

## AUTHORIZATION OF NEW HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ABU DHABI

---

Standards & Procedure Manual – **2023**

# | Foreword

This procedure manual presents the 2023 edition of the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) standards and procedures for obtaining a “No Objection Letter” (NOL) to establish and operate a new higher education institution (HEI) in the Emirate.

The ADEK [NOL](#) is a prerequisite to apply to the Ministry of Education (MOE) Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) for Initial Licensure. No entity (i.e., individuals, institutions, providers, consortia, or organizations) is allowed to advertise, solicit, recruit, enroll, or operate a post-secondary education institution or program in Abu Dhabi without prior authorization by ADEK and licensure by [MoE](#).

The ADEK standards and procedures for authorization of new [HEIs](#) are developed based on the contextual and strategic needs of the higher education (HE) system in Abu Dhabi. They were benchmarked with international best practices to promote the enhancement and excellence in HE provisions and to obtain recognition regionally and internationally. They also underwent a wide stakeholder consultation in the Emirate, harnessing valuable insights from HE providers, policymakers and educationalists at large.

Our approach to a new [HEI](#) authorization is driven by aspirations of:

- Enhancing the quality, relevance and efficiency of higher education offers
- Increasing access to higher education
- Promoting excellence and competitiveness regionally and internationally
- Acknowledging the continually increasing diversity in HE provisions
- Supporting the development of a knowledge-based society.

This procedure manual applies to all entities interested in establishing educational operations in Abu Dhabi – federal, Abu Dhabi government-funded, inbound and outbound Cross-border Higher Education (CBHE) providers and private [HEIs](#). This manual is subject to regular revisions to ensure its lasting value, validity and relevance to socioeconomic and cultural needs.



# | Contents

I.	<a href="#">Introduction</a>	4
II.	<a href="#">New HEI Authorization</a>	5
III.	<a href="#">Application Prerequisites</a>	6
IV.	<a href="#">The Evaluation Framework</a>	6
V.	<a href="#">The Procedure</a>	9
VI.	<a href="#">Standards</a>	15
	<a href="#">Module A: Generic Standards</a>	15
	<a href="#">Module B: Online Provisions</a>	19
	<a href="#">Module C: Cross-Border Provision</a>	20
VII.	<a href="#">The ADEK Register</a>	21
VIII.	<a href="#">Related Expenses</a>	21
IX.	<a href="#">External Reviewers</a>	21
X.	<a href="#">Appeal Procedure</a>	25
	<a href="#">ANNEX A: Glossary of Terms</a>	29
	<a href="#">ANNEX B: List of Acronyms</a>	33
	<a href="#">ANNEX C: Nomenclature</a>	34

# I. Introduction

The Abu Dhabi higher education ecosystem is governed by the External Quality Assurance Framework (EQAF), which requires a two-phased approach in which [HE](#) provisions in the Emirate must be authorized by ADEK prior to proceeding with [MoE](#) licensure and accreditation at the federal level.

Entities willing to establish a [HEI](#) in Abu Dhabi must undergo a quality review by ADEK to obtain an [NOL](#), prior to proceeding with the [CAA](#) procedures.

The [EQAF](#) is composed of two phases:

**Phase 1** covers the following key procedures under ADEK’s jurisdiction:

- Authorization of new [HEIs](#)
- Re-authorization of [HEIs](#)
- Authorization of new programs
- Authorization of substantive changes

This phase and procedures serve to ensure fitness-of-purpose, through which a higher education institutional performance is evaluated based on its alignment with Abu Dhabi’s strategic priorities and its fitness to serve the socioeconomic and cultural needs of Abu Dhabi.

**Phase 2** covers the following key procedures under the [MoE CAA](#) jurisdiction:

- Initial Institutional Licensure for new [HEIs](#)
- Licensure and Renewal of Licensure for existing [HEIs](#)
- Initial Program Accreditation
- Accreditation and Renewal of Accreditation for existing programs

On the other hand, this phase and procedures serve to ensure fitness-for-purpose, whereby an institution is evaluated per the extent to which it and/or its program(s) are fit for the purpose/mission it has been established for.

While distinctive in nature, both the ADEK and [CAA](#) procedures are complementary, ensuring a holistic approach to [QA](#) in Abu Dhabi.

# II. New HEI Authorization

This authorization procedure ensures a proactive approach to the enhancement of [HE](#) provisions in Abu Dhabi and is designed to provide step-by-step guidance for the set-up and establishment of new [HEIs](#).

Applicable to all new [HEIs](#), ADEK’s framework for authorization of new [HEIs](#) focuses on three distinctive higher education aspects:

- 1. Teaching and learning
- 2. Research
- 3. Service to society

To ensure coherence with the ADEK strategic priorities and good practices in [QA](#) internationally, the ADEK new [HEI](#) authorization procedure is underpinned by the following major principles:

- Independence
- Consistency & Alignment
- Transparency & Integrity
- Relevance & Value added
- Enhancement

In line with Abu Dhabi’s strategic priorities, our review process of new [HEIs](#) is based on:

- Quality of educational provision
- Increased access to higher education
- Socio-economic and cultural need
- National development plans
- Aspirations to develop a knowledge-based society

This review process is guided by the following questions:

- 1. To what extent does the new [HEI](#) meet the socio-economic and cultural needs of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi?
  - a. Is the business case of the [HEI](#) sustainable and feasible? Is there evidence to support sustainability and feasibility?
  - b. Are the partners, if any, committed to the [HEI](#) success? Is there evidence to support the strength of commitment?
- 2. How does the new [HEI](#) fit the strategic development scheme of Abu Dhabi and what is its market niche? What value does it add?
- 3. What is the mission of the new [HEI](#)? How does it complement and supplement the higher education system in Abu Dhabi?

- 4. What is the relevance indicator? Are there enough resources to ensure students obtain the qualifications relevant to the market needs? Is there evidence that the awarded qualification will be recognized nationally, regionally and internationally? What are the guarantees for enhanced employment of the graduates?
- 5. How does the [HEI](#) intend to ensure and enhance the quality of its provisions and its international visibility in the short- and long-term?

The ADEK authorization process (Phase 1 of the [EQAF](#)) is conducted through a one-stage procedure, which consists of the submission of a Self-Evaluation Report (SER), as well as and mandatory external review and, if applicable, a site visit.

### III. Application Prerequisites

- Any applicant seeking to establish a new [HEI](#)/branch in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi must consult ADEK before submitting the application.
- The applicant should partner with internationally highly ranked and reputable [HEIs](#) and/or leaders in the fields of study proposed. Exceptions to this requirement may be made if the application is supported by a Federal or Abu Dhabi government decree.
- Failure to comply with the prerequisites set by ADEK will result in the rejection of an application.

### IV. The Evaluation Framework

This section introduces the standards and sub-standards that new applicants will be evaluated against. The standards for [HEI](#) performance take a modular approach to support the diversification of Abu Dhabi higher education provisions and address the needs of each [HEI](#) as per their specific and unique profiles. The standards are broken down into the following modules:

- \* Module A:** Generic standards that refer to all types of institutions regardless of their status (**mandatory for all**)
- \* Module B:** Standards mandatory for only those [HEIs](#) that offer blended/ fully online elements
- \* Module C:** Standards mandatory only for cross-border [HEIs](#)

Table 1: Modules & Standards

MODULE A Generic	MODULE B Online Provisions	MODULE C Cross-Border Provisions
Mandatory to all types of <a href="#">HEIs</a> regardless of their status	Additional and mandatory only to <a href="#">HEIs</a> aiming to establish and offer blended/ fully online provisions	Additional and mandatory only to <a href="#">HEIs</a> intending to offer cross-border provisions (inbound or outbound)
<p>This encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alignment with Abu Dhabi strategic priorities</li><li>• Governance &amp; administration</li><li>• Programs</li><li>• Research, innovation, &amp; development</li><li>• Service to the society</li><li>• Resources</li><li>• Access &amp; inclusion</li><li>• Internal quality assurance</li><li>• Transparency &amp; academic integrity</li><li>• International visibility &amp; recognition</li></ul>	<p>This encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Online provisions</li><li>• Quality of student experience</li><li>• Resources</li></ul>	<p>This encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The <a href="#">CBHE</a> provision</li><li>• Quality of student experience</li><li>• Culture and context alignment</li></ul>

These standards are measured against pre-defined measurement metrics. Local/contextual specifics and internationally accepted averages are adopted for each data point to arrive at a meaningful judgment on how the new [HEI](#) adds value to Abu Dhabi and its [HEI](#) landscape.



## Judgments

ADEK's decision on the authorization of new [HEIs](#) is carried out on a three-point scale. The following interpretation of the three-point scale underpins the logic of external evaluation done by the External Review Panel (ERP):

- **Meets the standard:** The application is justified and provides the necessary analysis and evidence (from a content and technical perspective) that proves compliance with all standards and guidelines, as well as demonstrates added value and relevance to the socio-economic and cultural needs of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- **Partially meets the standard:** The application clearly states the socio-economic, cultural and market needs, and the [HEIs](#) added value and impact are explicit. However, there are administrative and technical issues still to be addressed to meet all standards and guidelines.
- **Does not meet the standard:** The submission shows clear deficiencies, including but not limited to the application and supporting documents, and fails to justify the impact, socio-economic, cultural and market needs, as well as the necessary capacity to offer educational provisions.

External reviewers are asked to provide a list of major findings, along with a substantiated analysis and a list of commendations and recommendations (for follow-up and enhancement) for each of their judgments.

Based on the desk review and site visit (if applicable) of at least three external reviewers, the [ERP](#) Chair develops a final joint report for the ADEK Higher Education Authorization Committee (HEAC) to take a decision.



# V. The Procedure

This section outlines the procedure step-by-step:

Stage 1		
Step 1  Application Preparation	Description:	<p>The <a href="#">HEI</a> planning to establish its operations in Abu Dhabi should file an application to ADEK based on the standards specified in this manual. The application should include an analytical <a href="#">SER</a> that adheres to ADEK standards for the authorization of new <a href="#">HEIs</a>. The application should be submitted through the <a href="#">ADEK Higher Education Authorization Portal</a>.</p> <p>An applicant planning to establish an entity or program in health and medical sciences must also submit a no objection statement (e.g., Letter of No Objection) from respective federal and Emirate-level authorities.</p> <p>If required, ADEK will coordinate additional internal approvals (e.g., ADEK Infrastructure and Facilities Division to proceed with the location grant request).</p>
	Responsability:	<a href="#">HEI</a>
	Inputs:	ADEK application package for authorization of new <a href="#">HEIs</a>
	Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Filled and submitted ADEK application package for authorization of new <a href="#">HEIs</a></li><li><a href="#">SER</a></li></ul>
	Timeline:	Six months prior to the planned submission for Initial Licensure by the <a href="#">CAA</a>



<b>Step 2</b> <b>Technical Review</b>	Description:	ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division Director signs the ADEK Procedure Coordinator, who receives and reviews the application along with the required supporting documents for technical compliance.
	Responsability:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division Director</li> <li>ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a></li> <li>ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADEK application package for authorization of new <a href="#">HEIs</a></li> <li><a href="#">SER</a></li> </ul>
	Outputs:	ADEK Technical Compliance Report or ADEK Technical Non-Compliance Report
	Timeline:	Two weeks after receiving the application
<b>Step 3</b> <b>Revision of Application (if needed)</b>	Description:	In case of any non-compliances, the applicant needs to revise and resubmit the application to ADEK within two weeks upon receiving the ADEK Technical Non-Compliance Report. This deadline may be extended by a maximum of two additional weeks, provided ADEK receives a clear justification and evidence for the extension request in writing prior to the initial deadline expiry.
	Responsability:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">HEI</a></li> <li>ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a></li> <li>ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	ADEK Technical Non-Compliance Report
	Outputs:	Revised application submission to ADEK
	Timeline:	Two weeks after the receipt of ADEK Technical Non-Compliance Report

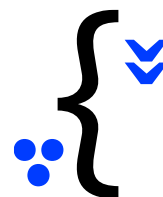
<b>Step 4</b> <b>Technical Review (if needed)</b>	Description:	The ADEK Procedure Coordinator receives and reviews the re-submitted application along with the required supporting documents for technical compliance.
	Responsability:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division Director</li> <li>ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a></li> <li>ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	ADEK <a href="#">NOL/NAL</a>
	Outputs:	ADEK <a href="#">NOL/NAL</a>
	Timeline:	Two weeks after receiving the revised application

<b>Step 5</b>  <b>Selection &amp; Appointment of External Reviewers</b>	Description:	The ADEK Procedure Coordinator identifies potential external reviewers and submits the list for approval to the Chairperson of ADEK <a href="#">HEAC</a> . External reviewers are contracted and sign the required documents (see inputs below).
	Responsability:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADEK <a href="#">HEAC</a> Chairperson</li> <li>ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division Director</li> <li>ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADEK policy and procedure for external reviewer selection</li> <li>Shortlist of external reviewers</li> <li>ADEK non-disclosure/confidentiality statements</li> <li>ADEK conflict of interest statement</li> <li>External reviewer's service commitment statement</li> <li>ADEK internal memo template for appointing external reviewers</li> </ul>
	Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved ADEK internal memo (letter) appointing external reviewers</li> <li>ADEK agreement with external reviewers</li> <li>Signed ADEK non-disclosure/confidentiality statement</li> <li>Signed ADEK conflict of interest statement</li> <li>Signed external reviewer's service commitment statement</li> <li>ADEK internal memo (letter) appointing external reviewers</li> </ul>
	Timeline:	One week after the submission of the shortlist to the ADEK <a href="#">HEAC</a> the external reviewers' panel is appointed
<b>Step 6</b>  <b>Submission of Application for External Desk Review</b>	Description:	The full application package is submitted to the external reviewers for a desk review.
	Responsability:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a></li> <li>ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The application package</li> <li>ADEK external reviewer's template and guidelines</li> </ul>
	Outputs:	The application package assigned to the <a href="#">ERP</a>
	Timeline:	Within one week of the <a href="#">ERP</a> appointment

<b>Step 7</b> <b>External Desk Review</b>	Description:	External reviewers conduct the desk review. Close to the end of the review, a one-day session takes place to discuss major findings and areas of further inquiry during the site visit (if any). This meeting is jointly led by the ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a> and Procedure Coordinator and joined by local and international reviewers.
	Responsability:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li> <li>• ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a></li> <li>• External reviewers</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	N/A
	Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual external reviewer reports</li> <li>• Joint draft report with major findings, including summary table with external review results, areas to be further explored, comments and recommendations</li> </ul>
	Timeline:	4 weeks after the receipt of the application package
<b>Step 8</b> <b>Site Visit (Optional &amp; Based on External Reviewers Request)</b>	Description:	Led by the ADEK Procedure Coordinator, the <a href="#">ERP</a> undertakes a site visit (either physically or online) to verify and scrutinize provided application data, meet stakeholders and further investigate areas that are not clearly covered in the application package.
	Responsability:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">ERP</a></li> <li>• ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li> <li>• ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a></li> </ul>
	Inputs:	Individual external reviewer reports
	Outputs:	Joint draft report with major findings, including summary table with external review results, areas to be further explored, comments and recommendations
	Timeline:	Up to 5 working days

<b>Step 9</b> <b>Joint Report Preparation</b>	Description:	The <a href="#">ERP</a> Chair prepares a joint report and submits it to the ADEK <a href="#">HEAC</a> for decision-making. The joint report is circulated to all external reviewers for confirmation.
	Responsability:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">ERP</a> Chair</li> <li>• ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li> <li>• ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a></li> <li>• ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division Director</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	Joint report template
	Outputs:	Joint draft report with major findings, including summary table with external review results, areas to be further explored, comments and recommendations
	Timeline:	Within two weeks after the site visit (if any)
<b>Step 10</b> <b>Decision Taking</b>	Description:	The final joint report is submitted to the ADEK <a href="#">HEAC</a> for decision-making.
	Responsability:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADEK <a href="#">HEAC</a></li> <li>• ADEK <a href="#">HEAC</a> Secretary</li> <li>• ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division Director</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	The joint report
	Outputs:	Session minutes and decisions (i.e., <a href="#">NOL</a> or <a href="#">NAL</a> to be issued)
	Timeline:	Within one month upon the submission of the joint report
<b>Step 11</b> <b>Applicant Notification</b>	Description:	The respective ADEK letter (i.e., <a href="#">NOL</a> , <a href="#">NAL</a> , Revise, Resubmit or Recommendation) is issued, signed by the ADEK <a href="#">HEAC</a> Chairperson and sent to the applicant. It will specify the grounds for the decision and reflect the status ( <b>meets, partially meets, does not meet the standards</b> )
	Responsability:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADEK <a href="#">HEAC</a> Chairperson</li> <li>• ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division Director</li> <li>• ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a></li> <li>• ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	ADEK <a href="#">NOL</a> / <a href="#">NAL</a> /Revise & Resubmit letter template
	Outputs:	ADEK <a href="#">NOL</a> / <a href="#">NAL</a> /Revise & Resubmit letter (if applicable)
	Timeline:	Within one week upon the decision making





# VI. Standards

## Module A: Generic Standards

Heading	Standards
1. <b>Alignment with Abu Dhabi Strategic Priorities</b>	<p><b>1. Positioning in the HE system:</b> The <a href="#">HE</a> institution demonstrates a justified, well-grounded and feasible plan of operations that ensures steady growth leading to tangible and trustworthy outcomes, outputs (quality and/or quantity), and developmental impact on society at large. The new <a href="#">HEI</a> demonstrates solid plans that ensure the visibility of Abu Dhabi <a href="#">HE</a> provisions at national, regional and international levels.</p> <p><b>2. Alignment with the Abu Dhabi cultural and socio-economic needs:</b> The new <a href="#">HEI</a> adds value within its chosen sector(s) and has a strong potential for contributing to Abu Dhabi's strategic, economic, social and cultural development priorities and needs.</p>
2. <b>Governance &amp; Administration</b>	<p><b>1. Mission, vision, values and strategy:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a>'s vision, mission, values, objectives and strategic priorities are in line with the Abu Dhabi strategic, economic, social and cultural priorities and needs.</p> <p><b>2. Nomenclature:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> presents solid evidence that the nomenclature of the <a href="#">HEI</a> reflects its capabilities and functions.</p> <p><b>3. Governance, administration, and structure:</b> The governance model is based on robust accountability, and autonomy approaches. The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures independent decision-making, and efficiency in administration, management, and operations.</p> <p><b>4. The Governing Board:</b> The Governing Board ensures a meaningful and beneficial stakeholder engagement that leads to smooth steering of the strategies and independent decision-making.</p> <p><b>5. Integrity:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has a robust policy and related procedures in place to underpin integrity in its functions and operations, and to ensure adherence to the highest standards of integrity in governance, administration, and management.</p>





<p><b>8. Internal Quality Assurance</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Internal quality assurance system:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures a robust internal quality assurance system (<a href="#">IQAS</a>) which is an integral part of the HEI's life and enables data-driven decision-making and governance. The <a href="#">IQAS</a> incorporates a continually updated data management system.</li> <li><b>2. Quality assurance scope:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures that the <a href="#">QA</a> scope covers all qualification levels offered and awarded by the <a href="#">HEI</a>, research activities, and service to society.</li> <li><b>3. Relevance of and trust in quality assurance:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures that the <a href="#">IQAS</a> is regularly revised to ensure relevance and trust in provisions and has approved the Quality Enhancement Plan (<a href="#">QEP</a>).</li> <li><b>4. Risk and crisis management:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures that the <a href="#">IQAS</a> embeds robust processes, and procedures to proactively identify, manage and mitigate possible disruptions, potential threats, unanticipated events, and other risks and their consequences at an institutional level and in situation-based circumstances.</li> </ol>
<p><b>9. Transparency &amp; Academic Integrity</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Academic integrity:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has a robust policy, related procedures, monitoring and review mechanisms in place to underpin academic integrity including admission, teaching and learning, and research integrity in all modes of delivery.</li> <li><b>2. Transparency:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures key information regarding teaching and learning, research and service to society is publicly available, including strategies, annual reports, and external reports.</li> </ol>
<p><b>10. International Visibility &amp; Recognition</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. International accreditation:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> establishes <a href="#">QA</a> mechanisms to pursue international accreditation of its programs, if applicable.</li> <li><b>2. International visibility:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has robust mechanisms and processes in place steadily leading to international visibility (e.g., through such instruments as global rankings).</li> <li><b>3. Recognition:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has policies, procedures, and feasible plans in place to ensure its outcomes and outputs (teaching and learning, research, service to society) are recognized nationally, regionally and internationally.</li> </ol>





## Module B: Online Provisions

Heading	Standards
1. Online Provisions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Alignment with the mission:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has policies, procedures, and feasible plans in place to ensure that blended/ fully online modality is a strategic endeavor of the HEI, aligned with the mission and vision of the <a href="#">HEI</a>, and supported by respective and relevant governance structures to oversee the design, implementation, and evaluation of blended/ fully online.</li> <li><b>Quality assurance:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has the necessary <a href="#">QA</a> measures in place for safeguarding their blended/ fully online learning provision and the reputation of education in Abu Dhabi. The <a href="#">IQAS</a> also enables an institution-wide culture of continual educational enhancement.</li> <li><b>Curriculum:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures that the curriculum content is current, research-informed and specifically developed for blended/ fully online modality and contextualized to the society at large and the strategic needs of Abu Dhabi.</li> <li><b>Academic integrity:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has robust policies and procedures in place to ensure that the implementation of blended/ fully online learning upholds the virtues of academic integrity and honesty.</li> <li><b>Awarded qualifications:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures robust policies and procedures are in place to ensure the awarded qualifications are recognized at national, regional, and international levels.</li> </ol>
2. Quality of Student Experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Student learning:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures that the blended/ fully online educational experiences of all students are enriching, and participatory and lead to the successful achievement of the intended learning outcomes.</li> <li><b>Student support:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> provides adequate student support services for blended/ fully online delivery to ensure learning experiences that instill confidence.</li> </ol>

<b>3. Resources</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Learning environments/technology:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures that the learning environment(s) and associated technologies facilitate blended/ fully online modality, and ensure inclusive teaching, learning and assessment practices.</li> <li><b>2. Faculty capacity:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures that faculty teaching blended/ fully online learning courses/programs are subject-matter experts, master the pedagogical aspects of blended/ fully online learning, and ensure scholarly methods in creating, enabling and evaluating meaningful blended/ fully learning interactions.</li> <li><b>3. Finances:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures special financial provisions to meaningfully support its blended/ fully online learning mission and is suitable to maintain and enhance its current blended/ fully online learning provision.</li> </ol>
---------------------	--

## Module C: Cross-Border Provisions

Heading	Standards
<b>1. The CBHE Provision</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. The CBHE Provision:</b> The <a href="#">CBHE</a> provider ensures that it is a legally recognized provider in the home country and that its provisions are quality assured as per the home country regulations.</li> <li><b>2. The content:</b> The <a href="#">CBHE</a> provider ensures that the proposed <a href="#">CBHE</a> provision is of comparable standards to those in its home country and across its delivery modalities (face-to-face, blended/ fully online).</li> <li><b>3. The delivery:</b> The <a href="#">CBHE</a> provider ensures that the admission, student assessment, and graduation requirements are comparable to the home country and across all modalities and ensure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.</li> <li><b>4. Awarded qualifications:</b> The <a href="#">CBHE</a> provider deploys robust policies and procedures to ensure the awarded qualifications are recognized at national, regional, and international levels.</li> </ol>
<b>2. Quality of Student Experience</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Learner experience:</b> The <a href="#">CBHE</a> provider ensures the student learning experience is comparable to that of the home country in terms of exposure to the faculty qualifications, a body of knowledge, resources for learning achievement of intended learning outcomes and application of knowledge and internships.</li> <li><b>2. Quality assurance:</b> The <a href="#">CBHE</a> provider ensures that robust <a href="#">QA</a> procedures and mechanisms are in place to attest to the effectiveness of the student experience.</li> </ol>

<b>3. Culture and Context Alignment</b>	<b>1. Culture and context:</b> The <a href="#">CBHE</a> provider considers the socioeconomic needs and cultural peculiarities in the delivery of teaching and learning, research, and service to society. The <a href="#">CBHE</a> provider is guided by Abu Dhabi’s strategic priorities.
---	--

VII. The ADEK Register

The ADEK Register of Authorized [HE](#) Institutions is a database that operates in the jurisdiction of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. To be enrolled in it, [HEIs](#) will need to undergo a full procedure of authorization with ADEK. Based on the results of the ADEK [HEAC](#) decision on the new [HEI](#) establishment, the Register will be updated with the relevant information of the new provider.

VIII. Related Expenses

Considering the authorization process is conducted with the involvement of external reviewers, the following expenses apply and must be covered by the applicant:

- Application handling fees.
- External reviewer fees.
- Local and international travel expenses for experts in case a site visit is required.

Each review will be calculated individually, with costs varying depending on the nature of the procedure and the number of external reviewers.

IX. External Reviewers

Composition of the External Review Panel

To ensure an independent and objective review and decision-making, the external reviews are conducted by an independent [ERP](#), which is assisted by the ADEK Procedure Coordinator, assigned once the application is filed.

External reviewers must meet the following requirements:

- The panel should include at least three members - local and international.

- The panel should possess the following complementary skills and competencies:
  - Expertise in recent developments in higher education
  - International expertise and practical experience in the field of higher education governance and administration
  - Experience in teaching and learning
  - Skills in developing study programs
  - Good knowledge of student-centered approaches
  - Expertise in [QA](#) (i.e., conducting audits)
- Panel members should have complementary skills and competencies.
- The panel should be chaired by one of the panel members based on an internal agreement between the panel members themselves or the chair is appointed by ADEK's Procedure Coordinator.
- The panel's independence is guided by the ADEK Conflict of Interest Policy and [ERP](#) members must sign a declaration of independence/conflict of interests and confidentiality prior to commencing the review process.

## External Reviewer Qualifications

### Administrators & managers:

### Faculty members:

# Conflict of Interest Policy and Confidentiality

A conflict of interest occurs when an external reviewer is involved in an activity, commitment, or interest that could negatively affect, compromise, or be incompatible with his/her obligations as an ADEK external reviewer:

- **A conflict of time commitment** occurs when the external reviewer is involved in and committed to unauthorized activities that interfere with his/her obligations to ADEK thus delaying the review procedure.
- **A conflict of relationship interest** occurs when an external reviewer has a relative (up to second degree) that is employed by the [HEI](#) under scrutiny, which might restrict or impair the reviewer’s ability to perform the external evaluation of the case objectively and independently.
- **A conflict of financial interest** occurs when an external reviewer is either employed or has been employed by the [HEI](#) for the last five years or financially benefits (either directly or indirectly) from the [HEI](#) under scrutiny.
- **A conflict of competitor interest** occurs when the external reviewer has an interest in producing a biased report that might question the objectivity and independence of the review.
- **A conflict of discipline-specific interest** occurs when the nature of the external reviewer’s discipline could cause situations that, while not implicating one of the conflicts listed above, could question the independence of the review.

The ADEK Procedure Coordinator is responsible for providing verbal and written guidance to external reviewers on ADEK’s Conflict of Interest Policy. External reviewers, on the other hand, are obliged to disclose such conflicts and sign a conflict-of-interest statement, as well as a non-disclosure/ confidentiality agreement prior to their engagement.

In addition, the final joint report submitted to the ADEK [HEAC](#) for decision-taking should include a declaration that the assessment has been carried out independently and that findings may not be disclosed by any other party but ADEK.

## External Reviewer Selection Procedure

The expert selection procedure has the following steps:

1. The ADEK [HE](#) Executive Director sends a nomination request, along with the external reviewer qualification requirements, to [HEIs](#) to nominate professionals in different fields to be assessed and included in the ADEK [HE](#) expert pool. For international reviewers, the nomination request is sent to the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE) and other recognized [QA](#) entities. An open call to invite external reviewers is also possible through the ADEK Higher Education Authorization Portal.
2. Once nominations have been received, ADEK contacts the nominees to submit their Curriculum Vitae (CV) along with a statement of interest to serve as an external reviewer.
3. The ADEK Head of [QC](#) collects all CVs and arranges for an initial discussion on candidates.
4. Following an initial evaluation, the list of shortlisted candidates is submitted to the ADEK [HEAC](#) for approval and inclusion in the ADEK database of external reviewers.
5. Upon receiving an external review request/mandate, the ADEK Procedure Coordinator selects the external reviewers based on their qualifications from the ADEK database and conducts a conflict-of-interest check.
6. The list of proposed panel members is first submitted to the ADEK [HERL](#) Division Director for approval before sending it to the ADEK [HEAC](#) for an appointment. In case one or several candidates are rejected, replacements will be selected from the same database.
7. Once appointed, external reviewers sign the ADEK agreement/service commitment statement, a conflict-of-interest statement, as well as a non-disclosure/confidentiality agreement prior to commencing the external review.



# X. Appeal Procedure

In case of a negative decision, the applicant can appeal through the ADEK [HE](#) Appeals Committee, which is established on a case-by-case basis.

The appeal petition must be submitted in writing to the ADEK [HERL](#) Division and should be filed through the ADEK Higher Education Authorization Portal within 30 calendar days of receiving the letter of rejection.

On average, the appeals process takes up to twelve weeks. Depending on the scope of the appeal, the timeline may vary.

All the expenses related to the appeals procedure are covered by the appellant [HEI](#).

The appeals procedure includes the below-outlined steps:

## Step 1: Submit Appeal for Review

Description/ Definition:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The appeal petition must be submitted in writing to the ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division Director and should be filed through the ADEK Higher Education Authorization Portal.</li><li>• The letter can be up to five pages long and should include a detailed justification, substantial evidence and facts that were available at the time of the review and that substantiate the grounds for the appeal.</li><li>• The basis for appeal is the initial application submitted by the applicant. Evidence of corrective action taken in response to the findings and recommendations by the external reviewers cannot be included in the appeal process.</li><li>• An appeal is only valid in case the review procedure was not properly adhered to, relevant information provided by the <a href="#">HEI</a> was not considered or properly interpreted by the panel, or a judgment was made based on factually inaccurate data.</li><li>• The appellant can withdraw the appeal at any time during the process. However, if the appeal is withdrawn, the ADEK <a href="#">HE</a> Appeals Committee will not accept a future appeal on the same or substantially similar grounds.</li></ul>
Responsible:	Appellant
Inputs:	<a href="#">NAL</a>
Outputs:	N/A
Timeline:	Within 30 calendar days of receiving the letter of rejection

## Step 2: Receive and Review Appeal

<b>Description/ Definition:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division Director receives and reviews the appeal and supporting evidence to determine its validity.</li> <li>If the appeal is justified, the ADEK Procedure Coordinator is assigned to launch the appeal.</li> <li>If the appeal is found not to be valid (justified), the appellant will either be notified and provided a justification or requested to elaborate on their concerns and provide further evidence within three days. The case will automatically be closed within five days if the appellant does not respond.</li> </ul>
<b>Responsible:</b>	ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division Director
<b>Inputs:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">NAL</a></li> <li>Appeals petition</li> </ul>
<b>Outputs:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appeals petition</li> </ul>
<b>Timeline:</b>	Within one week of submitting the application

## Step 3: Register Appeal, Schedule Appeals and Prepare Response

<b>Description/ Definition:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The appeal, including all supporting documents and evidence, is registered in the Appeals Register by ADEK Procedure Coordinator.</li> <li>A review schedule is set by ADEK Procedure Coordinator.</li> <li>The <a href="#">ERP</a> is formed.</li> <li>The ADEK Procedure Coordinator prepares a response letter to the appellant that outlines the review logistics and provides information about any requirements that need to be prepared and submitted.</li> <li>The response letter is shared with the ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division Director for review.</li> </ul>
<b>Responsible:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a></li> <li>ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li> </ul>
<b>Inputs:</b>	Appeals petition
<b>Outputs:</b>	Response letter
<b>Timeline:</b>	Within two weeks upon the case registration

Step 4: Approve Response

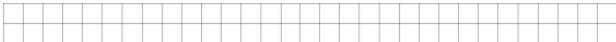
Description/ Definition:	The ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division Director reviews the response letter and either requests changes or approves it to be sent to the appellant.
Responsible:	ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division Director
Inputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Response letter</li><li>• Appeals petition</li></ul>
Outputs:	Response letter
Timeline:	Within one day of receiving the response letter

Step 5: External Review of the Case

Description/ Definition:	The case is submitted to at least three independent external reviewers for evaluation.
Responsible:	External reviewers
Inputs:	Appeals petition with all the supporting documents and evidence
Outputs:	External reviewer reports
Timeline:	Four to six weeks upon appointing the <a href="#">ERP</a> depending on the scope of the appeal

Step 6: Summary of the Report

Description/ Definition:	The ADEK Procedure Coordinator prepares a summary of the external reviewer reports and sends it to the ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a> .
Responsible:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li><li>• ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a></li></ul>
Inputs:	External reviewer reports
Outputs:	Summary report
Timeline:	Within one week upon receiving the external reviewer reports



## Step 7: Convention on the Appeal and Final Order

<b>Description/ Definition:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ADEK <a href="#">HE</a> Appeals Committee convenes to decide on the case.</li> <li>The Committee's secretary takes the meeting minutes and records taken decisions.</li> <li>The ADEK <a href="#">HE</a> Appeals Committee renders a written decision that either upholds, amends or overturns the recommendation/decision of the <a href="#">ERP</a>.</li> <li>The Committee secretary prepares the recommendation for initial endorsement to the Committee's Chair and submits it afterward to the <a href="#">HEAC</a> Chairperson for sign-off.</li> </ul>
<b>Responsible:</b>	<a href="#">HE</a> Appeals Committee
<b>Inputs:</b>	Appeal's case file
<b>Outputs:</b>	Appeal decision
<b>Timeline:</b>	Within two weeks of receiving the summary report. However, in extraordinary circumstances this timeline may be extended by the Committee's Chair if required.

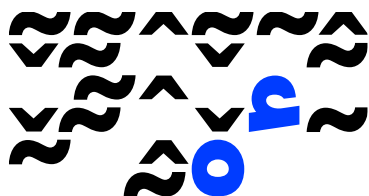
## Step 8: Receive Letter Overturning/Upholding Decision

<b>Description/ Definition:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The appellant receives the final decision made by the ADEK Undersecretary/<a href="#">HE</a> Executive Director.</li> <li>If ADEK's prior decision is overturned, the appellant's <a href="#">NOL</a> application proceeds.</li> <li>If ADEK's prior decision is upheld, the appeal case file is closed and archived.</li> <li>The decision taken by the ADEK <a href="#">HE</a> Appeals Committee is final and binding.</li> </ul>
<b>Responsible:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HE Appeals Committee Chair</li> <li>ADEK <a href="#">HE</a> P&amp;R Division Director</li> </ul>
<b>Inputs:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appeal decision</li> </ul>
<b>Outputs:</b>	<a href="#">NOL</a> and <a href="#">NAL</a>
<b>Timeline:</b>	Within one week after the decision making

## ANNEX A: Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
<b>Higher Education Authorization Committee</b>	The <a href="#">HEAC</a> is a decision-making body established within the ADEK Higher Education Sector to take decisions related to the authorization of new <a href="#">HEIs</a> , programs, substantive changes, and re-authorization of existing <a href="#">HEIs</a> . It is comprised of the key stakeholders of the Abu Dhabi higher education system.
<b>Academic/ study program</b>	An academic/study program is a combination of courses and/or requirements leading to a degree.
<b>Appeal</b>	A procedure in which cases are reviewed in case parties involved in a procedure request a formal change to an official decision. Appeals function both as a process for error correction as well as a process of clarifying and interpreting the decision. Appeal procedures are ADEK internal.
<b>Authorization</b>	Authorization is a process whereby a new institution or a new academic/study program is granted a <a href="#">NOL</a> to operate in Abu Dhabi. It is a pre-requisite step for new <a href="#">HEIs</a> and new programs prior to their submission to the <a href="#">CAA</a> for initial licensure and initial accreditation.
<b>Cross-border provision</b>	Cross-border provision of higher education comprises any educational service or higher educational learning activity that offers at least one program and/or course of study and confers higher education qualifications according to the legal provisions in force. Cross-border provision encompasses any arrangement of higher education provision or refers to any entity that delivers higher education service inbound or outbound of Abu Dhabi. Cross-border provision of higher education necessitates the establishment of a physical presence (e.g., a branch campus of the institution) in a cross-border location other than the geographical location of its parent university (e.g., <a href="#">HEI</a> /provider).
<b>External review</b>	The process whereby the ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division collects data, information, and evidence about an institution, a particular unit or program of a given institution, or a core activity of an institution, to make a statement about its quality. The external review is usually based on a <a href="#">SER</a> provided by the institution and can be used as a basis for measurement metrics or as a method of judgment for (external) evaluation in higher education. ADEK provides training programs/induction prior to the evaluation to ensure their mutual understanding and the fair, consistent, appropriate and smooth implementation of the process.

<b>External reviewers</b>	External evaluation is carried out by a team of external experts, peers, or professionals in the field. The external reviewers have strong backgrounds in their respective fields of study and professional experience, therefore, they come from academia for institutional authorization cases, and from academia and labor market for external review of study/academic programs.
<b>External review panel</b>	The <a href="#">ERP</a> consists of up to 5 external reviewers and up to 5 faculty members, peers and/or professionals in respective fields in case of study/academic programs. For each procedure ADEK sets an <a href="#">ERP</a> by matching the qualifications of the peers and professionals with the submitted initiatives.
<b>Evidence-based evaluation</b>	Evidence-based evaluation is the cornerstone of the culture of evidence. The latter is a <a href="#">HEI</a> -acquired mindset based on clear ethical values, principles, and rules. It consists of the regular and thoughtful self-evaluation of the <a href="#">HEI</a> 's learning outcomes, engages the faculty and academic administration, and uses relevant institutional measurement metrics, in order to inform and prove, whenever (and to whomever) necessary, that it is doing well in specific areas (e.g., institutional planning, decision-making, quality, etc.) and for the purpose of improving its learning and teaching outcomes. The culture of evidence requested from the <a href="#">HEI</a> implies that it is encouraged to be able to provide empirical data proving the consistency of its own mission.
<b>Fitness-of-purpose</b>	This is a definition of quality in higher education, which guides the principle of evaluation of the extent to which the quality-related intentions of an organization are adequate and are aligned with the priorities set in the country.
<b>Fitness-for-purpose</b>	This is a definition of quality in higher education, which judges the quality of a product or service in terms of the extent to which its stated purpose—defined either as meeting customer specifications or conformity with the institutional mission—is met.
<b>Follow-up</b>	Follow-up is shorthand for procedures to ensure that outcomes of review processes have been, or are being, addressed and supported by data-driven facts, figures and evidence.



<b>Guidelines</b>	Guidelines provide a general framework of guidance, recommendations and/or additional instructions on how to achieve a given standard. They are designed to streamline certain processes according to what the best practices are. Guidelines are not mandatory and are provided for further interpretation by <a href="#">HEIs</a> providing flexibility and common sense in different circumstances and conditions, as well as in guiding their decisions and achieving rational outcomes.
<b>Higher Education Institution (HEI)</b>	An education body that carries out higher education activities based on legally approved study programs leading to an undergraduate degree and above. Any <a href="#">HEI</a> /provider must follow an external evaluation procedure (authorization) to assess its quality and to acquire the provisional functioning authorization, followed by its official licensure, as well as the accreditation of its study programs. <a href="#">HEIs</a> /providers may differ in size, quality, resources, number of faculty and students, etc.
<b>The Internal Quality Assurance System</b>	A scheme that should entail the existence of a quality policy and organizational structure, as well as formal procedures, processes, mechanisms, methods, and resources that provide reliable information on the quality of the <a href="#">HEI</a> 's activities. It should also provide guidance and recommendations on how to improve these activities.
<b>Procedure</b>	A predefined, fixed, step-by-step sequence of activities or course of action (with definite start and end points) that must be followed in the same order to correctly perform an external evaluation.
<b>QFEmirates</b>	The single description, at a national level or level of an education system, which is internationally understood and through which all qualifications and other learning achievements in higher education may be described and related to each other in a coherent way and which defines the relationship between higher education qualifications. The <a href="#">QFEmirates Handbook</a> sets out the policies, structures, standards, systems and procedures for the national qualifications framework for the UAE, known as the <a href="#">QFEmirates</a> . It enables a coherent, consistent and robust approach to be taken to the design of qualifications for higher education, general education and technical, vocational and professional education and training. It sets out criteria for both the accreditation of qualifications and for those organizations in the public and private sectors which are to deliver them. It provides guidance and a reference tool for accreditation and awarding bodies and qualifications designers and developers.

<b>Quality Enhancement Plan</b>	This is a multi-year strategic document devised by the institution that focuses on well-defined areas of improvement for attaining educational goals and addresses areas of concerns identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning, and institutional evaluation processes. The <a href="#">QEP</a> also provides a framework for successful stewardship, continual assessment, and flexible modification of strategic goals and major aspects of students' educational experiences. The <a href="#">QEP</a> should demonstrate broad-based engagement of institutional constituencies in the development and implementation of the <a href="#">QEP</a> .
<b>Self-evaluation</b>	The process of self-evaluation consists of the systematic collection of administrative data, the questioning of students and graduates, and the holding of moderated interviews with lecturers and students, resulting in a <a href="#">SER</a> . Self-evaluation is a collective institutional reflection and an opportunity for quality enhancement. The resulting report further serves to provide information for the review team in charge of the external evaluation.
<b>Standards</b>	Checkpoints or benchmarks determining the attainment of certain thresholds/requirements. Standards are mandatory for compliance and describe to a certain degree of detail the characteristics of the requirements, conditions and courses of action to be met. They, therefore, provide the quantitative and qualitative basis on which the attainment of certain thresholds/requirements is measured, and an evaluative conclusion is drawn. Standards comprise technical specifications or other precise criteria designed to be used consistently as a guideline or definition. Standards articulate the minimum thresholds/conditions that are required from any <a href="#">HEI</a> in Abu Dhabi to be in compliance with the performance expectations set by ADEK.
<b>Technical compliance</b>	The first step in external evaluation by the authorization body whereby the ADEK Procedure Coordinator evaluates the submission for compliance against ADEK standards. The technical check ensures that all standards are addressed in a due manner and all the required evidence to support the statements is in place prior to sending the application to the external reviewers. The application is not sent to the external reviewers if it fails to comply with ADEK standards. If the result of the technical review demonstrates that the application is incomplete and/or essential information/evidence is missing, the applicant revises the application, incorporates all recommendations and resubmits the application within the stipulated deadline, for it to be considered for future eligibility and external review.
<b>Wellbeing</b>	Wellbeing encompasses special arrangements and policies that prioritize the physical, mental, and social aspects of students, faculty, and staff and promote optimal bodily health, encouraging participation in sports, extramural activities, and other recreational pursuits. These policies and activities recognize the interconnectedness of all parties involved and aim to foster a harmonious and supportive environment where everyone can flourish in terms of their physical, mental, and social wellbeing. In addressing wellbeing needs, HEIs should strive to create a positive and conducive environment for learning, teaching, and sporting excellence, aligning with the strategic priorities of Abu Dhabi.

## ANNEX B: List of Acronyms

<b>ADEK</b>	Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge
<b>ANQAHE</b>	Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
<b>APQN</b>	Asia-Pacific Quality Network
<b>CAA</b>	Commission for Academic Accreditation
<b>CBHE</b>	Cross-border Higher Education
<b>ENQA</b>	European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
<b>ERP</b>	External Review Panel
<b>EQAF</b>	External Quality Assurance Framework
<b>HEAC</b>	Higher Education Authorization Committee
<b>HE</b>	Higher Education
<b>HEI</b>	Higher Education Institution
<b>HERL</b>	Higher Education Regulation & Licensing Division
<b>INQAAHE</b>	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
<b>IQAS</b>	Internal Quality Assurance System
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>NAL</b>	Non-Approval Letter
<b>NOL</b>	No Objection Letter
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance
<b>QC</b>	Quality Control
<b>QEP</b>	Quality Enhancement Plan
<b>QF<i>Emirates</i></b>	Qualifications Framework for the Emirates
<b>SER</b>	Self-Evaluation Report
<b>SoD</b>	Students of Determination

# ANNEX C: Nomenclature

HEIs (universities, institutes, colleges, schools, academies, etc.) in Abu Dhabi are differentiated by research, teaching, and service to society capacities, as per the below definitions.

## University

An institution that normally offers and grants **undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral** degrees in a **variety** of subject areas. The institution engages in **high-quality research** across the range of its subject areas which informs its teaching and learning.

## Institute

A **research-focused, stand-alone** institution concentrating on **a single or small** range of subject areas, usually of a **technical nature**. The institution engages in **high-quality research** across the range of its subject areas. It may offer and grant degrees in areas **related to its research focus/foci**, at the undergraduate level but more normally at the **graduate and doctoral degree** levels.

## College or School

An institution that is either **stand-alone** or a **constituent** part of a university. The terms college and school can be used interchangeably.

As a **stand-alone** entity, a college will be **practice-led** and normally offer and grant degrees in **a single or small range of subject areas**, usually at the **undergraduate** and/or **graduate levels**. The institution is expected to engage in a level of **research commensurate** with the level/s of the program/s being offered.

A college as a **constituent** part of a university (sometimes referred to as a university college) adopts the characteristics of the parent institution in **a single or small range of subject areas**, the college’s specialism, for example, medicine, law, business, engineering, etc. A college, within an institution, may deliver **undergraduate** and/or **graduate** and/or **doctoral** degrees. The college/school is expected to engage in **a level and type of research commensurate** with the remit of the parent institution and the degrees being delivered by the college across the range of its subject areas. This research will inform the college’s teaching and learning.

## Academy

A **stand-alone** institution that is **practice-led**, normally offering and granting degrees in **a single subject area**. An academy normally offers and grants **undergraduate and/or graduate** degrees. An academy is expected to engage in **a level of research commensurate** with the level/s of the program/s being offered.