Chapter 2: Academic Quality Assurance Framework

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Academic Quality Assurance Framework
The Academic Quality Assurance Framework has been adapted from the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area, May 2015.

The Framework sets out the structures, responsibilities, processes and timelines for ensuring that academic programs are fit-for-purpose, viable, and meet national and international standards, and that students have a comparable educational experience regardless of where they study.

The HCT Framework consists of the components listed below each of which is described in following Chapters.

3. Key Structures for Quality Assurance
4. Design, Approval and Modification of Programs
5. Academic Program Quality Review
6. Course Quality Review
7. Assessment and Grading
8. Faculty
9. Students
10. Teaching and Learning Resources
11. Public Information - Academic Programs
12. Academic Information Management
13. Cyclical External Quality Assurance

Institutional Quality Assurance Framework
The Institutional QA Framework includes all administrative departments, units, services and processes. The Framework is being developed as part of the ISO Integrated Management System (IMS) project which is being overseen by the HCT’s Strategy and Future Division. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2018.

Evaluation of the QA Framework
Internal Review
The Academic Quality Assurance framework is reviewed by the Academic Council (refer Chapter 3) on a regular basis to ensure that the Framework is meeting expectations and being implemented effectively.

External Review
To ensure that it is fit-for-purpose, the quality assurance framework for academic programs will undergo periodic evaluation by external experts.
Commission for Academic Accreditation
The Ministry of Education of the United Arab Emirates requires that each program of one academic year or longer leading to the award of an academic degree, certificate, or diploma is accredited by the Commission for Academic Accreditation.

Accreditation for new programs lasts up to two years after the first cohort of students graduate from the program. Renewal of accreditation is required every five years.

Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC)
The HCT is required to obtain a "No Objection" letter from ADEC before applying to the CAA for approval to offer a new Bachelor’s or Master’s program in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

The ADEC criteria look at the quality of educational provisions, access to higher education, alignment with the national development plans as well as an aspiration to establish a knowledge-based society through evaluating the impact and the 'value added' that the new programs bring to the HE system and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi society at large.

International & Professional Accrediting and Licensing Agencies
In order to ensure that programs meet accepted international or professional standards, each academic program is expected to seek and obtain international or professional accreditation/licensure from an appropriate agency.

Furthermore, Academic Faculties are expected to align programs with professional certifications wherever possible to ensure currency with developments and standards within the field.