty members' role; disciplinary actions may be taken against faculty members who violate these standards, and the institution has a policy that outlines disciplinary procedures, potential actions, and appeal procedures.

4.14   Grievances. The institution operates a grievance policy and associated procedures; these are available to all faculty and professional staff members.

4.15   Graduate Assistants. The institution ensures that its use of graduate students as assistants in teaching and instruction takes account of their other academic responsibilities and adheres strictly to policies regarding appropriate academic preparation, qualifications, and experience; graduate students do not normally teach courses, but may support the faculty by aiding with class activities, facilitating group discussions and team-based learning, and offering technical support.

4.16   Faculty involved in *e*-learning. The institution:
  4.16.1   provides faculty members with instruction design and course production support, including graphic designers, multimedia specialists, and programmers, as appropriate;
  4.16.2   provides faculty members with the necessary equipment, software, and communications tools for the development and delivery of *e*-learning courses;
  4.16.3   adjusts faculty members' workload appropriately for *e*-learning course development, delivery, interaction with students, and class size;
  4.16.4   ensures the participation of *e*-learning faculty located off-campus in the development and assessment of courses, programs, and the evaluation of the effectiveness of information technology resources.

4.17   Copyright and Intellectual Property. The institution's copyright and intellectual property policy covers ownership of *e*-learning materials, copyright issues, the utilization of revenue derived from the creation and production of software, courses and related materials, and access to libraries of electronic learning resources, or other media products; this policy is disseminated to faculty, professional staff, and students.

5. Students

The institution defines the characteristics of the students it seeks to enroll, and provides an environment that contributes to their cultural, social, moral, intellectual, and physical development. Student services and programs are based upon an assessment of students' needs, support the achievement of their educational goals, and are consistent with the institution's mission.

Criteria

5.1 Policies, Procedures and Documentation. The institution maintains a *Policies and Procedures Manual* that includes *all* the policies and procedures concerning students and meets the Commission's requirements, as specified in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual*. The institution implements these policies.

5.2 Student Handbook. The institution maintains a *Student Handbook* that includes all the policies and procedures specified in Appendix A: *Student Handbook*; these policies and procedures are taken from the *Policies and Procedures Manual*. The institution implements these policies and procedures and distributes the *Student Handbook* to all students.

5.3 Undergraduate Admission.
    5.3.1 The governing body determines the size and character of the student body and the general admissions policies; these are implemented by the faculty and administration.
    5.3.2 The responsibility for administering admissions policies and procedures is coordinated institution-wide, although units, such as academic departments or colleges, may have a separate admissions office.
    5.3.3 Admissions policies and the bases for admissions decisions are consistent with the institution's mission and the goals of its programs; these policies are clearly defined, applied to all students equally, and are published appropriately.
    5.3.4 Undergraduate admissions requirements include qualitative and quantitative measures, completion of secondary school, and other preparation that is consistent with the current requirements of the Ministry and with the curriculum of the academic program in which the student wishes to enroll.
    5.3.5 Admissions standards for programs and the institution are regularly assessed and such information is used in recruitment and enrollment planning.
    5.3.6 For programs taught in English, the institution adheres to the Commission's minimum standards of English language proficiency as described in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual*.
    5.3.7 Students in a preparatory English language program meet or exceed these minimum standards of English language before advancing into a degree program.
    5.3.8 The institution operates policies on potential credit for advanced standing and for transferred courses that meet the Commission's requirements as described in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual*.

5.4   Graduate admission.

5.4.1   Students admitted to pursue U.A.E. graduate or professional degrees show a potential for a high level of performance based on their previous academic record and other indicators of ability and provide official transcripts of all earned undergraduate credits that attest to an earned undergraduate degree appropriate to their planned field of study as described in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual.*

5.4.2   For programs taught in English, the institution adheres to the Commission's minimum standards of English language proficiency as described in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual.*

5.4.3   Requirements for admission differentiate among degrees; students admitted to a master's degree have completed a baccalaureate degree in a related discipline and students admitted to a doctoral program have also completed a master's degree in a related discipline.

5.4.4   The institution operates policies on potential credit for advanced standing and for transferred courses that meet the Commission's requirements as described in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual*.

5.5   Admission to *e*-Learning Programs and Courses.

5.5.1   Before admitting students into a program or course involving *e*-learning, the institution evaluates whether students have the necessary information technology skills and are otherwise prepared to succeed in an *e*-learning environment; it identifies any specific admission requirements for *e*-learning programs and courses.

5.5.2   The institution, through pre-admission materials, informs the prospective student of:
- the nature and potential challenges of learning in an *e*-learning program's technology-based environment;
- necessary information technology skills;
- software, hardware, and internet connectivity required for the program;
- the time frame in which courses are offered;
- library and other learning services available to support *e*-learning and the skills necessary to access them;
- other support services relevant to *e*-learning;
- the ways in which students interact with faculty and fellow students;
- the timing, duration, and cost of any residential portion of the program, if required;
- location and arrangements made for any in-person examinations and course-related activities;
- the expectations for independent learning.

5.6   Student Records.

5.6.1   The institution has appropriate policies governing the collection, maintenance, storage, disposal, safety, and security of all official and original student records, including secure fireproof storage and back-up, preferably off-site.

5.6.2   The institution has policies concerning what constitutes the permanent student record, who may manage and update records, who has access to them, how long they are to be retained, and what may be disposed.

5.6.3   The institution has a policy concerning the release of information to the public that respects the rights of individual privacy, the confidentiality of records, and the best interests of the student and institution.

5.7   Student services.

5.7.1   A designated administrative unit is responsible for planning and implementing student services that is headed and staffed by those with appropriate academic preparation and experience.

5.7.2   Professional counselors provide personal counseling services and program faculty members serve as academic advisors.

5.7.3   The institution provides access to health services and health education programs consistent with the verified needs of its community.

5.7.4   To assist students in career planning and appropriate employment, career development services-career testing, information, and counseling, interviewing and other employment skills, job placement, and follow-up activities—are available to students beginning with their first enrollment; specific policies govern the career services available to students, alumni, and employers.

5.7.5   If the institution offers financial aid, all awards, including scholarships, are centrally coordinated and awarded according to published criteria; all funds for financial aid programs are audited in compliance with U.A.E law.

5.7.6   The institution makes all student services available to and adapted for students of *e*-learning programs.

5.7.7   The student services are systematically surveyed as part of the program for institutional research, using a variety of methods that includes user surveys; the evidence is assessed, and the results evaluated and incorporated into planning.

5.8   Student Activities and Publications.

5.8.1   The institution has a program of student activities commensurate with its mission and its student body and guided by appropriate policies and procedures regarding the institution's supervision of those activities.

5.8.2   A written policy guides the institution's responsibility for any student-run media.

5.8.3   The institution recognizes the virtual community of *e*-learners by inviting them to campus events, sending them institutional publications, and otherwise involving them whenever possible.

5.9   Student Behavior and Academic Integrity. The institution has:

5.9.1   a clear statement of student rights and responsibilities;

5.9.2   policies and procedures regarding student discipline, including the authority of judicial bodies and institutional administrators;

5.9.3   policies and procedures regarding academic offences (including plagiarism);

5.9.4   an appeals policy and procedures for students.

5.10 **Security in an *e*-Learning Environment.** The institution ensures:
   5.10.1 the security of the electronic systems used for serving, accepting, storing, and retrieving student information for *e*-learning programs;
   5.10.2 the authentication of any official, electronic copies of student information;
   5.10.3 the protection of personal information in the conduct of assessments and evaluations and in the dissemination of results.

5.11 **Grievances**. The institution has and operates reasonable policies and procedures for student grievances.

5.12 **Residence Halls.**
   5.12.1 The institution has policies and procedures governing residence halls, insuring insofar as possible a healthy, safe, and secure living environment with special consideration for female students.
   5.12.2 The learning environment in the residence halls supports the educational mission of the institution.
   5.12.3 A sufficient number of suitably trained staff members administers the residence halls and enhances them as a learning environment.

6. Library and Other Information Resources

The institution provides information resources and services for students and faculty members that adequately support teaching and learning, and, if applicable, research, in ways consistent with the institution's mission and goals. Library and information resources and services are sufficient in quality, depth, diversity, and currency for the institution's curricular offerings at the appropriate level for the programs offered, and they meet the needs of the faculty, students, and academic support personnel, regardless of where they are located.

Criteria

6.1   Policies, Procedures and Documentation. The institution maintains a *Policies and Procedures Manual* that includes *all* the policies and procedures concerning the library and other information resources and meets the Commission's requirements as specified in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual*. The institution implements these policies.

6.2   The Operation of Library and Information Resource Services.
    6.2.1   The institution operates its library and information resource services in order to meet the needs of faculty and students and to support its academic mission and administrative functions.
    6.2.2   The library and other information resources and services are supported by an adequate budget.
    6.2.3   The institution's physical library, electronic environments, and other learning resource centers provide adequate space, electronic imaging equipment, and an atmosphere conducive to study and research.
    6.2.4   The library and any other learning resource centers are open for a sufficient number of hours to meet the needs of faculty and students.
    6.2.5   *e*-learning students can access electronic library resources and services at any time.
    6.2.6   The library provides appropriate services, including efficient book and periodical circulation and acquisitions.
    6.2.7   The institution ensures the proper use of its technology systems and resources by users.
    6.2.8   The library and other learning resources are systematically surveyed as part of the program for institutional research, using a variety of methods that includes user surveys; the evidence is assessed, and the results evaluated and incorporated into planning.

6.3   Electronic Library. The institution provides electronic library services that meet international *Standards* and support the needs of *e*-learning students and faculty members, as appropriate to its mission [2].

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[2] See, for example, the American Library Association's "Guidelines for Distance Learning Library Services: http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/guidelinesdistancelearning.htm   Another useful resource is "Managing electronic library services: current issues in UK higher education institutions," http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue29/pinfield/.

6.4   Library Support. Library and other staff provide all students with orientation programs, workshops, personal assistance, and other services so they develop the key skills of information literacy and can locate, evaluate, and appropriately use knowledge and information available on line, in print, or in other media.

6.5   Library Collection. The library collection, including books, periodicals, databases, and other learning resources in both traditional and electronic form, is adequate for the education, research, and public service programs of the institution.

    6.5.1   Faculty and other stakeholders are involved in the development of collections and the assessment of the acquisitions policy.

    6.5.2   The library collection reflects the level of degrees offered.

    6.5.3   The library collection is catalogued according to accepted bibliographical formats and conventions to provide both on-campus and off-campus users with convenient access to resources, including electronic databases.

6.6   Cooperative Agreements. The institution seeks cooperative agreements with other libraries and agencies; such agreements supplement, but do not replace, its own collection; agreements are formalized, follow the requirements of any contractual agreement (see *Standard 9*), and are subject to periodic evaluation.

6.7   Library Staff. A sufficient number of professionally qualified staff administers the institution's library, information resources and services, and instructional and information technology support functions so that professional staff are available during all hours of operation.

    6.7.1   The head librarian has a master's degree or equivalent in information and library science and substantial experience in library and learning resource administration.

    6.7.2   Other professional staff members have degrees in library and information sciences and training and experience in electronic resources.

    6.7.3   Professionally qualified staff of a sufficient number administers the institution's electronic library, information resources and services.

6.8   Training. Faculty, staff, and students receive online training and support to use electronic library and information resources, and instructional and information technology effectively.

7. Physical and Technology Resources

Whether owned or rented, the physical facilities—including buildings, materials, equipment, and campus—are designed and maintained to serve the needs of the institution in relationship to its mission. The campus area adequately provides for the institution's buildings and activities and includes a sufficient number of classrooms and other specialized physical resources (such as laboratories) to support its academic programs. The necessary equipment, including computing and laboratory equipment, and software systems are readily accessible and meet educational and administrative requirements. A reliable network supports the uses of information technology.

Criteria

7.1   Policies, Procedures and Documentation. The institution maintains a *Policies and Procedures Manual* that includes *all* the policies and procedures concerning physical and technology resources and meets the Commission's requirements, as specified in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual.* The institution implements these policies.

7.2   Planning. The institution engages in comprehensive physical resources planning based upon its mission and goals and related to other institutional planning; it maintains a facilities master plan; the use of space is effectively managed; long-range and annual planning and budgeting include routine, preventative, planned and deferred maintenance of all property.

7.3   Physical and Technology Resources. The institution's physical and technology resources meet its needs in relationship to its mission, programs, activities, and enrollment and support the institution's *e*-learning strategy; these resources include buildings and grounds, classrooms, general offices, faculty offices, network infrastructure, computer laboratories, and, where relevant, science and other specialized laboratories, studios, learning skills centers, and clinical training facilities.

    7.3.1   The physical environment of the institution takes into consideration location, accessibility, and parking.

    7.3.2   The space allocated is adequate for the function it serves.

    7.3.3   Classrooms are equipped with up-to-date instructional media.

    7.3.4   Adequate facilities and equipment support research related to graduate programs.

    7.3.5   The institution provides access to physical and technology resources and the necessary support services for staff, faculty, and students with physical disabilities, as required by U.A.E. law.

    7.3.6   The physical and technology resources are systematically surveyed as part of the program for institutional research, using a variety of methods that includes user surveys; the evidence is assessed, and the results evaluated and incorporated into planning.

7.4   Health and Safety. The institution provides a healthy and secure environment for the campus community and meets U.A.E. legal requirements for safety.

    7.4.1   Health and safety programs are the assigned responsibility of a campus administrator.

    7.4.2   The health and safety policy and procedures are adhered to and regularly evaluated.

7.5   Information Technology. A reliable network enables all members of the community to use information technology and to access information resources.

7.5.1   Appropriate security measures protect the integrity and confidentiality of academic systems, administrative systems, and institutional networks.

7.5.2   Information technology supports the institution's academic programs, administration, institutional research, and planning.

7.5.3   The institution has a policy and an implemented plan to maintain and upgrade hardware and software and keeps them consistent with current technology.

7.5.4   The institution demonstrates that it incorporates technological advances into its operations on an on-going basis.

7.5.5   The institution provides technical equipment to serve the needs of its *e*-learning programs and courses appropriate to the number of students and faculty being served, with sufficient computer storage space for course development and delivery and ancillary support services.

7.5.6   The institution provides an information technology infrastructure, including an *e-learning platform* and internet bandwidth adequate to meet the demands of the *e*-learning programs, courses, students, and faculty members; the information technology infrastructure is consistent with the institution's *e*-learning strategy and its development.

7.5.7   The institution has an information technology disaster recovery plan.

7.6   Interaction. Technical facilities, software, and support services for *e*-learning programs and courses facilitate interaction (in real time or delayed) between faculty and students and among students.

7.7   Technical Support.

7.7.1   The institution provides faculty members and students with technical support for all required educational technology hardware, software, and delivery system.

7.7.2   The institution has a policy statement that specifies what kind and level of technical support it will provide for student-owned equipment and software.

7.7.3   The institution provides the educational and student support services staff with the technical support required for the effective delivery of these services to *e*-learning students.

8. Fiscal Resources

The institution evidences present and future financial stability with resources adequate to accomplish its mission effectively and to ensure that all enrolled students are able to complete their academic program. A finance officer, reporting to the chief executive officer, oversees all business and financial functions of the institution. Essential policies and procedures for budgetary planning and control, accounting, and external audits are in place.

Criteria

8.1 Policies, Procedures and Documentation. The institution maintains a *Policies and Procedures Manual* that includes *all* the policies and procedures concerning fiscal resources and meets the Commission's requirements, as specified in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual.* The institution implements these policies.

8.2 Fiscal Resources.

   8.2.1   The institution demonstrates financial stability with a budget adequate to fund the personnel, operation, and capital requirements to further its mission.

   8.2.2   The institution has sufficient financial resources, beyond tuition and fee revenues, to support all of its academic programs.

   8.2.3   The institution maintains:
   - budgets for the institution as a whole, and for departments, and for programs;
   - monthly and annual reports of expenditures to budget;
   - audited financial statements;
   - statements of its current accounts and financial capacity.

8.3 Reporting. The institution provides the Commission with all budgets, financial statements and reports, and prepares additional financial reports, on request.

8.4 Organization. Business and financial functions are centralized in a finance or business office headed by a chief finance officer who reports to the institution's chief executive officer.

8.5 The Annual Budget.

   8.5.1   The annual budget involves input from key constituencies and is approved by the governing body; the annual budget relates to short and longer-term institutional planning, studies of institutional and program effectiveness, and is based on conservative estimates of enrollment and other sources of revenue.

   8.5.2   The annual budget is transparent and presented in a standard format including itemized details of revenues and expenditures for individual units and contingency funding.

   8.5.3   Budgetary information and financial arrangements relating to *e*-learning education and special learning activities, such as certificate programs and training workshops, are clearly specified in the institutional budget.

8.5.4   The responsibility for approving and controlling expenditures rests with the chief executive officer.

8.5.5   Authority for expenditures within defined limits is delegated to unit heads.

8.5.6   The chief finance officer provides periodic (usually monthly) statements to unit heads to ensure that the institution remains within its approved budget;

8.5.7   The institution has a process for revising the budget if necessary and for modifying allocations.

8.6   Accounting and Auditing.

8.6.1   An accounting and auditing system is administered by appropriately qualified personnel, the accounting system follows generally accepted principles and practices for accounting in higher education.

8.6.2   The institution has the necessary tools of information technology to maintain accurate accounts and generate timely reports.

8.6.3   The institution maintains revenue/expenditure reports either independently certified in the audit report or included as supplemental data in the audit report.

8.6.4   The chief finance officer prepares regular financial reports for institutional officers, the governing body, and, if requested, the Commission.

8.6.5   The institution demonstrates that it has an effective process of internal auditing and financial control that complements the accounting system and the annual external audit.

8.6.6   Independent, certified public accountants not associated personally or professionally with the institution conduct an annual, fiscal-year audit.

8.7   Purchasing and Inventory Control. The institution operates within policies and procedures that ensure control over purchasing and inventory management.

8.8   Fees Collection and Refund Policy. The institution's policy adheres to generally accepted practices in the higher education community and is published in relevant documents.

8.9   Cash management. Adequate policies and procedures exist for the receipt, deposit, and safeguarding of institutional funds.

8.10 Risk Management.

8.10.1 The institution has a detailed framework to define, assess, and manage its risks; the institution manages its financial risks by evaluating them, developing strategies to avoid or reduce them, obtaining appraisals of facilities and equipment, and insuring them; it carries liability and other insurance to protect the institution and its constituencies.

8.10.2 The risk management plan addresses, among various risk sources, the risks of disruption or failure of information technology infrastructure and tools.

8.10.3 The institution has appropriate levels of insurance—or designated financial resources—to provide adequate replacement protection for its physical plant and to cover the potential liability of personnel.

8.11 Auxiliary Enterprises.

    8.11.1   Income-generating activities, such as bookstores, residence halls, food service operations, printing/duplicating services, child care, and transportation services, operated by or for the institution, adhere to the same budget and reporting practices as the rest of the institution.

    8.11.2   Revenues and costs from such enterprises are accounted for separately and included in regular financial reporting.

    8.11.3   Revenues in excess of expenses for auxiliary services are used in a manner consistent with institutional policies to improve student and academic services, such as scholarships and support for student activities.

9. Public Disclosure and Integrity

The institution adheres to the highest ethical standards in its teaching, research, scholarship, and service; in its treatment of its students, faculty, and staff; and in its external interactions and relationships. It is committed to the search for and the dissemination of knowledge. Both print and electronic publications for students, prospective students, and the public provide complete, clear, consistent, and accurate information about the institution.

Criteria

9.1   Policies, Procedures and Documentation. The institution maintains a *Policies and Procedures Manual* that includes *all* the policies and procedures concerning public disclosure and integrity and meets the Commission's requirements, as specified in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual.* The institution implements these policies.

9.2   Policy. The institution:
- 9.2.1   meets all legal requirements of the U.A.E. and of the Emirate or Emirates in which it is located;
- 9.2.2   makes no unsubstantiated claims for itself, for the prospects of students who pursue its academic programs, for its relationships with other institutions, agencies, or employers, or otherwise portrays itself in ways that are other than clear, truthful, and substantiated by evidence;
- 9.2.3   takes all reasonable measures to foster academic honesty in its policies and practices;
- 9.2.4   demonstrates through its policies and practices its commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge consistent with the institution's mission and goals;
- 9.2.5   operates institutional policies and procedures on matters such as conflict of interest, academic freedom, research on human subjects, intellectual property, and grievances and publishes these in relevant documents, as appropriate.

9.3   Publications. The institution:
- 9.3.1   meets the Commission's requirements for all its publications;
- 9.3.2   maintains an active web presence;
- 9.3.3   ensures that all publications are internally consistent, consistent with one another, accurately portray the institution, and approved by the appropriate authorities in the institution;
- 9.3.4   ensures that its recruiting activities, print and electronic publications, and advertisements accurately and truthfully portray the institution, its licensure status, its programs and their accreditation status, so that students and their families may make informed decisions about enrollment.

9.4   Enrollment Practices. The institution:
- 9.4.1   does not compromise its admissions standards or academic progress policies to achieve a desired enrollment;
- 9.4.2   does not award credit for duplicated courses;
- 9.4.3   does not award credit for experiential learning or training provided by non-collegiate institutions or though professional certification.

9.5   Courses and Programs. Descriptions and titles of courses and programs convey their content; these reflect what has been approved.

9.6   Institutional Name. The institution has a name which accurately reflects its status and affiliations.

9.7   Relationship with the Ministry and the Commission. The institution:
  9.7.1   provides the Commission access to information as requested, including enrollment and faculty data, budgets, personnel information, all reports of its operations, including reports from any licensing, auditing, external reviews, or other accrediting agencies;
  9.7.2   cooperates with the Commission in preparing for and conducting site visits or other meetings;
  9.7.3   facilitates, at its expense, on-sites visit to a partner institution by a committee of experts when requested by and under the direction of the Commission;
  9.7.4   fosters an open, cooperative, and collegial relationship with the Commission and the Ministry.

9.8   Contractual Relationships. In developing contractual relationships, the institution's representatives take responsibility for anything undertaken in its name. It ensures that the range of activities that may form the basis of a contract meet the *Standards*; such activities include: cooperation in planning and developing academic programs, courses, and instructional material; providing such programs, courses, or instructional materials; exchange of faculty, students, and academic administrators; cooperation in research activities and internship opportunities; or receiving services such as a bookstore or dining operation.

  9.8.1   The institution submits any prospective contract or memorandum of understanding to the Commission for review and approval *before* signing it.
  9.8.2   Notwithstanding any given contract, the institution maintains full control of all aspects of its academic programs and services, ensuring that it has primary responsibility for awarding any degree recognized in the U.A.E. and for the integrity, rigor, outcome, and management of the academic program and compliance with the *Standards*.
  9.8.3   Notwithstanding any outsourcing of services, the institution remains responsible for the quality and timeliness of the services provided, for protecting confidentiality, and for ensuring that such services meet the requirements of the *Standards*.
  9.8.4   If the contractual relationship involves an academic institution as a partner, the institution offers evidence of the partner institution's quality, ensuring that it is either licensed in the U.A.E. or internationally known and respected.
  9.8.5   The institution regularly assesses its contractual relationships for effectiveness and uses the results of the assessment for improvement.

9.9   Associations with Corporate Entities. Institutions associated with separately incorporated entities, such as radio or television stations, foundations, hospitals, business, corporations, trusts, or similar organizations:

9.9.1   detail the nature of the relationship, describing the benefits and obligations of each party, particularly the ways in which the association furthers the institution's mission;

9.9.2   describe the associate's activities and the manner in which such activities relate to the mission of the institution;

9.9.3   provide a roster of the associate's board members and list any personnel who have responsibilities, compensated or not, with both the institution and the associate;

9.9.4   provide a copy of the associate's most recent annual financial audit report, its charter, and by-laws.

10. Research

As compatible with its mission, the institution pursues research. In line with a research strategy, the institution's physical, fiscal, and human resources, its organization, services, policies, and programs all reflect a commitment to the creation, integration, and application of knowledge and scholarly and creative activity. The quality of its research activities and their contribution to the community, nation, and region are demonstrated.

Criteria

10.1   The institution's research is congruent with its research strategy.

10.2   The institution's support of research is evident in all areas of the institution: its organization, strategic plan, budget allocations, policies, faculty development support, and facilities and equipment.

10.3   The institution has benchmarks and targets for scholarly productivity related to some or all of its academic programs.

10.4   By education, background, and scholarly productivity, the institution's faculty or a significant proportion thereof demonstrates the ability to pursue high caliber research.

10.5   Any academic program offered is consistent with the level of research activity; advanced degrees are offered only if the program faculty members pursue research, scholarship, or creative activity.

10.6   As appropriate, the institution encourages cooperative relationships for research with organizations, agencies, and other institutions.

Academic Program Accreditation

Introduction

To assure prospective students, their families, and the public that the academic programs offered by institutions licensed in the U.A.E. meet international standards, each program must be individually accredited. The *Standards for Licensure and Accreditation* and the institution's program *Proposal* or program *Self-Study* that addresses the standards in terms of the program provide the basis for review by the Commission staff and a committee of international experts who assess each program both through paper documentation and a campus visit.

After review, the visiting committee and the Commission recommend an action concerning accreditation to the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research (the Minister), who decides whether accreditation is to be granted. Licensed, independent institutions in the United Arab Emirates must receive initial program accreditation for each academic program they plan to offer before recruiting students or enrolling them; all programs offered by the institution must continue to be accredited.

Applying for Accreditation

Steps in Accreditation

Any institution applying for the accreditation of a proposed program must follow each of the steps below in order, with an application dated at least six months prior to the intended start of the program or the deadline for accreditation renewal. The Commission normally reviews completed, accepted applications submitted by November 1 during the following spring semester; those submitted by May 1, during the following fall semester. The institution is responsible for monitoring deadlines related to accreditation and renewal. Each step requires the satisfactory completion of the previous step before the Minister determines whether accreditation is to be granted or renewed.

1. The institution is licensed.

2. The institution submits a complete application, including four hard and electronic copies of each of the following:
    i.   the application form;
    ii.   an application letter from the Chief Executive Officer of the institution. This application letter verifies that the information in the supporting documentation is accurate and complete and that the proposed program 1) has been approved by the faculty and the institution's governing body, 2) is consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, and 3) will receive the necessary budget, personnel, physical, and other resources to inaugurate and sustain it;
    iii. the program *Proposal* for the accreditation (the *proposal*) of a new academic program or the program *Self-study* (the *self-study*) for the renewal of accreditation;
    iv.   the institution's catalog, faculty/staff handbook, student handbook, institutional effectiveness manual, organization chart, and any other documents deemed relevant by the institution;
    v.   the feasibility study for the accreditation of a new academic program.

3. If the Commission finds the *proposal*, the *self-study*, or the documentation incomplete or inadequate to

warrant a full review, it returns the application with an explanation and information about resubmission. An application may not be resubmitted for at least six months from the date of the official notification from the Commission.

4. Assuming satisfactory documentation, the Commission selects several international experts (the *visiting committee*) to provide a paper and an on-site evaluation of the program or proposed program.

5. An on-site review, hosted and funded by the institution, results in an evaluation report concerning the program. That report includes both those matters on which the program does not meet the *Standards*, termed *recommendations*, which the institution must rectify to the satisfaction of the Commission, and *suggestions* for improvement from the visiting committee.

6. The institution provides the visiting committee with a copy of its policies and procedures manual and any other relevant institutional documentation at the start of the on-site visit.

After review, the Commission makes a recommendation to the Minister who decides whether to approve, delay, or deny accreditation or to place the program on probation.

Approved: Given a favorable review and decision from the Ministry, and provided that the institution enrolls students into the program within one year, accreditation of a new program remains in effect for up to two years after the institution graduates the first cohort of students from the program. If warranted by the review, the Commission may schedule another visit or visits during this period. If the beginning of the program is delayed for more than one year, the institution must re-apply for accreditation before offering the program. After the prescribed initial period, a program's accreditation must be renewed every five years. The program may receive unscheduled visits from the staff of the Commission to ensure that it continues to meet the requirements of the *Standards*. Failure to do so may result in loss of accreditation, as determined by the Minister. For Baccalaureate degree programs, the Commission may schedule an on-site visit by an external visiting committee member during the third year after the commencement of the program, to ensure the full implementation of the program requirements and the provision of resources as originally planned.

Delayed: The decision concerning accreditation is delayed until the institution rectifies a problem, provides additional information, or resolves an issue concerning the program. If the institution fails to satisfy the Commission's requirements within six months following notification, it will either be placed on probation or denied accreditation.

Probation: A program placed on probation must correct any deficiencies noted to the satisfaction of the Commission within a specified period of time. Should the deficiency warrant it, the institution may not be permitted to admit students to the program. At the end of the probationary period, the Commission makes a recommendation to the Minister, which may result in the denial of accreditation or its renewal.

Denied: The program denied accreditation may not admit students and must initiate actions to close the program while protecting enrolled students.

Guidelines for the Program Proposal or Program Self-Study

Accreditation is linked to institutional licensure, and the **proposal** for accreditation of a new program or the **self-study** for renewal of accreditation demonstrates the ways in which the program plans to meet or meets the *Standards for Licensure and Accreditation* and their criteria (the *Standards*). Each academic program must meet all relevant criteria of the *Standards*, with particular attention to *Standard Three*, the Academic Program. Each one of the *Standards* should be addressed and backed with clear, detailed evidence and appropriate documentation.

A **proposal** for a new program establishes its need and rationale and the availability of resources necessary to begin and sustain it. A **self-study** for the accreditation of an existing program demonstrates the achievement of the outcomes of the program and the learning outcomes of the courses it comprises.

Addressing the Standards

1. Mission and Institutional Effectiveness

A. Needs assessment. The **proposal** for a new program provides a convincing rationale for the program and demonstrates that it fills a need both for students and society. That rationale is based on a needs assessment that includes:
   i. a market survey of employment opportunities within the Emirate, nation, and region;
   ii. a market survey of students who are likely to enroll in the program and their reasons for doing so;
   iii. projected year-by-year enrollments for the first five years of the program, giving a best case, worst case, and mid-range estimates;
   iv. an analysis of any competing programs at both public and private institutions in the U.A.E., their likely impact on prospective enrollments, and on the extent of the need for the new program;
   v. a justification for the proposed program in relation to other programs at the institution.

B. Goals and program outcomes.
   The **proposal** for accreditation includes a detailed statement of the goals and intended outcomes of the new program consistent with the mission and goals of the institution. The **self-study** offers evidence of the ways in which students meet the outcomes of the program and substantiates the ways in which other program goals are met.

C. Program effectiveness.
   The **proposal** explains in detail how the institution's program of institutional research will be used to assess and evaluate the program against its goals and outcomes and how institutional planning will use the results of institutional research to improve program effectiveness.
   A **self-study** demonstrates institutional effectiveness by describing improvements made in meeting

program goals and outcomes. It shows how those improvements are a consequence of institutional planning and how that planning has used the results of institutional research.

The **proposal** or **self-study** includes:

i. a matrix relating program outcomes to the learning outcomes of the courses comprising the curriculum;

ii. the assessment instruments to be used or used to evaluate the outcomes of the program and the extent to which they have been met;

iii. the assessment instruments to be used or used to evaluate the learning outcomes of each course of the program and the extent to which they have been met;

iv. a description of other instruments to be used or used to obtain program-specific data, the mechanisms by which these data are analyzed, the ways in which the results are used or to be used for program improvement and achieving its outcomes;

v. the roles and responsibilities of faculty members and the program coordinator in assessing the effectiveness of the program, planning for improvements based on an assessment of the data, and implementing changes.

D. Planning. The **self-study** assesses the effectiveness of departmental short-range and longer-term planning to improve its curriculum or services to students or to modify program goals and student learning outcomes.

2. Organization, Governance, and Leadership

A. The **proposal** or **self-study** documents the position of the program within the institution's academic and administrative organization and includes:

i. an organization chart;

ii. a description of the role or proposed role of the faculty in curriculum and instructional decisions regarding the courses and curriculum and in faculty recruitment and appointment;

iii. a description of the role of the program coordinator or chair and other academic administrators responsible for the program and its development, including faculty hiring and evaluation;

iv. if the program is offered in more than one location, an explanation of how the coordination between or among different locations is or will be managed and how appropriate control of academic policy, standards, and course offerings is or will be ensured.

B. The **self-study** addresses the effectiveness of the organization in achieving program goals.

3. The Academic Program

A. Degree completion requirements. The **proposal** or the **self-study** describes all specific degree requirements, including credit hours, general education or institution-wide courses, program courses, internship or practicum experiences, grade point average, and minimum and maximum duration of study. They include a *degree plan* to indicate which courses in what sequence a student

may take in order to complete the degree within the timeframe for the degree.

B. Curriculum and instruction. The **proposal** or the **self-study** includes detailed information on the content of the program:
    i.   a semester-by-semester sequence of the full curricular offerings, including required and elective courses so designated; the learning outcomes of each course that support the goals and outcomes of the program;
    ii. course catalog descriptions with the title, description, designated course number and level, pre-requisites and co-requisites, if any;
    iii. detailed syllabi for all courses, with each syllabus detailing learning outcomes, course content week-by-week and other information listed in the Appendix A: *Syllabus Guidelines*;
    iv. a manual or similar document detailing policies for practicum, internship, or practical application experiences, if relevant, following Appendix C: *Guidelines for Good Practice in Practicums and Internships.*

C. The **self-study** deals with the ways in which the program specifically meets each of the *Standards'* criteria for the academic program (see Standard 3 in the section on institutional licensure); for *e*-learning programs the **self-study** also includes specific reflection on additional information technology requirements and support services for students, faculty, and staff.

D. Based on evidence, the **self-study** assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum in achieving specific student learning outcomes and describes plans for improvement.

E. The **self-study** examines the extent of and institutional control over externally funded grants and contracts related to the program, particularly the relationship between the direct and indirect costs generated and faculty assignments, salaries, and other program support.

4. **Faculty and Professional Staff**

A. The **self-study** evaluates the extent to which the program meets all institutional requirements for hiring, evaluating, and assigning faculty members and adhering to workload and other policies outlined in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual*.

B. The **proposal** or the **self-study** provides detailed information about the faculty members who are to be assigned or are assigned to the program including:
    i.   the curriculum vitae of faculty members teaching on the program and of the academic administrator responsible for it;
    ii. the qualifications, areas of specialization, and proposed academic rank for faculty and academic administrators who will be appointed to the program;
    iii. the effect on the institution and the other programs of the re-assignment of any faculty

member to the new program;

iv.   a list of faculty with semester-by-semester course assignments to indicate how the curriculum needs are to be met or are met;

v.   information concerning any planned or existing part-time faculty assignments;

vi.   a time line for the appointment of new faculty, if relevant, including the different stages of advertising, recruitment, interviewing, appointment, arrival, and orientation;

vii.   any planned or actual use of teaching assistants, lab assistants, or other staff to support instruction.

C.   The **self-study** evaluates the number of support staff such as laboratory assistants to ensure effective utilization of laboratory sessions, providing support for handling problems in use of equipment, and their continuous maintenance.

D.   The **self-study** analyzes the information concerning faculty and support staff, demonstrates the effectiveness of faculty development support and programs, research or scholarship support (if relevant), and workload assignments and outlines any plans for improvement.

5.   Students

A.   Admissions. The **proposal** or **self-study** details admissions requirements ensuring that they comply with the requirements of the Ministry and the criteria outlined in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual.* The **self-study** analyzes the effectiveness of the admissions requirements as predictors of student academic advancement into the program and projects any plans for changing the admissions requirements.

B.   Counseling and career development: The **proposal** addresses how any increased demands created by the program on the institution's counseling and career development functions will be met.

C.   The **self-study** includes data on job opportunities for program graduates and demonstrates the effectiveness of career development services.

D.   The **proposal** provides information on the projected number of students to be admitted to the proposed program over a period of four years. The **self-study** appends program enrollment data on a year-to-year basis to include:

i.   new student enrollment (first year and transfer);

ii.   total program enrollment;

iii.   attrition (withdrawal, academic dismissal, other dismissal);

iv.   number of graduates.

E.   The **self-study** analyzes various measures of institutional effectiveness and student satisfaction in the area of student services and projects any plans for improvement.

6. **Library and Other Information Resources**

   A. The **proposal** specifies those learning and human resources necessary to support the proposed program directly, including:
       i.   a list of the titles of current library books, periodicals, and software pertinent to the program;
       ii. access to electronic information, including databases and journals related to the proposed area of study;
       iii. a plan to expand the library collection to support the program, including any additional necessary learning resources;
       iv. the budget required to build the program's library and learning resources from startup of the program through the first five years.

   B. The **self-study** evaluates the learning resources, services, and staff available for the program and describes any plans for improvement.

7. **Physical and Technology Resources**

   A. The **proposal** describes the location and the available physical resources to offer the program, including classrooms, office space, laboratories, studios or other specialized facilities, analyzes their adequacy, and projects plans to address any deficiencies.

   B. The **proposal** includes detailed timed-action plans to meet the program's needs for instructional technology, including computers and any other required instructional equipment, learning platform, bandwidth, and technical support to faculty, students, and support staff, specific to the proposed program.

   C. The **proposal** addresses any safety issues specific to the program.

   D. The **self-study** describes the physical resources used for the program, including classrooms, office space, laboratories, studios or other specialized facilities, analyzes their adequacy, and projects plans to address any deficiencies.

   E. The **self-study** demonstrates the adequacy of information technology, including computers and other equipment, learning platform, bandwidth, and technical support to faculty, students, and support staff, specific to the proposed program, to meet the needs of the program, projects future needs, and offers plans for improvement.

8. **Fiscal Resources**

   A. The **proposal** for the accreditation of a new program includes a financial plan for the first five years

of the program that considers, among all other relevant factors, the following:

i.   Personnel
- A program administrator—program chair, coordinator, or other academic administrator to lead the program's development;
- current faculty members available for the new program and their areas of specialization;
- the number of new faculty members necessary and their areas of specialization;
- support for course load reductions and other support for faculty members to develop courses, to establish the program and their teaching and scholarship in relation to the program, and in applied fields to identify internships and practicum experiences for students;
- any technical support personnel or other staff required, current and projected.

ii.   Facilities and equipment
- instructional technology and other equipment and software needed to support the program, both currently available and projected;
- laboratories, studios, or other specialized facilities, including furnishings and equipment, both currently available and projected;
- individual office space for new faculty members, and research space and equipment, if relevant.

iii. A "teach-out provision," a clear and specific explanation of how the institution will provide for the rights and protection of any student enrolled should the proposed program be accredited and offered and later cancelled.

B.   The **self-study** includes the financial analysis of the costs and revenues of the program in the previous academic year, demonstrates its financial viability over time, and describes any plans for improvement in revenue generation, policy, or processes.

9.   Public Disclosure and Integrity

A.   The **proposal** addresses the ways in which it will seek external review and advice and how its students and faculty will engage with the external professional and academic communities to support the goals of the program. These relationships may include, as appropriate:

i.   a program advisory board or similar means of program oversight, feedback, and coordination with the external community;

ii.   plans for information exchange with peer institutions or programs and input from them;

iii. development of opportunities for program faculty to be active as professionals in the community;

iv.   plans for students in the program to apply their knowledge and skills in work environments and community organizations;

v.   review by external examiners;

vi.   opportunities for program faculty to participate in professional meetings and associations that support their professional growth and development;

vii. opportunities for students in the program to be active in student organizations that support their academic and professional careers.

B.   The **proposal** or **self-study** explains any contracts, memoranda of understanding, or other agreements concerning the delivery of or support for the program. Copies of any such agreements are included in the program **proposal** or **self-study**. The **self-study** also demonstrates the benefit of any contractual agreement concerning delivery or support of the program.

C.   The **self-study** demonstrates how and from which sources the program has received the benefits of external review and how students and faculty engage with the external professional and academic communities in ways that support the goals of the program.

10. Research

A.   If research is relevant to the program and the institution's mission, the proposal includes the institution's research strategy and provides evidence of the scholarly and research productivity of the faculty members assigned to the program.

B.   If research is relevant to the program and the institution's mission, the self-study examines the research and scholarly productivity of faculty members in the program and the extent to which the institution's research strategy has been implemented and benchmarks met.

Appendices

Appendix A

Required Documents and Their Contents

Contents

Introduction

The Commission requires all institutions to develop, evaluate, and update each of the following documents for distribution: 1) *By-Laws* of the governing body, 2) *Catalog*, 3) *Faculty / Staff Handbook*, 4) *Student Handbook*, 5) *Policies and Procedures Manual*, and 6) *Institutional Effectiveness Manual*. For initial licensure the Commission also requires the feasibility study, detailed financial analysis, and timed action plan described below. Because students need to receive a current syllabus for each of their courses on the first class day, the requirements for course syllabi are also included.

All documents should be clear, factually accurate, and current. Although they primarily serve to meet the specific needs of the institution's constituencies and its distinct mission, each must also include the policies, procedures, topics, or specific information required by the Commission, as noted in the relevant sections. **Some of the policies listed herein have specific requirements which institutions must comply with.**

Representation of Licensed Status

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (the Ministry) recognizes only accredited academic programs at licensed institutions. After an institution is licensed, each academic program needs to be accredited before it can be offered, and continued licensure indicates that all programs have been accredited. The Ministry makes known to the public, government agencies, and interested international parties those institutions that are *recognized* or *licensed* in the U.A.E. and publishes their names on its website. Institutions placed on probation or denied licensure may not state or imply in any of their materials, official or unofficial, that they are either licensed or recognized by the Ministry.

In its publications and advertisements only a licensed institution may state or imply that it is recognized in the United Arab Emirates by the Ministry. When an institution's licensure is approved, it may refer to its status as either "licensed" or "recognized" by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. It must note its status in the catalog, prospectus, and other publications intended for the public, using this statement:

> *[Name of Institution] located at [address], is officially licensed from [day, month, year] to [day, month, year] by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the United Arab Emirates to award degrees in higher education.*

Required Documents

I. Policies and Procedures Manual

The institution maintains a *Policies and Procedures Manual* that contains *all* the official policies, procedures, and regulations of the institution. It contains policies required by the Commission for all institutions of higher education and others the institution deems necessary to meet its mission. The institution operates in accordance with its policies, procedures and regulations at all times. In particular, *it adheres to all Ministry and Commission requirements*.

The policies, procedures and regulations are clearly written and consistent with good practice in institutions of higher education; they are approved by the appropriate institutional bodies. When these policies, procedures and regulations are worded for a specific audience to be published, for example, in the *Faculty Handbook* or in the *Student Handbook*, they are consistent and complete. They are distributed to those affected by them.

The Commission requires institutions to develop and maintain policies, procedures, and regulations covering the topics listed below.

1. **Mission and Institutional Effectiveness**
    a. *Planning Policy*. This covers short-term (annual) and long-term planning, and the review and revision of the institution's mission and its strategic plan.
    b. *Institutional Effectiveness Policy*. This covers the relationship between institutional/program research, academic planning and budgeting (see also Appendix A: *Institutional Effectiveness Manual* concerning institutional effectiveness).

2. **Organization, Governance and Leadership**
    a. The *By-laws* of the governing body (see also Appendix A: *By-laws*).
    b. *Conflict of Interest Policy*. This includes a policy covering the limitations on financial dealings between board members and the institution (see also Appendix A: *By-laws*).
    c. *Organization*. This policy includes job descriptions and lines of authority/reporting structure for the principal administrative and academic officers (where relevant):
        i.   the chief executive officer;
        ii.   the chief academic officer;
        iii. the chief financial officer;
        iv.   the student services officer;
        v.   the heads of academic units;
        vi.   the registrar;
        vii. the librarian;
        viii. the head of information technology;
        ix.   the human resources officer;
        x.   other persons responsible for major institutional functions;

    d.   *Standing Committees.* The institution has terms of reference for all its standing committees.

    e.   *Multiple Campus Policy* (where relevant). This policy covers procedures and regulations to assure comparability in learning outcomes and services.

    f.   *Institutional Relations Policy* (where relevant). This policy details the roles and responsibilities in the areas of development and fund raising, communication with internal and external offices, and media relations.

3.   The Academic Program

    a.   *Curricula Approval and Revision Policy.* This policy covers the procedure for the approval and revision of curricula, including individual courses, whether offered on campus or through *e*-learning (also see Appendix B: *Policy on Substantive Change*).

    b.   *Internship Policy* (where relevant). This policy governs procedures and regulations (also see Appendix C: *Guidelines for Good Practice in Practicums or Internships*).

    c.   *Independent Study Policy* (where relevant). This policy ensures adequate student supervision, comparability in content and assessment methods to other courses, and this limit on credits earned through independent study: 6 credits for undergraduate programs below the baccalaureate degree; 9 credits for a baccalaureate.

    d.   *Undergraduate Completion Policy.* The policy:
        i.   ensures that each program provides an appropriate sequence of courses;
        ii.   ensures that the total credit hours required for each program is consistent with international practice;
        iii.   ensures that each program has an appropriate distribution of credits between general education, major (or area of concentration) and electives;
        iv.   requires that the majority of the final year credits be earned at the institution;
        v.   requires a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 point scale, or its equivalent;
        vi.   defines the minimum and maximum enrollment period allowed.

    e.   *Graduate Completion Requirements Policy.* The policy:
        i.   ensures that master's or postgraduate diploma programs include a substantial proportion of taught course work;
        ii.   ensures that doctoral programs include:
            a.   at least one year of taught course work;
            b.   a period of independent research leading to a thesis;
        iii.   requires that the majority of the final year credits be earned at the institution;
        iv.   requires a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 point scale, or its equivalent;
        v.   defines the minimum and maximum enrollment period allowed.

    f.   *Academic Progress Policy.* This policy covers retention, dismissal, honors, and graduation, including:

  i. a minimum cumulative grade point average for satisfactory progress and graduation; for undergraduates the minimum permitted is 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, or the equivalent; for master's degree and doctoral programs the minimum permitted is a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, or the equivalent;

  ii. criteria for add, drop, leave of absence, withdrawal, and re-admission;

  iii. criteria for probation, academic suspension, and dismissal of students unable to demonstrate satisfactory progress.

 g. *Grading and Assessment Policy.* This policy provides:

  i. Institutional guidance on grading in order to ensure consistency;

  ii. guidelines and standards for faculty for writing examinations and making course assignments;

  iii. procedures and regulations for the late submission of coursework.

 h. *Examinations Policy.* This policy includes procedures and regulations for all forms of examination.

 i. *Academic Advising Policy.*

4. Faculty and Professional Staff

 a. *Faculty and Professional Staff Role Policy.* This policy:

  i. defines the role and responsibilities of the faculty in academic affairs: the curriculum, teaching, student support, research and/or scholarship, management and administration;

  ii. outlines course management requirements, including maintaining office hours, providing a syllabus for each course on the first class day, and grading and examination duties;

  iii. defines the role and responsibilities of professional staff in the institution;

  iv. defines the role of faculty in governance;

  v. assures academic freedom;

  vi. defines the organizational and reporting relationships for faculty and professional staff;

  vii. describes standards of professional ethics and cultural norms to which faculty and professional staff adhere.

 b. *Employment Policy.* This policy:

  i. restricts the proportion of part-time faculty teaching on each program to less than 25% of the total; exceptions may be permitted for *e*-learning programs with the permission of the Commission;

  ii. describes academic and professional ranks, and policy on rank as related to qualifications;

  iii. ensures that faculty members who do not hold the terminal degree are appointed *only* as lecturer or instructor and not at professorial rank;

  iv. requires the same qualifications of part-time faculty members as of full-time;

  v. provides parity for all faculty members (full-time and part-time) in meeting the requirements for professional, experiential, and scholarly preparation, for professional privileges, and in

compensation;

vi. Defines the probationary period and the terms of the contract including its renewal and termination;

vii. provides procedures for the periodic evaluation of faculty and professional staff, with its relationship to promotion and contract extension; the procedures include details of the evaluation, the criteria used, and the weighting of the criteria;

viii. provides procedures for professional development and including details of development opportunities, the relevant criteria and application procedures to pursue them;

ix. defines leaves, including sabbatical, training, maternity, compassionate, Hajj, emergency, sick, and any other leaves; the policy includes details of the relevant criteria and application procedures;

x. specifies the division of obligations between research and other academic responsibilities, where relevant;

xi. specifies the relationship between grant and contract funding and salaries, salary supplements, and/or consulting fees;

xii. addresses consulting services;

xiii. provides procedures for appropriate orientation and supervision.

c. *Promotion Policy.* This policy provides:
i. explicit and detailed criteria and the weighting of the criteria for promotion between ranks;
ii. procedures for applying for promotion;
iii. procedures for considering and awarding promotions.

d. *Personnel Policy.* This policy ensures the proper maintenance of employment records for all employees, including the original or officially attested documents of academic preparation, the original signed contract, contractual terms, a job description, a copy of the passport, and copies of other documents required by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in the U.A.E.

e. *Faculty Workload Policy.* This policy:
i. limits the teaching load for faculty members to:
   • 15 credit hours per semester for master's degree holders teaching in undergraduate certificate, diploma, associate degree, and baccalaureate programs;
   • 12 credit hours per semester for faculty members teaching in baccalaureate programs;
   • 9 credit hours per semester for faculty teaching in graduate programs;
   • 6 credit hours for part-time faculty members.
ii. provides release time:
   • of a minimum of 3 credit hours for program coordinators and department chairs;
   • of 6 credit hours for deans;
   • as appropriate for additional major assignments.

f. *Policy on Professional Requirements for Teaching.* The policy:

i. ensures that the preparation and qualifications of all faculty members are appropriate to the field and level of their assignments with degrees earned from internationally recognized institutions of higher education;

ii. ensures that faculty members have an earned terminal degree;

iii. ensures that the minimum expected academic or professional qualifications for different levels of primary teaching assignment are as noted:

- *Teaching courses in developmental/remedial programs*: a baccalaureate degree in a discipline related to the subject taught, teaching experience in that subject, or graduate-level training in remedial education;

- *Teaching courses in non-transferable certificate or diploma programs*: a baccalaureate degree in a discipline related to the subject taught, work experience, and where appropriate, relevant professional certification;

- *Teaching credit courses in professional, occupational, and technical areas* (where these are components of certificate or diploma programs and are not accepted either for transfer or continuation): a baccalaureate degree with appropriate work experience and, where appropriate, relevant professional certification;

- *Teaching courses in certificate, diploma, associate degree programs* or the following *general education courses*: the first two courses in English, Arabic, or other language, and the first course *only* in Islamic studies, history, or culture; humanities, arts, social sciences, behavioral sciences, natural sciences, physical sciences, mathematics and information technology: a master's degree with a major in the discipline taught and one of the following:
  - » five years' teaching experience in the discipline;
  - » a combination of five years' experience in teaching or other employment related to the field;
  - » the equivalent of eighteen credit hours of graduate study in the field beyond the master's degree;
  - » an internationally recognized professional credential (such as certified public accountant);
  - » At least one faculty member teaching in each program area holds a terminal degree in the discipline;

- *Teaching courses in baccalaureate degree programs or associate degrees offered in conjunction with a higher diploma of three years or more beyond secondary school* requires a terminal degree in the teaching discipline, usually a doctoral degree or, where appropriate, a terminal master's degree; [3]

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[3]In art, desgn, and design-related disciplines, an MFA, master of architecture, or other master's degree that isi studio-based, may be considered the terminal degree. The Master of Social Work is the terminal degree in its field.

- *Teaching courses in graduate degree programs* requires a terminal degree in the teaching discipline and either a strong record of (or the potential for) research and scholarly activity or significant professional experience as a practitioner in an applied discipline;
- *Exceptions to the requirement of a terminal degree* are:
  » limited to applied fields (such as business administration) for a faculty member who has a master's degree in the teaching field or a PhD in a related field, and who also has extensive senior level experience in the applied field (such as corporate management or senior accountant) or experience in the applied field coupled with internationally recognized professional association certification (as in medical board certificate or Certified Public Accountant);
  » fully justifiable in terms of education, training, and professional experience;
  » restricted to no more than 10% of the faculty;
  » reported at the beginning of each semester to the Commission for approval. The report includes the faculty member's name, highest degree earned and conferring institution, area of specialization, justification for the exception, and descriptions of the courses assigned.

g. *Compensation Policy.* This policy describes the compensation and benefits for all employees covering housing, travel, health insurance, education, furniture, repatriation and death benefits.

h. *Disciplinary Policy.* This policy refers to the institution's standards of conduct and is accompanied by regulations and full operational procedures including a range of actions.

i. *Faculty and Professional Staff Appeals Policy and Procedures.*

j. *Faculty and Professional Staff Grievance Policy and Procedures.*

k. *Graduate Assistants Policy.* This policy covers the employment of graduate students as teaching assistants and their rights and responsibilities; it includes administration of graduate assistantships, appointment criteria, remuneration, evaluation, and reappointment.

5. Students

a. *Undergraduate Admissions Policy.* The policy:
   i. has clear criteria consistent with the institution's mission;
   ii. is published in the *Catalog* and other relevant documents;
   iii. sets admissions criteria appropriate to the requirements of the programs that are offered;
   iv. is applied consistently to all applicants;
   v. is regularly evaluated;
   vi. includes qualitative and quantitative requirements;
   vii. allows acceptance *only* of students with a U.A.E Secondary School Certificate, or its equivalent, who meet minimum admission requirements set in the Ministerial Decrees No. 200/year 2004 and No. 133/year 2005 or any such relevant decrees that supersede or post-date these;

viii.   requires for programs taught in English a *minimum* TOFEL score of 500 (173 CBT, 61 iBT) or its equivalent in a standardized English language test, such as 5.0 IELTS or another standardized, internationally-recognized test that is approved by the Commission; the institution applies this admissions condition to *all* students, including those who have previously been admitted to a non-credit bearing intensive English language program (or remedial English courses) offered by the institution;

ix.   specifies additional criteria, including high school grades, for admission into a program (such as engineering and health sciences) that requires a higher proficiency in mathematics and/or sciences;

x.   includes criteria regarding potential credits for advanced standing;

xi.   includes conditions governing provisional or probationary admission, where relevant.

b. *Graduate Admissions Policy.* The policy:

i.   has clear criteria consistent with the institution's mission;

ii.   is published in the catalog and other relevant documents;

iii.   sets admissions criteria appropriate to the requirements of the programs that are offered;

iv.   is applied consistently to all applicants;

v.   is regularly evaluated;

vi.   includes qualitative and quantitative requirements that predict the potential for a high level of performance, based on the undergraduate record and other indicators of ability and aptitude;

vii.   differentiates between and among each level of graduate degree offered (graduate certificate, graduate diploma, master's, doctorate);

viii.   develops and sets admissions requirements for each program with input from program faculty members;

ix.   requires the submission of official transcripts of credit earned from all institutions of higher education previously attended;

x.   requires for master's programs a recognized baccalaureate degree earned in a discipline appropriate for the prospective graduate degree with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale or its established equivalent;

xi.   requires for doctoral programs a recognized master's degree earned in a related discipline with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 point scale or its established equivalent;

xii.   requires for programs delivered in English as a medium of instruction a minimum TOEFL score of 550 (213 CBT, 79-80 iBT) or its equivalent in a standardized English language test such as 5.5 IELTS or another standardized, internationally-recognized test that is approved by the Commission;

xiii.   contains clear guidelines (where relevant) for probationary or conditional admission, separately approved by the Commission, including time limits and the requirements for moving to full admission.

c. *Transfer Admissions Policy.* The institution:

i.   specifies that only students transferring from a federal or licensed institution in the U.A.E. or

a recognized foreign institution of higher learning are eligible for admission;

ii. requires transfer students to meet the English language proficiency requirements of the program to which they transfer;

iii. requires for admission to baccalaureate programs the submission of official   transcripts;

iv. requires for admission to graduate programs the submission of official transcripts of credit earned from all institutions of higher education previously attended;

v. specifies that transfers through any articulation agreement meet all criteria for transfer credit;

vi. does not award credit for work or life experiences;

vii. accepts only students for transfer to an undergraduate program of study similar to that from which the student in transferring who are in good academic standing (a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0. scale, or equivalent);

viii. permits students who are not in good standing to transfer only to a program that is in a field different from the one from which the student is transferring;

ix. accepts only students for transfer to a graduate program of study similar to that from which the student in transferring who in good academic standing (a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a4.0.scale, or equivalent);

x. transfers undergraduate program credits only for courses relevant to the degree that provide equivalent learning outcomes and in which the student earned a grade of C (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) or better;

xi. transfers graduate program credits only for courses relevant to the degree that provide equivalent learning outcomes and in which the student earned a grade of B (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) or better;

xii. informs applicants for transfer admissions or re-admission of the transfer credits earned for previous courses;

xiii. limits transferred credit hours to less than 50% of the total credit hours required for the program;

xiv. does not grant credit twice for substantially the same course taken at two different institutions;

xv. allows the transfer of credits for clinical training only when done in the U.A.E.; in exceptional circumstances, the Commission may grant a waiver of this condition.

d. *Career Service Policy.* This policy covers the use of career development services by students, alumni, and employers.

e. *Residence Policy* (where relevant). This policy includes safety and security matters;

f. *Student Finance Policy.* This policy covers tuition and fee payment, refunds, and financial aid.

g. *Student Disciplinary Policy.* This policy is accompanied by regulations and full operational procedures.

h. *Student Academic Dishonesty Policy.* This policy includes plagiarism and cheating, and is accompanied by regulations and full operational procedures.

      i.   *Student Grievance Policy and Procedures.*
      j.   *Student Appeals Policy and Procedures.*
      k.   *Student Activities Policy.* This policy covers the supervisory role of the institution over student activities and student life.
      l.   *Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy.*
      m.   *Student Counseling Policy.*
      n.   *Health Services Policy.*
      o.   *Student Records Policy.* This ensures:
           i.   the continuous maintenance and back up of student records with one set stored in a secure location, preferably off-site in a vault or fireproof cabinet;
           ii.   special security measures to protect and back up computer-generated and stored records;
           iii.   confidentiality of records;
           iv.   a definition of what constitutes the permanent record of each student;
           v.   the right of access to student records, including students' access to their own records;
           vi.   the authority to manage and update student records;
           vii. appropriate retention and disposal of records.
      p.   *Information-Release Policy.* This respects the rights of individual privacy, the confidentiality of records, and the best interests of the student and institution

6.   Library and Other Information Resources
      a.   *Library Policy, Procedures and Regulations.* This policy covers:
           i.   library access, circulation, acquisition, and collection reduction;
           ii.   the role of librarians, teaching faculty, and researchers in the continuous development of collections and review of library policies;
           iii.   operational matters (such as opening hours, staff availability);
           iv.   library services (such as inter-library loan, electronic resources, cooperative arrangements, orientation, training);
           v.   a code of conduct for the use of library resources;
           vi.   image reproduction and copyright law.

7.   Physical and Technology Resources.
      a.   *Equipment and Software Policy.* This policy covers:
           i.   maintenance and schedules for replacement and upgrading;
           ii.   technical support for student-owned hardware and software for students on *e*-learning programs and courses (where relevant).
      b.   *Health and Safety Policy.* This policy includes:
           i.   the requirements of U.A.E. laws and regulations;
           ii.   safety equipment in laboratories and other areas where hazardous materials are used;
           iii.   the orientation of the campus community to safety measures and emergency evacuation procedures;

       iv.   special consideration for those with disabilities;

       v.   special consideration for female students.

   c.   *Use of Technology Resources Policy.* This policy covers:

       i.   appropriate uses and the handling of abuses of the information technology system;

       ii.   academic and administrative needs for information technology resources;

       iii.   confidentiality and integrity of the academic systems, the administrative systems, and the institutional networks.

8. Fiscal Resources

   a.   *External Audit Policy.* This policy requires:

       I.   audits to be conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles;

       ii.   approval of the external auditor by the governing body;

       iii.   open access for the external auditor to all financial records and all persons within the organization who are involved in financial transactions;

       iv.   inclusion of a management letter as part of the auditor's report;

       v.   freedom from interference or intrusion into the auditing process by officials of the institution or others;

       vi.   direct reporting to the governing body or to a committee formed for this purpose by the governing body;

       vii.   a copy of the audited financial statements and management letter to the Commission upon request;

       viii.   a prohibition against any direct connection between the auditors and the institution either personally or professionally.

   b.   *Financial Policy.* This policy governs:

       i.   revenues;

       ii.   receipting;

       iii.   deposits;

       iv.   expenditures;

       v.   authority to enter into contracts;

       vi.   bank reconciliation;

       vii.   production of regular (usually monthly) financial reports;

       viii.   distribution of financial reports;

       ix.   internal auditing;

       x.   fundraising.

   c.   *Purchasing and Inventory Control Policy.* This policy covers:

       i.   authorization for purchases;

       ii.   the assurance of competitive pricing;

       iii.   a mechanism for receipting purchases;

       iv.   inventory maintenance and updating;

       v.   reporting requirements for purchases and inventories.

    d.   *Cash Management Policy.* This policy includes:
  - i.   a clearly defined system for the receipt, deposit, and safeguarding of institutional funds centralized in the business/finance office;
  - ii.   handling of cash receipts by authorized persons only;
  - iii.   use of duplicate receipt forms and maintenance of hard copies of records, or in the case of electronic transaction, maintenance of backup files;
  - iv.   maintenance of electronic files of hard copy receipts;
  - v.   secure holding of receipts prior to deposit;
  - vi.   regular deposits of receipts within approved time frames;
  - vii.   reconciliation of receipts and deposits;

    e.   *Risk Management Policy.* This policy addresses a broad range of risks including financial, health and safety, and enrollment risks and includes a disaster recovery plan for *e*-learning programs and courses.

    f.   *Auxiliary Enterprises Policy* (where relevant). This policy covers budget and reporting practices with procedures and regulations.

9.   Public Disclosure and Integrity

    a.   *Copyright and Intellectual Property Policy.* This encourages the pursuit of knowledge and academic freedom, and covers the ownership of intellectual property created by faculty, staff, or students and the dispersal of any revenues produced.

    b.   *Research Policy* (where relevant). This includes guidelines for research involving human subjects.

10.   Research

    a.   *Research Strategy*, as well as the policies noted in 9, above, if research is relevant to the institution's mission.

II. Institutional Effectiveness Manual

An effective institution can demonstrate how well it achieves its mission. It documents its effectiveness by 1) identifying the expected outcomes of all programs, courses, processes, and services, 2) assessing through a coherent program of institutional research whether it achieves those outcomes, and 3) using an analysis of the results in planning and budgeting to sustain quality and foster institutional improvement.

Institutional effectiveness is essential to maintaining and improving institutional quality. The Commission therefore requires institutions to have an organized, ongoing process for assessment that is documented in a written *Institutional Effectiveness Manual*. The *Institutional Effectiveness Manual* describes the institutional effectiveness system that defines what is to be assessed, by whom, when, and how. For each area of the institution, it describes the type of evidence to be collected and analyzed to evaluate effectiveness, the instruments to be used to collect that data, and the ways in which the results will be evaluated and

incorporated in institutional and program enhancement.

The *Institutional Effectiveness Manual* fully documents the institutional effectiveness system (the *IE system*) that the institution operates. The IE system relates to institutional planning and the *Manual* identifies the institution's planning leadership, committee structure, and time-frame and the ways in which the analysis of data from institutional research relates to short-term and long-term planning and setting budget priorities. The IE system specifies how analyzed data from all institutional research is used to further the mission of the institution and improve the student experience, the faculty experience, all units, functions, and services, and how plans are executed and their implementation is assessed.

A director of institutional research is responsible for the operation, periodic assessment, and revision of the IE system and is supported by sufficient resources—financial, physical, and human—for efficient and effective operation. The IE system describes an annual cycle and appropriately phased timetable for all data gathering, assessment, evaluation and planning activities, listing the assessment tools and methods of analysis.

Because a concern for institutional effectiveness is central to maintaining and improving institutional quality, the IE system offers an analysis of the institution from multiple perspectives to determine whether institutional goals, program and course learning outcomes, and the objectives of service and administrative units are being met.

III. Catalog

The *Catalog* or *Bulletin* is the basic reference document about the institution and its programs for prospective and enrolled students and should be readily available either on-line or in print (or both). The *Catalog* is considered as a contract between the institution and its students so that the rules, regulations, and degree requirements in effect at the time of a student's initial enrollment remain consistent to graduation, assuming normal progress to program completion. The *Catalog* has the following contents:

1. the current academic calendar;
2. a brief statement of institutional history, plans, institutional mission and objectives;
3. a statement about licensure and program accreditation;
4. a brief description of the institution's financial resources, physical setting, community resources, and any cooperative relationships with other educational and cultural institutions;
5. the admission requirements and procedures, including application fees, admissions deadlines, policies on transfer credit, withdrawal and readmission;
6. the financial policies, including all costs (tuition, fees, and other program costs), schedule for payments, and policies and procedures for refunding fees and charges to students who withdraw from enrollment, a description of financial aid policies and opportunities;
7. a description of the availability of student services, including academic advising, personal and career counseling, health services, services for any special groups, extracurricular activities and groups, alumni activities, housing, dining, transportation, bookstore, and other services to the extent that these are

provided by the institution;

8. a statement of student rights and responsibilities, constraints on students, rules for maintaining order on campus, and general process for resolving complaints;
9. a statement about academic honesty, including a definition of plagiarism and other academic offences;
10. a description of governance, including the student role, if any;
11. definitions of academic terminology such as *major, minor*, or *area of concentration* and the number and level of credits required for each (see Appendix D: *Glossary*);
12. course offerings, with required sequences and frequency of course offering explicitly stated, course descriptions, credits, class and lab hours, instructor, course content, and if appropriate, course level and prerequisites;
13. degree and program completion requirements;
14. a description of the general education requirements or program, including outcomes;
15. academic regulations, including the grading system and standards for academic progress;
16. a listing of professional administrative staff and members of the Board;
17. a listing of the faculty with degrees held and the conferring institution.

IV. Faculty Handbook

Written for and directed towards the institution's faculty, the *Faculty Handbook* comprises information that is essential to them. The institution publishes such material specific to the institution's mission as it deems necessary for its faculty; it also ensures that the handbook covers the rules and regulations, practices, expectations, and responsibilities that pertain to the faculty listed under Standard 4 in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual*. It is distributed to all the institution's faculty members.

The Commission requires that each institution adhere to certain definitions and practices and include them and relevant policies in its *Faculty Handbook*. Those policies summarized below and included in detail in the *Policies and Procedures Manual*, should also be described in the *Faculty Handbook*.

1. *Role*: role and responsibilities in the institution; course management requirements; role in governance; academic freedom; organizational and managerial structures; professional ethics; intellectual property rights;
2. *Employment*: full and part-time staff; academic ranks and qualifications; probation and contracts; faculty evaluation; faculty development; leaves; research; consultancy; orientation and supervision;
3. *Promotion*: promotion criteria; applications procedures;
4. *Personnel*: employment requirements and job descriptions; record keeping;
5. *Workload*: limits on workload;
6. *Teaching*: academic preparation; qualifications and teaching assignments; compensation and benefits; grievances; appeals; graduate assistants;
7. *Compensation and benefits*;
8. *Discipline, Grievance and Appeals*;
9. *Graduate Assistants' Policy*.

V.   *Staff Handbook*

When not included in the *Faculty Handbook* or in a *Human Resources Handbook*, information essential for the institution's staff should be compiled into a *Staff Handbook*. Written for and distributed to them, the Handbook includes those rules and regulations, practices, expectations, and responsibilities that pertain to staff members and is specific to its mission.

Among the matters that the *Staff Handbook* should include from its *Policies and Procedures Manual* or other documents are those summarized below.

1. *Role*: organizational and managerial structures; professional ethics; intellectual property rights;
2. *Employment*: full and part-time staff; probation and contracts; evaluation; development; leaves; *orientation*; and supervision;
3. *Promotion*: promotion criteria; applications procedures;
4. *Personnel*: employment requirements and job descriptions; record keeping;
5. *Working conditions*: standard and non-standard workweeks, overtime, or compensatory time;
6. *Compensation and benefits*;
7. *Discipline, Grievance and Appeals*.

VI. *Student Handbook*

Written for and directed to students, the *Student Handbook* comprises information that is essential to them. It is distributed to all the institution's students.

The institution publishes such material as it deems necessary for its students but ensures that it covers the rules and regulations governing academic courses and programs and campus life, the opportunities available to students, the support services they can access, the facilities provided-such as the library, learning support centers, computer laboratories, recreation areas, dining services-and the expectations for their academic performance and behavior on campus. The *Student Handbook* contains information regarding student rights and responsibilities (including academic integrity and a definition of plagiarism), and a clear description of the nature, extent, and availability of all student services and activities. It details the way in which students may access academic advisors, career counselors and placement services, alumni services, and the health facilities and staff.

The *Student Handbook* therefore includes information concerning relevant policies listed under Standard 3 and Standard 5 in Appendix A: *Policies and Procedures Manual* pertinent to the institution and its students. This will include admissions, academic progress, grading, assessment, supervision, examinations, academic advising, careers, residence, finance (including financial aid), student discipline, academic offences, grievances, appeals, student activities and student life, student rights and responsibilities, student counseling, health services, student records, privacy and confidentiality. In the *Student Handbook*, such material is worded for the student readership, but the coverage should nevertheless be consistent with the *Policies and Procedures Manual* and complete.

VII. By-Laws of the Governing Body

The by-laws of the governing body (the *Board*) regulate its responsibilities and procedures. A clear distinction is drawn between the policy-making and fiduciary functions of the Board and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy; this is evident both in the by-laws and in the operation of the board. The board is responsible for the by-laws of the institution; these by-laws include the following.

1   **Membership and protocol.** The board:
   a.   consists of duly appointed or elected members in accordance with the institution's policies and procedures;
   b.   has a membership that ensures an appropriate balance of individuals with the range of expertise necessary to guide the policies and strategic planning of the institution;
   c.   has members representing the U.A.E. community;
   d.   ensures that investors in the institution do not form the majority of Board members;
   e.   stipulates the term of office for board members;
   f.   establishes a policy concerning conflict of interest including prohibitions and limitations on financial dealings between board members and the institution;
   g.   approves the institution's by-laws;
   h.   meets at least twice annually;
   i.   maintains official records of all meetings.

2   **Responsibilities.** The board:
   a.   appoints the chief executive officer;
   b.   establishes broad institutional policies;
   c.   approves and periodically reviews the institution's mission and its strategic plans;
   d.   approves educational programs of a quality consistent with the institution's mission;
   e.   confers, or authorizes the conferring of, academic degrees;
   f.   secures financial resources to support the institutional goals adequately;
   g.   approves the annual budget;
   h.   approves major facilities, contracts, and campus plans unless otherwise delegated;
   i.   ensures that the institution is subject to an annual external audit;
   j.   approves the selection of an external auditor and receives the auditor's report.

3   **Jurisdiction.** The board:
   a.   avoids interference in management decisions or with internal academic bodies;
   b.   is not involved in the day-to-day operation of the institution.

4   **Review.** The board:
   a.   evaluates the performance of the chief executive officer and approves his or her contract and continuance in office;
   b.   evaluates its own performance and the performance of individual members and uses that evaluation for improvement.

VIII. Organization Chart

Organization charts provide a convenient way to visualize and understand the official relationships within an organization in terms of rank. A good organization chart outlines the reporting structure of the institution's major units and offices—for example, the board, the offices of the chief executive officer, the chief academic officer, the chief student affairs officer, the chief finance officer, the deans, and the department chairs. The organization chart indicates hierarchical relationships and lateral relationships between different departments. The organization chart should identify all offices and personnel responsible for the major activities of the institution, such as the office responsible for institutional research. It is, however, most effective as a tool when it is not too cluttered with detail and enables those unfamiliar with the institution to understand readily who is responsible for which functions.

IX. Feasibility Study, Financial Analysis, and Timed Action Plan

Feasibility Study. In determining whether to grant licensure to a new institution or program accreditation to a new program, among the most important questions for reviewers and the Commission, are whether the mission and programs proposed by the institution meet a need in the community and the U.A.E. and whether a sufficient number of prospective students is interested in those programs and available to sustain them. A well-designed feasibility study is therefore a key document in the proposal. At the very least the study should provide *evidence* in the form of market data and other studies that responds to the following questions:

1. What is the need for the program, based on market survey of prospective students and of prospective employers of graduates?
2. Who will the students be? –including numbers, backgrounds, and other pertinent information.
3. Where will they come from?
4. Which are the competing institutions offering comparable programs in the same geographic area?
5. Why will students select the proposed institution or program rather than its competitors?
6. Who will hire the graduates of the proposed programs? What is the demonstrated need for graduates who have the learning outcomes the programs propose to provide?

Financial Analysis. Another major consideration in licensing new institutions is whether they have the financial resources to sustain the institution over time, particularly should the forecast of student numbers prove overly optimistic. The required financial analysis covers at least five years of operation, including the sources of anticipated revenues and all anticipated expenses including the costs of meeting licensure and accreditation requirements, capital, operating, personnel expenses, and a contingency fund. Sufficient detail is included so that the basis of calculation of each item is clear. The analysis also offers three different revenue forecasts—optimal, average, minimal—based on student intake, which in turn should be based on the analysis of the potential market and the competition within it.

Timed Action Plan. Applicants for initial licensure submit a *timed action plan*, a plan that documents

step-by-step—with dates and deadlines—everything necessary to realize the institution's mission and the delivery of its proposed programs from the time of the initial application through the first three years of the institution's operation. The plan includes:

1. each faculty and staff position required to plan, organize, and operate the campus and its programs;
2. deadlines for submitting academic programs for initial accreditation;
3. the dates of planned appointments;
4. each of the steps so that the necessary facilities, infrastructure, programs, library, equipment, instructional technology, services, and other resources are in place prior to the intended date of enrolling students.

X. Syllabus Guidelines

For each course offered, the institution provides a descriptive syllabus, which is a comprehensive document containing sufficient information to ensure that:

1. those involved in curriculum development understand any prerequisites or co-requisites and the learning outcomes of the course;
2. external reviewers understand the course's contribution to the program and connection to other courses in the curriculum;
3. students who take the course understand what they need to have achieved in order to take the course, what will be expected of them during the course, and what they will have achieved having taken the course;
4. any suitably qualified instructor could deliver the course satisfactorily within the curriculum;
5. sufficient information on the course is available for the purposes of course and program review (program effectiveness).

Each course description must include the following information, along with anything else the institution chooses to add:

1. course title and course code/number, credit hours, pre-requisites (if any), co-requisites (if any);
2. name, contact information and office hours of the current instructor;
3. brief course description;
4. intended Learning Outcomes of the course;
5. course topics and contents on a week-by-week basis;
6. out-of-class assignments with due dates for submission;
7. methods and dates of student evaluation, including the relative weight of various assessment methods in determining the course grade;
8. teaching and learning methodologies;
9. course texts, recommended reading, instructional material and resources.

XI. Additional Supporting Documentation for e-Learning

1. Organization chart illustrating the relationship between *e*-learning education and the institution's academic units;
2. Organization of the *e*-learning education unit;
3. Listing of any off-campus *e*-learning sites with the names of programs offered and their directors;
4. Any brochures and announcements pertaining to *e*-learning courses and programs;
5. List of all *e*-learning programs and courses taught in the past three years including: instructional formats, course title, length of course, number of credits, enrollment, and locations, as appropriate;
6. Information concerning any off-campus sites used for tutoring or proctored examinations.
7. Information about training courses offered to or required of students pursuing *e*-learning programs.

Appendix B

Policy on Substantive Change

Licensure and accreditation assure that an institution has established the policies, procedures, personnel, programs, and other conditions to fulfill its mission. Because institutions change constantly, periodic reviews confirm that the institution continues to adhere to the *Standards* and to fulfill its mission. Some changes, however, may have an immediate effect on the scope, quality, integrity, or effectiveness of the institution. Any such *substantive* changes initiated after the most recent review for licensure or program accreditation must be reported to the Commission and reviewed for approval before it is made.

Institutions should discuss prospective changes with the staff of the Commission. The Commission will determine the type and extent of review the change warrants, whether it is to be an on-site review by a Commissioner or an external review. Some changes are sufficiently limited in nature and scope that they may be approved with minimal review; others require an extensive review.

1. Types of Substantive Change. Institutions must inform the Commission of changes like the ones noted below. They include, but are not limited to, those that:
    i.   change the legal status or form of control of the institution, including a change in ownership or a merger with another institution;
    ii. significantly alter the mission, goals, or objectives of an institution or of a program;
    iii. introduce courses or programs at a different degree level from that which has been accredited;
    iv. establish instruction in a significantly different format (such as an intensive term) or method of delivery (such as *e*-learning programs);
    v.   relocate the primary campus or establish instruction at a new location, such as a branch or additional campus;
    vi. close one of the institution's locations;
    vii. make significant changes in the organizational structure, such as separating one unit or institution into two or joining two separate units;
    viii. establish a joint, dual, or concurrent degree with another institution, or in a field of study, degree level, or mode of delivery not previously included in the institution's licensure or program accreditation;
    ix. form a contractual relationship with another organization to provide instructional services;
    x.   make major reductions in program offerings;
    xi. increase or decrease the number of credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program or the length of the program;
    xii. offer non-credit courses or activities that affect the mission or alter faculty workload.

2. Notice to the Commission
    i.   Before the change. An institution considering a substantive change should notify the Commission early in its planning and meet with a Commissioner shortly thereafter. This provides an opportunity for the Commission to counsel the institution about the potential

impact of the change in its status, if any, and the procedures that need to be followed.

ii.　Upon deciding to initiate the change. The institution must give the Commission a report at least six months before the date the change is to be implemented. The report should provide the necessary information and analysis in as concise a presentation as possible. Most reports should be fewer than 25 pages; a one page executive summary should be attached. Reports are to include 1) a justification of the change with a detailed description and analysis of it, evidence of the need for it, and authorization by the governing body and other relevant parties, and 2) a projection of any developments anticipated as a result of the change. The following information should be included:

a.　rationale for change, relationship of change to mission;

b.　descriptions of changes in program or institutional design;

c.　faculty and staff needs to implement changes, qualifications of faculty;

d.　library and other learning resources and facilities required;

e.　physical plan expansion and equipment required;

f.　projection of needs over the next several years, including estimates of the additional costs;

g.　evidence that the institution has adhered to the *Standards for e-Learning* if the proposed change involves offering *e*-learning programs or courses.

3.　Evaluation by the Commission. When it receives the report, the Commission will review the change, determining the scope and type of evaluation required. The Commission may decide to:

i.　approve the change without conditions;

ii.　approve the change with specified conditions;

iii.　require an on-site visit by the Commission;

iv.　require an on-site visit by an external team;

v.　defer consideration;

vi.　deny the proposed change.

4.　Notification and Status. Only after the Commission has notified the institution that the change is acceptable may it assume that it has not affected and will not affect its institutional licensure or program accreditation. If an institution proceeds with the change without Commission approval, it risks jeopardizing its status.

Appendix C

Guidelines for Good Practice in Practicums or Internships

An internship or practicum provides students with guided work experience that, ideally, enables the student to connect academic learning to the workplace and meet other goals. Internships and practicums have long been a vital component and an inherent aspect of the education of students in the fields of health sciences, education, and engineering, and, increasingly, of the curriculum of other disciplines as well.

Any institution offering internships for credit is to demonstrate that it follows these *Guidelines for Good Practice.* Through a central office or individual departments, the institution ensures that:

1. Prospective employers are screened for their suitability as placement sites for internships; they provide:
    i.   safe and reputable environments for students;
    ii.   pertinent work experiences;
    iii. work experiences suitable to fulfill the institution's expectations for learning outcomes.
2. Official agreements with placement sites are signed by both parties, kept current and on file. Such agreements define the responsibilities and obligations of both the institution and the placement site.
3. Employers commit to enabling students to meet their learning objectives with a job description and suitable assignments.
4. With the help of an academic advisor, students develop their specific learning goals for the internship.
5. Students formally reflect on their internship or practicum experience, and the achievement of outcomes is measured.
6. Students are oriented to the skills, knowledge, and behaviors they need to succeed.
7. An effective mechanism for matching students with prospective employers exists.
8. The effectiveness of the placement site for learning is monitored, and feedback about both student and supervisor performance is gathered.
9. An internship and practicum manual delineates:
    i.   the responsibilities of the placement supervisor, the student, and the faculty advisor;
    ii.   the place of the internship in the curriculum, whether elected or required;
    iii. the credit hours to be earned and methods of evaluation.
10. The practicum or internship is supervised by faculty members in the department or program to which the practicum/internship applies.
11. The internship program is regularly evaluated, both in terms of individual student experiences and the program as a whole, and the results are demonstrably used for modification and improvement.

Appendix D

Glossary of Terms

Institutional Names [4].   The institutional name should accurately convey its scope and type. The inclusion of a national name should not be done as a marketing tool. Such names imply that the institution follows the educational norms of another nation's institutions of higher education. The public expects that an institutional called "British" or "American," for example, is comparable in most ways to the academic institutions of those nations, that credits and degrees earned would be transferable to and/or recognized by institutions in the other country.

1.   **University.** A large, diverse institution of higher education and research that offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Universities are typically composed of a number of *colleges* or *schools* devoted to the study of closely related disciplines or a single discipline, such as the College of Engineering, the School of Public Health.

2.   **College.** A smaller institution of higher education typically focused on undergraduate education, although some colleges offer a limited range of graduate programs. *College* is also the term for a unit within a university, synonymous with a *Faculty*, such as the College of Business Administration or the Faculty of Business Administration.

3.   **School.** The term *school* may refer to a unit within a university, as noted above, or it may refer to an educational institution that offers education at a secondary or lower level, such as the British School, the Indian School.

4.   **Institute.** An *institute* is an organization created for a specified purpose, usually research or the promotion of a cause. An educational *institute* tends to be devoted to technical fields, such as the Petroleum Institute or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

5.   **Academy.** An *academy* usually offers education at the secondary or high school level. The term is also used for a post-secondary educational institution or society devoted to a single subject, often in the arts, such as an academy of art or dramatic arts.

6.   **University College.** The term *university college* has so many different meanings in different countries and in different contexts that it is best avoided. It almost always refers to a unit within a university; in the US that unit provides continuing or adult education or serves as the academic home for lower-division undergraduate students. In Canada, the UK, and elsewhere the university college may be a constituent college of a university or an independent institution of higher education.

Degrees and Academic Awards. The Ministry recommends that its institutions follow the practice typical of the English-speaking world in naming degrees. The following are the most common degrees offered.

1.   **Non-degree awards.** Although the requirements for the different levels of degrees noted vary somewhat, they are far more standardized than are certificates and diplomas. The CAA recommends the following use of these academic awards.

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[4] The definitions for the following terms are by no means precise. Usage varies somewhat from country to country, and also within countries; however, the *Glossary* contains the most common uses of the terms.

i. **Certificates** are awarded for a relatively brief, prescribed period of training in a given field or concentrated subject area, often technical, such as a certificate in word processing or pesticide management. Certification indicates that the individual has a specific set of knowledge, skills, or abilities in the view of the certifying body. Professional bodies and corporations as well as academic institutions award certificates.

ii. **Diploma, Higher Diploma** are terms that indicate the recipient has completed a course of study, though the precise length of that study varies from institution to institution. The *diploma* often, though not always, indicates a course of study equivalent to the associate's degree of approximately two years' length. The *higher diploma* may indicate a course of study of three years in a specialized field.

2. Undergraduate degrees.

i. **Associate degrees**. An associate degree usually requires a minimum of two but less than four years of full-time academic study and a minimum of 60 earned credits. An associate degree is often termed a "diploma" in the U.A.E.. Typical degrees include the AA, Associate of Arts; AS, Associate of Science; AOS, Associate of Occupational Studies; ABA, Associate of Business Administration; and AGS, Associate of General Studies.

ii. **Baccalaureate or Bachelor's degrees**. A bachelor's degree normally requires at least four but no more than five years of full-time study to complete with a minimum of 120 earned credits. The most common undergraduate degrees are the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Science. Institutions typically award the BA for academic programs in the humanities and the BS for programs in the physical sciences. Some colleges may award the BA for all *academic* (rather than pre-professional) subjects, whether they are English or biology. Schools that offer professional training, such as nursing or accounting, often reserve the BS degree for these subjects. But the common degrees are the BA and the BS. One awards a BA in English or a BS in biology, not a Bachelor of English or a Bachelor of Biology.
Other common bachelor's degrees are:

BArch	Bachelor of Architecture
BBA	Bachelor of Business Administration
BFA	Bachelor of Fine Arts
BM, BMus	Bachelor of Music
LL.B.	Bachelor of Laws (the US degree is a post-graduate professional degree, the JD or Juris Doctor)
BSE	Bachelor of Science in Engineering
BEng	Bachelor of Engineering

3. Graduate degrees. Graduate degrees in the U.A.E. are taught degrees; they include a significant component of coursework in addition to any supervised research or practice.

i. **Postgraduate diploma**. Common in law, the program of study typically includes one year or at least 24 credits of course work beyond the bachelor's.

ii. **Master's degree**. This degree typically requires at least one year of study or a minimum of 30

credits of course work beyond the bachelor's degree. Often requires a major research paper, a thesis, or a major project. As is the case for the baccalaureate, the MA and MS (or MSc) are the basic degrees, awarded in the subject, such as an MA in English (not Master of English or Master of English Literature), an MS (or MSc) in Chemistry, not Master of Chemistry). The M.B.A., M.P.A., M.S.W, and other professional degrees normally require two or more years of full-time study beyond the baccalaureate. Extensive undergraduate preparation in the field may reduce the length of study to one year.

iii. **Professional degrees**. These are awarded in certain professional fields, such as law and the health professions. In some countries, these degrees are at the level of the master's degree; in others, more study is required and they are considered terminal degrees.

Pharm.D., D.P.T., Au.D., and similar degrees. These are entry level clinical practice degrees normally requiring two to three years of full-time study beyond a baccalaureate.

M.D., J.D., D.D.S.   First professional degrees, generally requiring a baccalaureate for entry and three or more years of prescribed postgraduate work

Ed. D., Psy.D., D.B.A. Degrees with an emphasis on professional knowledge. These doctoral degrees normally require three or more years of prescribed graduate work beyond the master's degree.

iv. **Academic doctorate**. The Ph.D. typically requires two years or more of coursework (60 credits) beyond the master's degree as well as academic research. Doctorates are nearly always awarded partly in recognition of academic research that is of a publishable standard (even if not actually published) and that represents some contribution to human knowledge. The research is usually assessed by submission and defense of a doctoral thesis or dissertation. The usual award is the Ph.D., the doctor of philosophy.

4. **Joint, Dual or Concurrent Degrees.**   While the terms for various arrangements in which students study simultaneously from or for two degree programs are not entirely consistent among institutions, the definitions below are used by the Commission:

i. **Joint degree**. A single degree awarded by two institutions.

ii. **Dual or concurrent degrees**. Two degrees, awarded by one or two institutions to students who have been admitted to each degree program, based on the normal qualifications. At the undergraduate level, students must typically take the equivalent of a full year of study beyond the first baccalaureate degree to earn the second degree. At the graduate level, enrollment in a dual or concurrent degree program typically results in a reduction in time; for example, a reduction in total time of a semester for two degrees that if taken separately would require four years of full-time study.

Terms Related to the Faculty

1. **Term of Appointment.**

i. **Part-time**. A part-time faculty member is defined as one whose major commitment is not to the institution concerned. Although part-time faculty members are subject to the same requirements

for employment as full-time and enjoy comparable benefits, their teaching assignment is limited to a maximum of six hours a week or six credit hours a semester.

 ii. **Full-time**. A full-time faculty member is defined as one whose primary employment is with the institution concerned and who receives the contract of a full-time employee with the primary assignment in teaching and / or research.

2. Rank.

 i. **Professor**. An appointment requiring an earned doctoral or terminal degree or equivalent and demonstrated, sustained high quality teaching, wide recognition for scholarly activities, and substantial service to the university and appropriate outside communities.

 ii. **Associate Professor**. An appointment requiring an earned doctoral or terminal degree or equivalent and demonstrated high quality teaching, recognition for scholarly activities, and service to the university and community.

 iii. **Assistant Professor**. An appointment requiring an earned doctoral or terminal degree or equivalent and potential for excellence in teaching and research.

 iv. **Senior Lecturer**. An appointment requiring an earned doctoral or terminal degree or equivalent and potential for excellence in teaching and research. The position of Senior Lecturer may be equivalent to an Associate Professor or an Assistant Professor.

 v. **Lecturer**. An appointment requiring at least a master's degree or equivalent professional qualifications.

 vi. **Instructor**. An appointment requiring a master's degree, or a bachelor's degree and equivalent professional qualifications.

 vii. **Adjunct (Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, or Senior Lecturer).** An appointment as adjunct is offered to persons not regularly or primarily employed within the academic unit to which the appointment is made. Because of training, experience, credentials, and interest, adjunct faculty are invited to participate to varying degrees and period of time in the teaching, research, and/or instructional programs of academic departments.

 viii. **Visiting (Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, or Senior Lecturer).** A guest appointment normally offered to a faculty member from another institution and appointed at the rank of that institution. Responsibilities will normally be similar to those of faculty in the department to which the appointment is made.

Courses and Programs

1. Course or Module. A course consists of a number of instructional activities over a prescribed period of time. It deals with a single subject and is commonly described by title, number, credits, and expected learning outcomes in the catalog. A *module* sometimes refers to a sub-division within a course covering a topic or part of a topic. In the British system, the term *module* is synonymous with *course*.

2. Program. The set of courses and other formally established learning experiences which constitute a program of study (see *curriculum* below). *Program* may also refer to a specific aspect of the

curriculum, such as the general education *program* or a study abroad *program*.

3. **Curriculum**. The term refers both to the range of courses offered by an institution and to a set of related courses constituting an area of specialization, such as the computer science *curriculum* or the civil engineering *curriculum*.

4. **Credits and the credit system**. The academic credit provides a basis to measure the amount of engaged learning time expected of a typical student enrolled in traditional classroom settings and in laboratories, studios, internships and other experiential learning, and *e*-learning. A credit hour is a unit of measurement toward attaining a degree. In the U.A.E., 1 credit equals approximately 1 hour of time in class over the course of a semester of 15 weeks or longer. It is assumed that a student spends 2 hours out of class in independent study or specific course assignments for every hour in class or a total of 45 hours minimum. Satisfactory completion of courses earns credits, which accumulate toward the total required for a particular degree. Most courses offer 3 credits. 120 credits is a typical minimal requirement for a baccalaureate degree.

5. **Semester, term**. A *semester* is the period of time, typically a minimum of 15 weeks, during which an institution offers courses. Some courses may be offered in a time-shortened period, often called a *term*, such as a summer *term*, which nonetheless offers class contact time and out-of-class assignments equivalent to a semester course.

6. **Developmental / Remedial Courses or Programs**. Such courses or programs prepare a student for enrolling in a regular college curriculum and aid the student in rectifying an area or areas of deficiency. These are non-credit and do not count toward a degree.

7. **Lower Division**. Courses at a level of comprehension usually associated with first and second year students and offered during the first half of a baccalaureate degree program are called lower division courses. These courses are numbered at a lower level than junior (third year) or senior (fourth year) courses (that is, 100 or 200 instead of 300 or 400).

8. **Upper Division**. Courses at a level of comprehension usually associated with third and fourth year students and offered during the last half of a baccalaureate degree program. In general, these courses are numbered at a higher level than the freshmen (first year) or sophomore (second year) level courses (such as 300 or 400 numbered courses as opposed to 100 or 200 numbered courses).

9. **Major, concentration, track**. The *major* or *concentration* is the field of study in which a student specializes. The major usually requires that a student complete between a minimum of one year of course work, or 30 credits, in the subject area and half or more of the total number of credits for the degree with most courses at the upper division level. A track is a narrow area within the major field, which the student may choose to follow, but which does not lead to a specialized award or degree and is not listed on the diploma. To earn a *double major*, a student must meet the subject-area requirements of each of the two majors.

10. **Minor**. The field of study in which a student has a secondary area of specialization, requiring less course work than the major. Minors typically require that students earn 15 or more credits in subject area courses at both the upper and lower division levels.

11. **Electives**. Courses which are not required. *Electives* may be *free*-selected by the student from any course offerings, or *restricted*-chosen from a pre-determined list of options.

12. **General Education**. General education is that aspect of the curriculum intended to provide 1)

practice in thinking critically, 2) an understanding of the approaches to knowledge of the major categories of disciplines (such as science, humanities, arts, social sciences), 3) a common core of understanding among students (such as Islamic studies or history), and 4) a level of skill appropriate to higher education in mathematics, information literacy, and communications.

Self-Study. After an institution is first licensed and its programs accredited, further reviews for continued licensure or accreditation require a *Self-Study*. The term *Self-Study* refers both to a process and a report. In the process of a *Self-Study*, members of the institution's community systematically examine evidence of institutional effectiveness, analyze that evidence against the criteria and *Standards*, and determine the extent to which the institution has achieved each of the criterion and the standard as a whole and the extent to which it achieved its targeted benchmarks. A self-study *report 1*) describes the current state of the institution, 2) summarizes the analysis of institutional strengths and weaknesses in terms of each *standard*, and 3) projects actions and plans to ensure that its strengths will be maintained and its areas of weakness improved. The Commission's *Self-Study Guidelines* provides more detailed guidance for institutions on both the process and the report.

Planning. Risk management, strategic planning, and benchmarking are significant planning methodologies to enable institutions better to prepare for their futures and to realize their missions and goals. These planning processes are complex and beyond the level of a simple glossary explanation, such as those given below. Institutions should consult the extensive literature in print and on the web that exists on strategic planning, benchmarking, and risk management. The website of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (www.hefce.ac.uk) offers several useful documents including Guide 01/28, "Risk management: a guide to good practice for higher education institutions" and Report 00/24, "Strategic planning in higher education."

1.   **Strategic Planning.** Strategic planning begins with the institution's mission and vision and an analysis of its current strengths and weaknesses. At the simplest level, a strategic plan appraises the environment in which the institution operates—both the internal environment for strengths and weaknesses and the external environment for threats and opportunities. After this environmental scan, it develops strategic initiatives to fulfill the institutional mission and achieve its goals, taking maximum advantage of trends and matching strengths to opportunities. The plan sets priorities for implementation among the strategic initiatives and establishes indicators to assess progress in their achievement.

2.   **Benchmarking.** Whether benchmarking in a specific area or overall, the institution begins by identifying the very best among a comparison group of institutions, programs, courses, or processes. Which one sets the standard? What is that standard? How is that standard achieved? Once the institution identifies those practices ("best practices") that led to setting the standard, the institution measures itself against them, using various research techniques to identify problem areas that need to be improved.

3.   **Risk Management Planning.** *Risk Management* involves developing a plan to manage whatever action or event might adversely or beneficially affect the institution and its ability to achieve its mission. Planning includes identifying possible risks, determining the extent to which they are

likely and whether their impact would be high or low, and developing a process and actions to minimize institutional exposure.

4. **Facilities Master Plan.** A facilities master plan addresses an institution's physical spaces and character as they relate to its overall development and strategic planning. The plan includes an analysis of the audit of current facilities and their condition, their use and projected use, and in developing the strategies for the future, considers the campus location, size, form, character, image, and environment. The plan is both for campus buildings and the outdoor spaces that surround them. Like other major planning documents, the facilities master plan is updated annually and serves as a tool to prioritize needs and make short- and long-term strategic decisions.

Off-Campus Learning

1. **Distance Learning**. A formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction occurs when a student and instructor are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Distance education may employ correspondence study, audio, video and/or other electronic technologies.

2. ***e*-learning**. A form of teaching and learning using electronic means of delivery, usually web-based. *e*-learning uses network technologies to create, foster, deliver, and facilitate learning, anytime and anywhere.

3. **An *e*-learning platform**. A software system that is used to deliver and support web-based instruction and learning. Through a learning platform, hardware, software, and supporting services are brought together, integrating instructional materials from various media, providing tools to aid with course administration, establishing an on-line learning space, and, depending on the platform, linking with such institutional systems as records and registration.

4. **Blended learning**. Refers to combining approaches to learning, such as self-paced, collaborative, or inquiry-based study. Blended learning occurs when virtual and physical resources are blended as when technology-mediated sessions, face-to-face sessions and electronic or print materials are combined.

5. **External programs**. Teaching and learning take place in locations away from the main campus of the institution.

6. **Branch Campus**. This is the location of an institution that is geographically apart and from a main campus but related to it. A branch campus typically 1) is permanent in nature; 2) offers at least 50% of the courses of an educational program leading to a degree or other academic award; 3) has its own faculty and administrative organization; and 4) has its own budgetary authority. The home campus continues to be responsible for what is done in its name by the branch campus and for the quality and validity of its academic awards. When an institution has more than one campus in the U.A.E., coordination between the campuses is regulated through an approved institutional policy.

Conflict of Interest. A conflict of interest occurs when competing professional or personal obligations or personal or financial interests exist in a given situation, making it difficult for one to exercise impartial judgment or to fulfill one's responsibilities fairly.