Executive Summary

Renewal of Institutional Licensure
Umm Al Quwain University
Umm Al Quwain

19 – 22 September 2022

An External Review Team (ERT) visited Umm Al Quwain University (UAQU) from 19-22 September 2022, to evaluate the Applications (hereafter the *Self-Studies*) for Renewal of Institutional Licensure (RIL). The findings of the ERT reflect its observations at the time of the review and relate to the *Standards for Licensure and Accreditation 2019* (hereinafter referred to as the *Standards*) and the *Procedural Manual for Renewal of Institutional Licensure 2019 (PM-RIL)*. The exit interview was held on 22 September 2022.

Umm Al Quwain University (UAQU) was established as Emirates Canadian University College (ECUC) in 2007 to award degrees/qualifications in higher education and received its institutional license on 8 March 2008 by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the United Arab Emirates. In 2015 ECUC obtained the Renewal of Licensure Following an extensive review of operations, facilities, services, and programs. ECUC received accreditation for its first program, a BA in English and Translation in 2009. Subsequently, Bachelors programs in Business Administration, Mass Communications and, as of March 2014, Law have been accredited. The ownership of ECUC was transferred in September 2012 to the Government of Umm Al Quwain represented by His Highness Sheikh Saud bin Rashid Al Mu'alla, the Ruler of Umm Al Quwain, and his partners In 2019 the university's name became Umm Al Quwain University (UAQU).

UAQU consists of four colleges: College of Business Administration, College of Art and Science (English Language and Translation), College of Law, and College of Mass Communication with a total students count of 511 as of spring of 2021. The University offers 4 undergraduate programs at the bachelor's level, UAQU currently offers 4 undergraduate programs in a broad range of disciplines: Business Administration, Mass Communication, Law, and English language and Translation. Some of these programs have different concentrations. The Bachelor of Business Administration has three concentrations (Accounting, Finance, and Human Resources) whereas the Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication has three concentrations (Public Relations, Journalism, and New Media) which are offered in Arabic. Also, the UAQU offers a Bachelor of English Language & Translation and a Bachelor of Law. The Sociology program will be offered by the College of Arts and Sciences.

As of Fall Semester 2022, UAQU enrolled 586 students. The total number of full-time faculty in the university during Fall 2022 is 36 (4 at Professor rank, and 5 at Associate Professor rank, 14 at Assistant Professor ranks, and 3 Lecturers). The current institutional student to full-time faculty with a terminal degree ratio is 22:1.

In Fall of 2022, UAQU moved to a new campus consisting of with a built-up area of 17850 sq m. The new campus includes comprises of modern classrooms, theatres & lecture halls, sports hall, library,

workshop, and administration offices. A restaurant is being planned for Khalifa City, Al-Salama District which can cater to all the needs of UAQU.

The ERT would like to commend UAQU on recent significant improvements to its operation in the following areas:

<u>Facilities</u>. The move to the new campus is a major step forward, offering an immediate improvement in facilities, environment and additional buildings and space for future expansion.

<u>Quality Assurance Framework.</u> UAQU now has effectively implemented a sound framework for quality assurance which provides a basis for continuing quality enhancement.

<u>Support and Commitment</u>. ERT found a clear sense of enthusiasm and commitment shared between leaders, faculty, professional staff, and students.

<u>Alumni and Advisory Boards.</u> UAQU provided evidence that alumni and those involved in advisory board activities are very supportive and committed to the ongoing success of the institution.

Matters that need addressing to bring the programs in full compliance with the *Standards* can be grouped into three thematic areas:

<u>Accreditation.</u> The *Self-Studies* and the associated evidence were not prepared to the expected quality. The difference between the quality of the submission, and the quality of the areas the submission is supposed to document and evidence, was significant. In several areas, the *Self-Studies* provided no useful information whatsoever and failed to address the *PM-RIL*. As a result, there are many requirements addressed, at the time of the review visit, that simply insist that UAQU undertake the descriptions and analyses, together with comprehensive evidence, that should have been provided prior to this review.

<u>Policies and Procedures</u>. The current Policies and Procedures Manual is inadequate. While UAQU has policy headings that cover most needs, the substantive material is very poor. Presently, most policies are no more that section headings with a general narrative explanation. All structure and formality is missing. This weakness is accompanied by the lack of a systematic approach to policy development, review, and revision. Finally, since UAQU employs many mono-lingual Arabic speakers and offers programs in Arabic, all institutional documents should be available in both Arabic and English.

<u>Internal Governance</u>. UAQU has a sensible set of standing committees and there is good evidence that these are operating. However, there are some weaknesses. At present the description and remit of the standing committees is weak, lacking complete and precise terms of reference, details of membership, and logistical information such as the frequency of meetings and reporting lines. As a result, committees are not operating as well as they should. Moreover, the template for meeting minutes lacks an item covering matters arising, and decisions are not accompanied clearly by assigned responsibilities. All this militates against loop closure and weakens quality assurance.

<u>Research.</u> With recent strong faculty appointments and leadership in this area, there is now a good opportunity to focus on research more fully. The current strategy has adequate goals but focuses too much on monitoring and performance management of researchers rather than committing institutional

leaders to ensure the environment is properly supportive of research. UAQU ought to take this opportunity to review the mechanisms for research support that UAQU has documented to ensure that these, or revised mechanisms, are properly funded, managed, and communicated.

Accommodation. Despite the new building, the working facilities for faculty are poor. Faculty offices are the poorest spaces on campus, despite the fact that faculty are the focus of the mission and responsible for delivering all major pillars of the mission.

Website. The website will need significant work in light of many of the findings during review time. As for the hard-copy handbooks and manuals, the website needs to be fully and compressively offered in both languages.

Community Engagement. UAGU provides good evidence of activities and outlines a strategy in this area. This strategy should be reviewed and revised in order to ensure that its goals properly align with its objectives and performance indicators.

The ERT makes its recommendations in a spirit of constructive engagement, with the aim of ensuring that the *Standards* are met, and to aid UAQU in its desired objective to obtain the Renewal of Institutional Licensure.