دائرة التعليم والمعرفة
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AND KNOWLEDGE

CRITERIA, GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR AUTHORIZATION OF NEW AND REAUTHORIZATION OF EXISTING HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE EMIRATE OF ABU DHABI

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FOREWORD

The current *Criteria, Guidelines and Procedures for Authorization of New and (re)authorization of Existing Higher Education Institutions in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi* provides the necessary information for applicants in their process of submission of an application to the Abu Dhabi Department of Education & Knowledge (ADEK) for the purposes of obtaining a 'No Objection Letter'. The (re)authorization by ADEK is a prerequisite for applying to the Ministry of Education (MoE) Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) for (re)licensure. The document provides information regarding:

- Fundamental principles of ADEK upon which the HEI (re)authorization procedure is based
- ADEK's approach to (re)authorization of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to function in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi
- Requirements the HEIs must meet in order to obtain ADEK's 'No Objection Letter'

To ensure coherence with ADEK's strategic priorities, the ADEK (re)authorization criteria underpin their operationalization through spelling out those priorities in the major principles that the ADEK procedures are guided by.

The ADEK strategic priorities are as follows:

- **Quality:** Raise the quality of Abu Dhabi's higher education system to internationally recognized levels
- **Alignment:** Align higher education with Abu Dhabi's social, cultural, and economic needs
- **Research:** Build and maintain a research ecosystem to drive an innovation-based economy
- **Access:** Provide all qualified students with affordable access to higher education

Thus, the ADEK 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 HEIs bring to the HE system and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi society at large.

The ADEK (re)authorization procedure is mission and evidence-based in nature, which is underpinned by the *fitness-of-purpose* approach to quality assurance where the purpose is defined by the socio-economic and cultural needs in alignment with Abu Dhabi strategic priorities.

The ADEK criteria, guidelines and procedures for (re)authorization of HEIs are developed based on international best practice with particular consideration of the standards set by overarching umbrella quality assurance networks.

The ADEK criteria, guidelines and procedures are subject to revision at regular intervals to ensure relevance to the socio-economic and cultural needs as well as validity.

The criteria, guidelines and procedures in this manual apply to all types of Higher Education providers in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi – federal, government, and private.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADEK	Abu Dhabi Department of Education & Knowledge
ANQAHE	Arab Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education
APQN	Asia-Pacific Quality Network
CAA	Commission of Academic Accreditation
EAD	Emirate of Abu Dhabi
ENQA	European Network of Quality Assurance
HE	Higher Education
AQAC	ADEK Academic Quality Assurance Committee
HEI	Higher Education Institution
INQAAHE	International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
MIS	Management Information System
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NQA	National Qualifications Authority
P&R	Policy and Regulation Division
QA	Quality Assurance
QC	Quality Control
QF Emirates	Qualifications Framework of Emirates
QI	Quality Improvement
QID	Quality Improvement Division

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STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY

ADEK was established in accordance with law No. 24 of 2005, issued by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, the UAE President, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and the Ruler of Abu Dhabi.

ADEK's mission is to improve the quality and outcomes of schooling and higher education within the Emirate of Abu Dhabi (EAD), and to guide and define the overall profile and quality of higher education offerings within the Emirate. The Executive Council has delegated authority to ADEK with respect to leading, influencing and implementing educational initiatives and growth within the EAD.

Any entity interested in establishing, continuing or changing the nature of its operations in the EAD must follow the criteria, indicators, guidelines and procedures as outlined in this manual to obtain a 'No Objection Letter' from the Abu Dhabi Department of Education & Knowledge (ADEK) before filing an application with the Ministry of Education (MOE) Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) for (re)licensure and authorization of substantive change. No entity (e.g. individuals, institutions, consortia or organizations) may advertise, solicit, recruit, enroll, or operate a post-secondary education institution in the EAD until it meets the criteria set in this manual and is authorized for operation by ADEK.

The current criteria, guidelines and procedures are supported by an operating Memorandum of Understanding (2014) between MOE and ADEK.

Extract from the MoU between ADEK and MOE (November, 2014) (translation from Arabic) Proposed Mechanism

1. Higher Education Licensing Protocol

a) The current operating procedures shall continue. All applicants seeking to operate higher education activities in Abu Dhabi Emirate shall undergo ADEK's Higher Education Licensing process as outlined in the ADEK Higher Education Licensing Policies. Successful applicants shall be issued a "No Objection Letter" from ADEK, however, such letter will not guarantee the approval from the UAE Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA). After that step, applicants must submit an application for initial licensure to MOE CAA.

b) Institutions seeking renewal of MOE licensure, or which anticipate any changes to the nature of their operations or their premises, or seek to relocate or open a new branch, shall duly re-engage in the process set out in Article A above.

c) Institutions seeking to offer new programs must obtain ADEK's approval before submitting the relevant application for initial licensure from CAA. Such process shall start after ADEK sets an implementation date.

The institutional (re)authorization criteria, procedures and related expenses are adopted by the resolution of the Executive Committee, Abu Dhabi Executive Council (2016/2/036/22) as of 21 June 2016.

THE QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK IN THE EMIRATE OF ABU DHABI

The newly establishing Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as well as programs intending to function in the United Arab Emirates are to obtain an initial institutional license/initial program accreditation from the MOE CAA. To be effective, the HEIs and programs are to renew their license/accreditation on a five year cyclical basis.

Thus, at the federal level, the quality assurance framework in the United Arab Emirates evolves around institutional and program components and includes the following mechanisms:

- Initial Institutional Licensure (IL) for new Higher Education Institutions
- Licensure (L) and Renewal of Licensure (RL) for existing Higher Education Institutions
- Initial Program Accreditation (IA)
- Accreditation (A) and Renewal of Accreditation (RA) for existing programs

The quality assurance framework at the federal level falls under the jurisdiction of the CAA.

At the Emirate of Abu Dhabi level, the quality assurance framework extends to include the following mechanisms:

- Authorization of New Institutions
- (Re)authorization of Existing Institutions
- Authorization of New Programs
- Authorization of Substantive Changes

The quality assurance framework in the EAD falls under the jurisdiction of the ADEK.

The two approaches – CAA and ADEK - are distinct and complement each other in the sense that CAA's quality assurance framework looks at the extent to which the HEI or program is *fit for the purpose/mission* it has been established for, while the ADEK quality assurance framework specifically looks at the *fitness-of-purpose* in relation to Abu Dhabi's strategic priorities. Thus, all the proposals submitted to ADEK for authorization of new HE institutions and new programs as well as (re)authorization of existing HEIs and substantive changes to function in Abu Dhabi should underpin alignment to the socio-economic and cultural needs frame of reference with an explicit emphasis on the *value added*, *impact* and *alignment with the strategic priorities of Abu Dhabi.*

ADEK's authorization procedures sequentially precede CAA's (re)-licensing and initial accreditation procedures for new HEIs, new programs, existing HEIs and substantive changes. An ADEK No Objection Letter is a prerequisite for applicants to apply to the CAA for respective procedures.

The current guidelines offer a detailed approach that ADEK underpins and the HEIs should follow while conducting (re)authorization of new and existing HEIs and substantive changes in the EAD.

(RE) AUTHORIZATION OF HEIs IN THE EMIRATE OF ABU DHABI

According to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between ADEK and MOE (2014) the new and existing HEIs are to submit a proposal to ADEK for (re)authorization in the following cases:

- If there is a new initiative to establish an HEI in Abu Dhabi – this applies to all types of applicants.
- If the HEI seeks to renew the license with MOE, this approach applies to all HEIs in the EAD. It bears a cyclical character and is conducted on a mandatory basis once every five years.
- If the HEI anticipates any *substantive change* in the nature of its operations and premises, or seeks to relocate or open a new branch – this approach is case specific and only applies to the HEIs that intend to make substantive changes.

Substantive Changes: The definition

Existing HEIs are to apply to ADEK for a No Objection Letter in situations where there are plans to undertake substantive changes in its operations. The substantive changes are defined as follows:

- **Location:** ADEK approval is location specific. Operations granted approval within any given locale cannot seek to expand or move their operations to another area, zone or geographic location without further approval from ADEK.
- **New Partnerships:** ADEK approvals are for partnerships stated at the time of application. Institutions cannot seek to modify or terminate current partnerships without prior application to ADEK. Any new institutional partner must undergo the procedure outlined in the current manual to obtain a No Objection Letter before the institution, the partner, or their joint entity commences any activity in the EAD.
- **New Programs or Certificates**: ADEK approvals are program and certificate specific and limited to those stated at the time of application. New programs or certificates offered at an approved institution, in partnership with another institution or developed and delivered by the approved institution, require ADEK approval before delivery can commence. ADEK encourages the growth of institutional capacity, as long as the growth is strategically aligned with the needs of the EAD.
- **Changing Nomenclature or Category**: ADEK approval is valid for the nomenclature deemed appropriate at the time of application and for the category in which the approved institution is operational. Institutions that seek to change name, mission or operate with different purposes for which it was originally granted approval must be reassessed according to the nomenclature and categories put forward by ADEK and evaluated on the basis of the criteria and procedure outlined in this manual.

Thus, HEIs planning to and currently functioning in the EAD are to obtain a "No Objection" letter from ADEK prior to their application for (re)licensure to MOE CAA and prior to undertaking any substantive change in its operation.

THE SET UP AND FRAME OF REFERENCE

The HEI (re)authorization procedure is mission- and evidence-based in nature, which is underpinned by *the fitness-of-purpose* approach to quality assurance. In the case of ADEK HEI (re)authorization, the purpose is set by the economic, social and cultural needs and are guided by Abu Dhabi's strategic priorities.

ADEK's framework for authorization of new HEIs focuses on three distinctive mission aspects of HE; *teaching and learning*, *research* and *service to society* – from the point of view of *value added*, *impact* and *alignment with strategic priorities of Abu Dhabi* and responds to the following questions:

1. To what extent does the new HEI meets the socio-economic and cultural needs of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi?
    a. Is the business case of the HEI sustainable and feasible? Evidences to support financial and professional feasibility.
    b. Are the partners, if any, committed to the success of the case?
2. How does the new HEI fit the strategic development scheme of Abu Dhabi and what is its market niche? What is the value added?
3. What is the mission of the new HEI? How does it complement the higher education system in Abu Dhabi?
4. Are there enough resources to ensure the students obtain the qualifications relevant to the market needs?
5. How does the HEI intend to ensure and enhance the quality of its provisions?

In case of existing HEIs the response to the following questions is required:

1. To what extent does the existing HEI and the programs it delivers meet the labor market, social and cultural needs in the EAD? How does the existing HEI fit the strategic development scheme of Abu Dhabi and what its market niche is?
2. What are the unique and distinctive ways in which the institution enriches and adds value to the higher education sector and society, nationally, regionally and internationally? Has the HEI been able to increase its attractiveness and visibility at the national, regional and international levels?
3. What has the institution done to produce a vibrant intellectual culture within the institution and in society at large? To what extent does the HEI act as a generator of new ideas and cutting-edge knowledge and technologies within the national HE system?
4. Has the HEI been able to ensure enough resources to establish a student-centered environment thus enabling the students in obtaining qualifications relevant to market demand? Are the qualifications offered relevant to the market, social and cultural needs and the graduates employable?
5. To what extent has the internal and external quality assurance of the HEI been able to enhance the quality of its provisions?

THE SET UP AND FRAME OF REFERENCE

The preceding questions are translated into criteria, sub-criteria, indicators and guidelines to usher the applicants through the application preparation process.

If an HEI is planning substantive changes in its operations, it has to undergo a limited procedure of (re)authorization with ADEK. The cases with substantive change request are to be handled on individual basis drawing on the nature of the substantive change proposed. In each individual case, the criteria and respective indicators will be applied selectively, based on the case requirements.

PREREQUISITES FOR THE APPLICANTS OF NEW HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

To be considered for authorization review the HEI should comply with the following prerequisites:

- Any potential higher education provider seeking to establish a new higher education institution/branch in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi must consult ADEK prior to submitting the application.
- The HEI filing the applications for authorization should partner with internationally **highly ranked** and **reputable** higher education institutions and/or leaders in the fields of study proposed.

In exceptional cases an exemption may be granted to the cases that are supported by a Federal or Emirate level Decree.

Failure to comply with the prerequisites set by ADEK will result in the rejection of the application.

THE CRITERIA

Criteria	Sub-criteria	Indicators
1. Alignment with the Abu Dhabi Strategic Priorities	**1.1 Positioning in the HE system:** The institution demonstrates stable operations and steady growth in outcomes and outputs (quality and/or quantity). The HEI adds value within its chosen sector(s), and has strong potential for visibility at the national, regional and international levels. **1.2 Employability of graduates:** The HEI is tracking the status of its graduates to raise the employability rate and to better serve the needs of the market.	- Status of national and international accreditation - Employer satisfaction rate - Graduate satisfaction rate - % of employment within 9 months of graduation
2. Governance and Administration	**2.1 Mission, vision and strategy:** The HEI vision, mission, objectives and strategic priorities are in line with the Abu Dhabi strategic, economic, social and cultural development priorities. **2.2 Governance, structure and nomenclature:** The governance model allows for efficient management, operations and strategic plan implementation. The institution adheres to the highest standards of integrity. There is solid evidence that the nomenclature of the institution reflects its capabilities and functions.	- % of programs aligned with Abu Dhabi strategic plan - Board of trustees formation is in accordance with international standards - % of strategic projects shared with Abu Dhabi-wide entities - Number of academic programs with research and innovation projects
3. Programs	**3.1 Alignment of the programs with the national qualifications framework:** The institution has policies and procedures for designing and approving new academic programs and courses that are in line with the QFEmirates. **3.2 Learning outcomes and qualifications offered:** The institution has clearly articulated intended learning outcomes for its academic programs, which are relevant to market needs.	- % of colleges with established Advisory Board - % of programs aligned with QFEmirates - % of international students on sponsorship - % of programs with integrated practicum/internship

THE CRITERIA

4. Research	**4.1 Promotion of research and innovation:** The HEI has mechanisms and processes that support research activities, enhance research quality and productivity and promote innovation. **4.2 Research outputs and outcomes:** The research outcomes and outputs are visible at national, regional and international levels.	- Total budget allocated for research - Graduate /undergraduate students ratio - Total # of publications - # of publications per faculty - # of patents, licenses and spin-offs - # of external research grants - Field-weighted citation impact - Publications in top journal percentiles (%) - 25%
5. Community Services	**5.1 General community service:** The HEI sets community service as one of its strategic priorities and has relevant financial and human resources to deliver those services. **5.2. Charity and volunteer work:** The HEI promotes charity and volunteering activities to benefit society.	- # of community service initiatives - # of education and training provision for the community - # of charitable initiatives - Total # of government projects & consultations
6. Resources	**6.1 Faculty and staff:** The institution employs qualified and sufficient faculty and staff to deliver its academic programs. **6.2 Learning resources:** The institution has secured student access to learning resources (e.g. library, labs) to ensure achievement of the learning outcomes. **6.3 Student services:** The institution has secured access to student support services necessary to ensure the learning expected of its students as well as promote career aspirations.	- % of full-time faculty members - % of faculty with a PhD - % of faculty with qualifications from top 500 internationally ranked institutions (e.g. Shanghai, THE) - Faculty/student ratio (excluding foundation year) - # of print holdings – journals and textbooks - # of electronic holdings - journals and textbooks - # and % of students obtaining full time employment on graduation through the institution - Student satisfaction with student services and career guidance

THE CRITERIA

6. Resources (Cont.)	**6.4 Physical campus:** The institution has a purpose-built campus with adequate physical resources to ensure an environment comparable with international standards for students and faculty members. **6.5 Financial capacity:** The institution is financially capable of fulfilling its commitments to program delivery in the longer term.	- Compliance with Abu Dhabi Health & Safety requirements - Average teaching space in square meters per student FTE - Total budget (the amount from government support, tuition fees, donations, endowments, consultations) - Average compensation expenditure per faculty - Average expenditure per student - Tuition fees per program
7. Access	**7.1 Broadening access:** The institution demonstrates a commitment to broadening access to higher education. **7.2 Support for disadvantaged students:** The institution devotes human and financial resources to the support of disadvantaged and physically challenged students.	- % of students receiving internal financial aid and scholarship - % of total budget allocated to internal financial aid and scholarships - % of special needs students - Facilities adherence to special needs requirements
8. International Visibility	**8.1 Institutional ranking:** The institutional quality assurance system promotes and enhances the educational provisions and international ranking. **8.2. Institutional and program accreditation:** The institution has established quality assurance mechanisms to promote accreditation of the institution and the programs, both nationally and internationally.	- Ranking of the HEI by international agencies - % of programs with international accreditation

THE GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA

The overall guideline for conducting an institutional self-evaluation against the below criteria and indicators is; each sub-criterion should be addressed through an in-depth analysis as described in the current manual and justified with respective indicators, facts, figures and evidences.

The applications for substantive change will be handled on an individual basis drawing on the nature of the proposed substantive change. Respectively, the criteria will be applied selectively, based on the case-by-case requirements.

In case of establishing new HEIs, the analysis in the application should provide a clear projection for at least five upcoming years as well as justified with relevant data.

In case of the existing HEIs, the data provided should cover the last five *years* of the HEI operation.

CRITERION 1: Alignment with Abu Dhabi's Strategic Priorities

1.1 Positioning in the HE system: The institution demonstrates stable operations and steady growth in outcomes and outputs (quality and/or quantity). The HEI adds value within its chosen sector(s), and has strong potential for visibility at the national, regional and international levels.

1.2 Employability of graduates: The HEI is tracking the status of its graduates to raise the employability rate and to better serve the needs of the market.

Guidelines:

1.1 In case of new HEIs, the proposal should demonstrate how the educational establishment is aligned with the Abu Dhabi socio-economic and cultural needs, guided by the Abu Dhabi economic vision. It should clearly demonstrate the ways it will contribute to Abu Dhabi's strategic priorities, towards building a knowledge-based economy, what the value added is and what the expected impact would be. The analysis should be based on the evidence.

The feasibility study should clearly:

- Justify the need for the endeavor, which responds to the national development plan
- Provide references to need(s) of the society, and facilities proposed to be created in relation to the market demand
- Outline social benefits to be achieved

The business plan should clearly demonstrate the case, including but not limited to the philosophy and the objectives of the new endeavor expressed in the mission statement, vision, and respective projections.

THE GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA

In case the new HEI is established in partnership with an internationally renowned HEI there should be a clear presentation of the partner providing for sufficient background to start the endeavor. The commitment of the partner should be articulated (letter of commitment) and prove that the endeavor is feasible. The partner should be nationally and internationally credible, and be committed to the success of the new endeavor until the institution has the capacity to function on its own. The partner, if any, should be internationally highly ranked and be visible at international level.

In case of existing HEIs, the self-evaluation report should demonstrate how the existing HEI is aligned with Abu Dhabi's labor market, socio-economic and cultural needs, guided by Abu Dhabi's economic vision and strategic priorities. The analysis should be supported by the evidence. The report should clearly demonstrate the ways it contributes to Abu Dhabi's strategic priorities, towards building a knowledge-based economy, what the impact and value added is. A statement of current educational objectives of the institution, and an impact analysis on the labor market as well as a copy of the institution's affirmative action program, policy, and plan should be attached.

1.2 To justify this sub-criterion the proposal should provide an analysis of labor market, socio-economic and cultural needs followed by a clear statement of the problems and the opportunities. The analysis should cover demand and supply, and should demonstrate how it covers the unmet need:

- **Demand:** A clear articulation of what occupations/jobs the programs/qualifications prepare the graduates for should be provided. There should be clear evidence of prior consultation with potential and existing employers, the understanding of existing/potential capacity gaps and the Emiratization agenda. Any available evidence of employment rates among graduates should be presented
- **Supply:** Evidence should be provided that the higher education institution attracts a pipeline of students and should include a detailed elaboration on the background or profile of the student body – past, present and future.

The self-evaluation report should demonstrate an accurate analysis of the target student population (local and international) and a clear analysis on the effectiveness of the student recruitment, admission and enrollment. The data provided should demonstrate the extent to which the operations are/have potential to be stable as well as ensure quantitative and qualitative growth.

THE GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA

The HEI should demonstrate it has mechanisms in place to track student employability, through which it endeavors to understand how to better serve the needs of the market. A clear justification of the relevance of each program offered is requested. The institution should demonstrate a history of tracking the relevance of the learning outcomes and qualifications offered. This could be done, among other things, through analysis of the graduates' destinations and employer feedback.

CRITERION 2: Governance and Administration

2.1	**Vision, Mission and strategy:** The HEIs vision, mission, objectives and strategic priorities are in line with Abu Dhabi's strategic, economic, social and cultural development priorities.
2,2	**Governance, structure and nomenclature:** The governance model allows for efficient management, operations and strategic plan implementation. The institution adheres to the highest standards of integrity. There is solid evidence that the nomenclature of the institution reflects its capabilities and functions.

2.1 The self-evaluation report should clearly state the vision and mission statement of the institution, the vision to be achieved. The mission statement should clearly state the distinctiveness of the endeavor, address the needs of Abu Dhabi society at large, and identify the target population it serves. Priorities in teaching and learning, research and services to society should be identified. The mission statement should be measurable to provide a firm basis for internal and external evaluations. There should be a clear articulation of the goals and objectives of each proposed program which are in line with the institutional mission and Abu Dhabi strategic priorities.

A clear articulation with the mission and vision should be demonstrated. The goals and objectives should be reflected in a five-year strategic plan, which should be cascaded down to specific objectives, reflected in long and short-term operational plans and be linked with the budget and respective QA mechanisms. The policies and procedures should be devised in a way that ensure implementation of the strategic plan. The mission statement should be adopted by the Governing Board and made publicly available. A long-range plan should complement the institution's mission by defining the path to mission attainment over an extended period of time.

THE GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA

2.2 The primary focus in this sub-criterion is the manner in which the governance of the HE is designed. The self-assessment report should demonstrate the extent to which the Board involves key external and internal stakeholders, how it ensures independent decision taking, is free of conflict of interest as well as effective management and administration. The governing board should be composed of stakeholders: the government, employers, faculty members, and other key stakeholders should be ensured. The board members, including the chair, should be free of any personal or immediate familial financial interest in the institution, including as employee, stock- or share-holder, corporate director, or contractor. The administrative structure should be designed to ensure effective and efficient management of the HEI. Proper communication mechanisms between the board members and the administration should be set. The report should demonstrate to what extent the Board is active and contributes to the success of the university performance. Thus, the minutes of the Board meetings, the projects initiated, or the benefits the HEI has as a result of a Board member contribution are useful to support the Board contribution to the success of the HEI.

In this sub-criterion a clear justification of the organizational structure and the benefits of each unit are requested. The proposal should emphasize the governance and administration structure, outline the legal authorities, responsibilities and relationships among the governing board, academic council, administration, faculty, and staff. To ensure efficient functioning the organigram of the HEI should be designed in a way that supports achievement of the institutional strategic priorities. The responsibilities of each entity should be clearly described in by-laws and other regulatory documents. The institution's organizational structure, decision-making processes, and policies should be clearly stated and consistent with its mission as well as support institutional effectiveness. The chief executive officer should have the necessary capacity to manage and allocate resources in keeping with institutional purpose and objectives and assess the effectiveness of the institution.

The proposal should provide sufficient evidence on all the policies, procedures and regulations related to the operations of the new institution. Through its policies and practices, the institution should demonstrate how it will convey the values it adheres to the public at large. The policies should be made publicly available for all the stakeholders.

THE GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA

Higher Education institutions (universities, institutes, colleges, schools, academies, etc.) in Abu Dhabi are differentiated by research, teaching and application capacities by the following categories, and ADEK seeks to provide approvals to only the leading institutions in each category, or 'best in class' institute.

University

An institution that normally offers and grants **undergraduate, masters** 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** entity 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 undergraduate level but more normally at **masters** 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 **undergraduate** and/or **masters' 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 **masters** 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 this is **practice-led**, normally offering and granting degrees in **a single subject area**. An academy normally offers and grants **undergraduate and/or masters** degrees**.** An academy is expected to engage in **a level of research commensurate** with the level(s) of the program(s) being offered.

If the HEI is operating in partnership with an international HEI, then the self-evaluation report should demonstrate the extent of the partner involvement in the governance and administration, the impact of such an involvement as well as the extent of such contribution.

CRITERION 3: Programs

3.1 Alignment of the programs with the national qualifications framework: The institution has policies and procedures for designing and approving new academic programs and courses that are in line with the QF*Emirates*.

3.2 Learning outcomes and qualifications offered: The institution has clearly articulated intended learning outcomes for its academic programs, which are relevant to market needs.

Guidelines:

3.1 The goals and objectives of the institution should be clearly spelled out in the programs to be offered. The self-assessment report should provide a justified analysis on how the proposed levels (bachelor, postgraduate diploma, master and PhD) as well as the intended and achieved learning outcomes fit into the Qualifications Framework of Emirates (QF*Emirates*)[1]. The analysis should underpin how the proposed levels tie in with the international perspective of the requirements currently set by the respective professional fields and the disciplines with regard to the content and outcomes of the programs offered. It should clearly show alignment of each program intended and achieved learning outcomes with the respective level qualifications outlined in the QF*Emirates*.

A clear description of each program should be provided, with a timed action plan. The programs offered should be justified with an in-depth analysis on how the proposed level and orientation (bachelor's or master's; professional or academic) as well as the intended learning outcomes fit into the Qualifications Framework of Emirates (QF*Emirates*). Such an analysis also refers to all the courses/modules offered within the frames of the programs, which should demonstrate clear alignment with the QF*Emirates*. A learning outcomes matrix should be constructed, attached and referenced to in the application (see Annex F attached). To ensure development of practical skills, the program design should demonstrate a balanced division between theory and practice as well as allocate sufficient time for gaining practical skills in a work place. Modes of delivery for each program should be clearly described (face-to-face; on-line; hybrid).

The existing HEI should provide an analysis of the policies and procedures for new program development and approval with clear evidence of the impact and effectiveness of such an approach, as well as steps undertaken to raise the effectiveness of the given policies and procedures.

1: QF Emirates Handbook at www.nqa.gov.ae

THE GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA

3.2 The HEI should demonstrate that it has clearly articulated learning outcomes for its academic programs, which are relevant to the market needs. Further, the analysis should demonstrate that the policies and procedures for designing and approving new academic programs, modules and courses are effective and clear, and promote relevance to socio-economic and cultural needs. A detailed analysis of such relevance should be provided. A description of the proposed degree program(s) including statement(s) of purpose, description of administration and governance, the curricula, course descriptions and syllabi, graduation requirements, and degrees granted should be provided. The intended learning outcomes of the program should be clearly stated with regard to knowledge, skills, and competencies, and a clear link with the labor market needs and international requirements should be demonstrated.

If the HEI is operating in partnership with an international HEI, it should demonstrate that such a partnership goes beyond signing a commitment letter, and there is a clear commitment of the partner and contribution to the success. The analysis should elaborate on the extent to which the partner is involved in the delivery of programs, how the partner, in collaboration with the HEI, puts efforts in ensuring delivery of the same quality as in its main institution, the respective impact and tangible outcomes of such a partnership.

Evidence to be attached to the application:

- Proposed degrees, diplomas, certificates to be awarded
- Name and duration of courses/program
- Mode of delivery
- Curriculum
  - Proposed structure/scheme of studies
  - Management of practical training, work placements
- Development of academic/study programs
  - Policies for study/academic program development and adoption
  - Development schedule/procedure
- Arrangement for academic supervision of students
- Local and international student admission policy
- Number of students to be enrolled, level-wise
- Procedures and criteria for admission
- Promotional campaign
- Fee structure
  - Admission fee
  - Annual tuition fee
  - Other dues / fees (to be specified by the applicant)
  - Scholarships
  - Bursaries
  - Assistantships

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- Total number of students envisioned to be enrolled in the HEI
- Student support service
- Career services
- Other respective evidence.

CRITERION 4: Research

4.1 **Promotion of research and innovation:** The HEI has mechanisms and processes that support research activities, enhance research quality and productivity and promote innovation.

4.2 **Research outputs and outcomes:** The research outcomes and outputs are visible at the national, regional and international levels.

Guidelines:

4.1 The self-evaluation report demonstrates the areas of research pursued by the HEI provider. The HEI should justify the research strategies, functions and processes it is involved in and provide adequate evidence demonstrating steady increase in research participation, enhancement of research quality and productivity. Acknowledging the fact that not all HEIs will be research intensive as articulated in their mission, some measure of research activity should nevertheless be underway at all HEIs (e.g. research undertaken to inform teaching, and research by postgraduate students and the like). Thus, an in-depth analysis should elaborate on the effectiveness of the adopted policies and plans related to research functions, the impact the research has on teaching and learning, effectiveness of the policies and criteria for access to and allocation of funding for research, regulations governing research output, strategies which evaluate, monitor and track the outcomes and impact of research as well as the effectiveness and efficiency of research management at the institution. The analysis should include the last five years of research activity carried out by the HEI. For a new HEI, the analysis should elaborate on the projections covering the upcoming five years, at least.

4.2 The HEI should demonstrate its steady and growing contribution to the body of knowledge through the research outcomes that are visible at national, regional and international levels. The analysis should elaborate on the effectiveness of the policies that encourage and support collaborative and problem-solving research at national, regional and international levels.

If the HEI is operating in partnership with an international HEI, it should ensure the partner's participation in joint research projects with the HEI's faculty members and that the outputs are visible at national, regional and international levels. Thus, an elaboration on the effectiveness and efficiency of the planned and implemented research activities with the partner institution should be provided as well as supported with respective evidence.

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CRITERION 5: Community Services

5.1 General community service: The HEI sets community service as one of its strategic priorities and has relevant financial and human resources to deliver those services.

5.2 Charity and volunteer work: The HEI promotes charity and volunteering activities to benefit society.

Guidelines:

5.1 The HEI should demonstrate that it sets the community service as one of its strategic priorities and has allocated relevant financial and human resources to deliver those services. There should be a clear description of all the services delivered and their relevance to the needs of the Abu Dhabi community. The HEI should demonstrate that it engages in planning activities to serve the Abu Dhabi community needs. Such planning should elaborate on the initiatives and processes through which the expertise of the institution in the areas of teaching and research are applied to serve the EAD community needs and encourage community involvement. There should be an analysis of such a service justifying the impact and effectiveness of the approach. The HEI should have evidence of engagement in a regular revision of its services to the community to better meet its needs. Such services may include but, are not limited to, delivery of training, consultancy services, seminars, workshops and the like.

5.2 The HEI should demonstrate that it sets charity and volunteering work as one of its priorities and has allocated relevant financial and human resources to deliver those services. There should be a clear description of all the services delivered and their relevance to the needs of the Abu Dhabi community as well as an analysis of the impact and effectiveness.

CRITERION 6: Resources

6.1 Faculty and staff: The institution employs qualified and sufficient faculty and staff to deliver its academic programs.

6.2 Learning resources: The institution has secured student access to learning resources (e.g. library, labs) to ensure achievement of the learning outcomes.

6.3 Student services: The institution has secured access to student support services necessary to ensure the learning expected of its students as well as promote career aspirations.

6.4 Physical campus: The institution has a purpose-built campus with adequate physical resources to ensure an environment comparable with international standards for students and faculty members.

6.5 Financial capacity: The institution is financially capable of fulfilling its commitments to program delivery in the long term.

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Guidelines:

6.1 The analysis should demonstrate that the HEI employs appropriate numbers of suitably qualified faculty and other academic and administrative personnel, to support its academic programs and ensure achievement of student learning outcomes. Faculty members and other academic personnel employed should be qualified by virtue of education, training, experience or appropriate skills. Designated professional qualifications should be consistent with the expected learning outcomes as outlined in the offered programs and should be relevant to the market need. There should be an adequate core of faculty and other qualified professionals that are responsible for successful delivery of programs and assures the continuity, coherence and enhancement of the HEIs programs.

The institution should also elaborate on the analysis of the impact of the staffing policy and procedure applied so far and state further improvements, if such an endeavor is necessary. The HEI should have a clearly planned approach to faculty and administrative staff recruitment, which should be transparent and ensure the faculty and administrative staff qualifications are actually contributing to the formation and achievement of the learning outcomes. The number of faculty members must be sufficient to ensure achievement of the intended learning outcomes by the students, to cover the breadth of expertise required as well as to maintain continuity in the event of faculty / staff turnover.

The management of the program is at the heart of the program's success, thus, the HEI should have management responsible for the program design, implementation, monitoring, review and enhancement. A clear focus should be made on the qualifications of the staff member responsible for the program. The qualifications of the program responsible should enable an effective and efficient management of the program. Further, the administrative staff selected should have the capacity to practice a student-centered approach in implementing the program in all the aspects: registrar, career center, advisory services and the like. The management and administration should be skilled enough to exercise quality assurance mechanisms to further enhance the program.

6.2 The HEI should provide an in-depth and justified analysis of the resource allocation per program, departments as well as individuals. A clear justification of the library and other resource availability for each program should be provided. The institution must make adequate provision for student access to web-based and other electronic learning materials. For practical courses there must be adequate relevant training facilities. Where applicable, equipment must be shown to conform to industry standards. The institution should have the necessary library stock relevant to the learning

outcomes of the new program and must provide student access to physical and/or online learning materials needed for the courses to be taught. All prescribed, background and further readings must be available in physical and/or electronic form. Where learning materials are provided through arrangements with a third party (e.g. another educational institution), the effectiveness of such arrangements must be demonstrable.

The resources allocation policy should be evaluated and constantly revised to ensure adequacy of the learning and working environment including access to a fully equipped campus, the instructional equipment, materials, space available to implement the program(s), research laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, dormitories, fitness facilities, etc. An analysis on the extent to which the existing resources are promoting achievement of learning outcomes by the students should also elaborate on the relevance of the resources to the market needs. The HEI should be able to justify value for money against tuition paid. To be able to prove the value for money, a comparative analysis of the leading competitors in the field should be provided.

6.3 The HEI should provide an in-depth analyses of the student services available and appropriate to the students' learning and physical needs. A clear description of the services consistent with student expectations and respective impact on their learning should be provided. The student services should include, but not be limited to, provisions of academic advice and supervision, career guidance, address of grievances and complaints, if offered, athletic or recreational activities and the like. The institution has to demonstrate that it has secured, and has enough resources to further secure, access to student support services necessary to ensure the learning expected of its students as well as achievement of student career aspirations.

6.4 The physical resources should be aligned with the mission of the new institution and be adequate for the proposed number of students and faculty members planned for the start and further expansion. The HEI should be able to demonstrate that it has adequate capacity to use the internal and external resources effectively and efficiently. Resources such as facilities, equipment and supplies, technology, research and instructional support and staffing, and other assets should be an integral and proportional part of all institutional planning, allocation, and assessment activities and be reflected in the budget. Access to the fully equipped campus should be ensured.

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The proposal should include but not be limited to the following evidence:

- Proposed site area along with a justification with reference to demographic requirements and availability of present facilities in the area.
- Land (land donation, land acquisition, land purchased).
- Infrastructure available – the proposal should consider a full campus with the necessary facilities including, but not limited to:
  - Administration, academic, library, laboratories, hostels, halls, sports grounds and other facilities, including recreational and health and safety facilities
  - The HEI has to align its health and safety regulations with the Abu Dhabi Environment, Health & Safety Management System Regulatory Framework (AD EHSMS RF) and the Education Sector EHSMS Requirements.
    - HEIs are required to comply with the Abu Dhabi Environment, Health & Safety Management System Regulatory Framework (AD EHSMS RF) and the Education Sector EHSMS Requirements currently under enforcement by ADEK as Education Sector Regulatory Authority (SRA) in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. To meet the sub-criterion the HEIs are requested to:
      - Register with Abu Dhabi Department of Education & Knowledge (ADEK) EHS Section and fill the Risk Classification Tool data (attached) to be classified and enroll as a nominated entity for the development and implementation of the required EHS Management tool as requested by ADEK.
      - Develop/implement approved the EHS Management System Tool (Full EHSMS, Mechanism 5, etc.) including Emergency Management Program in compliance with AD EHSMS Requirements RF and Education Sector EHSMS Requirements.
      - Monitor the approved EHS Management System Tool (Full EHSMS, Mechanism 5, etc.) in compliance with Abu Dhabi EHSMS Requirements RF and Education Sector EHSMS Requirements.
      - Conduct Annual External 3rd Party Audit.
      - Report & Investigate OSH Incidents in compliance with AD EHSMS Requirements RF and Education Sector EHSMS Requirements.
      - Management of Appointed Contractors in compliance with AD EHSMS Requirements RF and Education Sector EHSMS Requirements.
      - Maintain and continually improve EHS Management Tool as required and based on Annual Management Review as needed in compliance with AD EHSMS Requirements RF and Education Sector EHSMS Requirements.

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The requested attachments for this particular sub-criterion are as follows:

- Completed Risk Classification & Confirmed Classification by ADEK EHS Section to start development and implementation of EHS Management Tool based on classification. (**Reference:** Education Sector EHSMS Requirements-Section 3-: Education Sector Entities Risk Classification).
- EHS Management Tool Approved by ADEK EHS Section.
- Complete and Submit Form E - Entity Quarterly Performance Report.
- Form F - Entity Annual External EHSMS Audit Report Form.
- Form G - Serious OHS Incident Notification - v2.1 (Dec 2013) Fillable
- Form G1 - Serious OHS Incident Investigation- v2.1 (Dec 2013) Fillable
- Form G2 - Non-Serious OHS Incident Investigation- v2.1 (Dec 2013) Fillable
- Form H - Notice of Appointment of a Principal Contractor Form - V2.0 - Feb 2012
- Form J - Request for Modification of AD EHSMS RF - V2.1 - Apr 2013
- Equipment, office, and laboratories
- Books, journals, software, other publications
- Furniture, fixtures
- Emergency and recreational facilities

The HEI should ensure sufficiency and adequacy of physical resources to achieve the program outcomes as well as support the students in their achievement of the qualifications. The space/venue/location identified for program delivery should be adequate for the number of students to be enrolled. The location should have all the necessary instructional resources and media appropriate to the program learning outcomes. There should also be a description and evidence of any generic or dedicated computing facilities as well as learning centers for students, dormitory, sports and other facilities.

6.5 The financial performance related to the goals and strategies of the HEI should be continually assessed against the strategic and financial plans. The successful HEIs should be able to provide data for the last five fiscal years as well as a projection for, at least, upcoming two years including a forecast of revenues, expenses, and investment income, and where available, a statement of financial position at the end of the fiscal year. In addition, a certified audit showing the financial structure of the institution, with balance sheets and operating statements for the last five fiscal years, as well as information regarding the tax status of the institution should be enclosed. Sustainability projections from financial and academic points of view for the upcoming years should be duly justified. The analysis related to the financial stability of the HEI should demonstrate that the institution is in a good standing and has been and will be able to further fulfil its commitments to the students. The HEI should demonstrate a robust funding model by identifying the potential sources. There should be enough evidence on the financial stability for provision of sustainable services to meet its obligations to the students enrolled. The projections made for the upcoming five years should demonstrate a firm background for achieving the program's objectives. The budget should be aligned with the strategies and operational plans for the program and fit well within the overall HEI financial and strategic framework.

THE GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA

CRITERION 7: Access

7.1	**Broadening access:** The institution demonstrates a commitment to broadening access to higher education.
7.2	**Support for disadvantaged students:** The institution devotes human and financial resources to the support of disadvantaged and physically challenged students.

7.1 The HEI should demonstrate its commitment to widening and broadening access to its institution. Thus, it should justify based on which factors it designs its tuition fees and the extent to which it takes into consideration the needs of the customers and the market while setting tuition fees. If tuition fees have been raised throughout the last five years, based on which indicators such a decision was taken. It should also elaborate on the ways it seeks to ensure financial support to students. Geographical access should also be in the center of the HEI planning and respective activities.

7.2 The HEI should demonstrate an in-depth analysis on the target groups that are disadvantaged for some reason (e.g. geography, health, gender and the like) and provide a clear policy and evidence on the educational provisions for those groups. The educational provisions could include, but not be limited to, various forms of education delivery such as distance/e-learning, special tracks for students with disabilities and the like.

CRITERION 8: International visibility

8.1	**Institutional ranking:** The institutional quality assurance system promotes and enhances the educational provisions and international ranking.
8.2	**Institutional and program accreditation:** The institution has established quality assurance mechanisms to promote accreditation of the institution and the programs, both nationally and internationally.

Guidelines:

8.1 The HEI should provide an analysis on the effectiveness and efficiency of the internal quality assurance system at the institutional level, to what extent it promotes enhancement of the educational provisions and respective impact. The institutional internal quality assurance system should be designed in a way so as to promote establishment of a quality culture within the HEI. Thus, evidence of direct and indirect stakeholder involvement in the internal quality assurance should be provided. The HEI should be able to demonstrate the approaches undertaken to turn quality assurance responsibility of all the stakeholders involved, as well as steps undertaken to ensure ownership for quality assurance – all enabling establishment of a

learning organization. The impact could be expressed through, for example, the external reviews leading to recognition/visibility at the national, regional and international levels. Thus, a description of any procedure leading to national, regional and international accreditation, plans for promoting international ranking of the institution, and any other recognition activities should be provided. Listing in any of the rankings (if applicable) is useful to see the positioning of the HEI. Further, any suspensions, revocations, or investigative actions by accrediting agencies during the last five years, with an explanation of the cause(s) and the resolution(s), if any, is to be comprehensively stated and plans for the follow up and improvement should be provided.

8.2 A major advantage is international accreditation of the programs offered by internationally highly reputable program specific accreditors, thus, all the program level international accreditations as well as plans for future international accreditations of programs should be presented in detail. International rankings of the institution should be one of the priorities on the HEI agenda and clears plans for inclusion in leading international rankings should be submitted as well as the achievements with this regards should be documented.

To ensure continuous development and enhancement the HEIs should demonstrate to what extent they follow up on the recommendations spelled out in the internal and external evaluation reports received as a result of local and international accreditations/external reviews (financial or content-wise audits). Such an analysis should clearly evaluate and demonstrate the impact of such external recommendations on the success (failures are also possible) of the HEI as well as the lessons learnt.

THE PROCEDURE

The procedural steps

All HEIs in the EAD, new and existing, seeking to apply for or renew the MoE license or which anticipate any changes to the nature of their operations or premises, or seek to relocate or open a new branch are to apply to ADEK for (re)-authorization leading to a grant of a No Objection Letter prior to submitting their application to the CAA.

Overall, the duration of the procedure is up to six months (see Annex A for the flowchart). In case there is a need to make corrections and addition to the application by the HEIs some extension might apply.

All the institutions to undergo a (re)-authorization procedure are invited to a preliminary meeting with ADEK to discuss and agree on the scope of the external review prior to the launch of the procedure.

For the implementation of a procedure related to the authorization of substantive changes adjustments to the below procedure might be made based on the case requirements.

STEP 1: Prepare and submit application

Description/ Definition:	The HEI planning to apply for (re)-licensure with the MOE CAA should file an application to ADEK based on the criteria, indicators and guidelines as specified in this manual. The application should be analytical in nature and should adhere to ADEK criteria for (re)-authorization of HEIs. The application should be submitted in one official hard copy and a soft copy to the ADEK Chairman/ Sector Executive Director.
Responsible:	HEI
Inputs:	• The ADEK application form for (re)-authorization of existing HEIs • ADEK guidelines, criteria and procedures for (re)-authorization of existing and new HEIs • The application filed by the applicant seeking No Objection Letter from ADEK
Outputs:	The ADEK acknowledgement of the application
Time line:	All applications should be submitted at least seven months prior to the deadline for submitting the full application for (Re)-Licensure to CAA.

THE PROCEDURE

STEP 2: Pre-screen application for technical compliance

Description/ Definition:	Once the application is filed, the case is sent to the ADEK P&R Division Director and is assigned a Procedure Coordinator. The Procedure Coordinator receives and reviews the application along with the required supporting documents for technical compliance with the ADEK criteria and requirements.
Responsible:	ADEK P&R Division Director; QA Section Manager; Procedure coordinator
Outputs:	• ADEK letter of application acceptance • ADEK contract/agreement with the HEI
Time line:	One week upon the receipt of the application

STEP 3: Amend application

Description/ Definition:	In case of detection of any non-compliance with the ADEK requirements, the application is sent back to the HEI for revision and resubmission.
Responsible:	ADEK QC Section Manager, HEI
Outputs:	• ADEK letter of non-compliance to the HEI. • In case of a positive outcome of the technical review, the cases related to substantive changes and grant of space/location to the HEIs, an internal No Objection Letter is to be sent to the ADEK Infrastructure and Facilities Division to proceed with the location grant request. • Resubmitted application
Time line:	Two weeks upon the receipt of the letter of non-compliance.

THE PROCEDURE

STEP 4: Select and appoint external reviewers

Description/ Definition:	The ADEK Procedure Coordinator identifies potential external reviewers and submits the list for approval to the ADEK Academic Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC). The external reviewers are contracted and are to sign ADEK non-disclosure/confidentiality statement and ADEK conflict of interest statement. The content related to the sub-criterion on health and safety regulations will be reviewed by ADEK respective division. The results will feed into the final report to be submitted to the AQAC for decision-taking.
Responsible:	ADEK AQAC; Procedure Coordinator
Inputs:	• ADEK policy and procedure for external reviewer selection • List of external reviewers • ADEK non-disclosure/confidentiality statement • ADEK conflict of interest statement
Outputs:	• ADEK contract with external reviewers • Statements of confidentiality and conflict of interests signed by the reviewers
Time line:	Three weeks upon the submission of the list to the ADEK AQAC the external reviewers' panel is appointed.

STEP 5: Submit application for external desk-review

Description/ Definition:	The full application package is sent to the external reviewers for desk review.
Responsible:	Procedure Coordinator
Inputs:	• The application package • ADEK external reviewer's template and guidelines
Time line:	Within one week after the external panel appointment

THE PROCEDURE

STEP 6: Conduct external desk-review

Description/ Definition:	The external reviewers conduct the desk review. Close to the end of the review a one day face-to-face session takes place in ADEK under the QA Section Manager's and Procedure Coordinator's lead to draw the major findings and areas of further inquiry during the site-visit (if any).
Responsible:	External Reviewers; ADEK procedure coordinator; QA Section Manager
Outputs:	• Individual reports of the external reviewers • Joint draft of the final report with major findings and the areas to be further explored should a site visit be necessary
Time line:	Six weeks upon the receipt of the application package.

STEP 7: Site-visit (optional, based on the request of the external reviewers)

Description/ Definition:	Under the lead of ADEK Procedure Coordinator the External Reviewers undertake a site-visit to the HEI under scrutiny. During the site-visit the panel has an opportunity to explore on-site the data provided in the application, meet the stakeholders and further scrutinize the areas that are not clearly covered in the application package.
Responsible:	External reviewers and ADEK Procedure Coordinator
Outputs:	• Individual reports of the external reviewers • Joint draft of the final report with major findings and recommendations.
Time line:	Up to four to five days

THE PROCEDURE

STEP 8: Prepare summary report

Description/ Definition:	The panel Chair along with the ADEK Procedure Coordinator prepares a summary report to be submitted to the AQAC for decision taking. The summary report is circulated among the external reviewers for confirmation.
Responsible:	ADEK QC Section Manager; P&R Division Director
Inputs:	The summary report template
Outputs:	The summary report
Time line:	Within two weeks after the meeting / site visit.

STEP 9: Take decision

Description/ Definition:	The final summary report is sent to the ADEK AQAC for decision taking.
Responsible:	ADEK AQAC
Inputs:	The summary report
Outputs:	Minutes of the AQAC meeting and the decision decree
Time line:	Within one week upon the submission of the summary report.

STEP 10: Inform the applicant on the decision taken

Description/ Definition:	In case of a positive decision a No Objection Letter is issued to the HEI seeking to apply for (re)-licensure. The No Objection letter is signed by the ADEK Chairman and is sent to the applicant. In case of a negative decision a Non Approval Letter is issued to the HEI. The Non Approval letter is signed by the ADEK Chairman and is sent to the applicant. In case the decision taken entails further improvement, a Letter of Recommendations with follow up activities is issued to the applicant. The timeline for a new application is set in the letter. The Letter of Recommendation and follow up is signed by the ADEK Chairman and is sent to the applicant.

THE PROCEDURE

STEP 10: Inform the applicant on the decision taken (cont'd)

Responsible:	ADEK Chairman; P&R Division Director, QC Section Manager
Inputs:	• The No Objection Letter template • The Non Approval Letter template
Outputs:	• The No Objection Letter addressed to the HEI • The Non Approval Letter addressed to the HEI • The Letter of Recommendations and follow up addressed to the HEI
Time line:	Within one week upon the decision taking.

STEP 11: Inform the CAA on the decision taken

Description/ Definition:	Once the decision is taken, ADEK informs the CAA on the results of the procedure for the CAA consideration.
Responsible:	ADEK AQAC; P&R Division Director, QC Section Manager
Inputs:	• The sample letter to the CAA • The No Objection Letter template • The Non Approval Letter template
Outputs:	• The letter to the CAA on the specific case and decision • The No Objection Letter addressed to the HEI applicant • The Non Approval Letter addressed to the HEI applicant • The Letter of Recommendations and follow up addressed to the HEI applicant
Time line:	Within 10 working days upon the decision taking.

THE PROCEDURE

Scheduling the procedure

For existing HEIs, in March each year ADEK will contact HEIs whose licensure is close to expiration in the upcoming year to initiate the procedure for reauthorization. The scheduling of reauthorization procedure will have the following steps:

- The HEIs receive a letter from ADEK notifying the date when the license from MOE expires and asking for providing the provisional dates for (re)authorization application submission
- The HEIs scheduled to be re-authorized in the upcoming year are to send to ADEK the provisional dates when they are ready to apply to ADEK for (re)authorization
- Based on the data collected, ADEK schedules procedures for all the applicant HEIs and informs them on the timing.

The schedules for the upcoming year (re)authorization are to be finalized by ADEK by June every year. Some adjustments to scheduling might apply in the transition phase.

For new HEIs, the applications are received on a rolling basis.

Expenses related to the procedure

Considering ADEK's (re)-authorization procedure is conducted with the involvement of external reviewers, the following expenses apply to each procedure:

- Expenses related to the application handling
- Expenses related to the external reviewers' honoraria
- Expenses related to travel and subsistence costs of the external reviewers, if any.

All the expenses related to the procedure are borne by the applicant.

The costs related to the external reviews must accompany the agreement signed between ADEK and the applicant HEI. Each procedure will be calculated individually and the costs may vary depending on the nature of the procedure and the number of invited external reviewers.

THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

Composition of the Panel

ADEK's Higher Education Policy and Regulation Division establishes an external reviewer panel to conduct the (re)-authorization review leading to the award of a No Objection Letter. The panel is assisted by the ADEK Procedure Coordinator assigned once the application is filed. The external reviewers must meet the following requirements:

- The panel should be composed of at least three members - local and international.
- The panel should command the following competencies:
  - expertise regarding recent developments in HE
  - international expertise in the field of HE governance and administration
  - practical experience in HE governance and administration
  - experience in teaching and learning
  - skills in developing study programs
  - good knowledge of student-centered approach
  - expertise in quality assurance (e.g. conducting audits).

The panel should be chaired by one of the panel members based on agreement between the panel members themselves or appointed by ADEK AQAC.

The panel members should have complementary skills and competencies (to each other).

The panel should be independent and its independence should be guided by the ADEK Conflict of Interest Policy (see Conflict of Interest Policy and Confidentiality).

Panel members must sign a declaration of independence, conflict of interest and confidentiality statements prior to commencing the review process.

External Reviewer Selection Procedure

ADEK conducts (re)-authorization of existing institution by selecting and appointing external reviewers to ensure objectivity and independence of decision-taking. To ensure transparency of the external review procedure ADEK has adopted a procedure through which it selects and appoints the external reviewers. The expert selection procedure has the following steps:

THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

- The ADEK HE Executive Director sends a letter of request for nominations to the HEIs to nominate professionals in different fields to be assessed and included in the ADEK HE expert pool. The letter of request is accompanied by an outline of the qualifications expected from the potential external reviewers. In case of international reviewer selection the letter of request for nominations is sent to INQAAHE, ENQA, APQN, ANQAHE and other recognized QA entities. An open call to invite external reviewers is also possible through the ADEK online portal.
- Upon receipt of the nominations/letters of interest ADEK contacts the nominees/applicants to submit their curriculum vitae along with a statement of interest to serve as an external reviewer.
- ADEK QC Section Manager collects all the CVs and arranges for an initial discussion of the candidates.
- After the initial discussion, the list of shortlisted candidates is submitted to the ADEK AQAC for approval and inclusion in the ADEK database of external reviewers.
- Upon receiving an application for (re)authorization of existing institution, the ADEK QC Section Manager along with the Procedure Coordinator selects the external reviewers based on their qualifications from the ADEK database. The ADEK *Conflict of Interest* policy is applied during the selection to minimize the chances of any potential conflict.
- The list of the panel members is submitted to the Division Director for prior approval before it is submitted to the AQAC for appointment. In case of rejection of the candidates a replacement will be sought through the same database.
- Once appointed the external reviewers sign the agreement with ADEK as well as *Conflict of Interest* and *Confidentiality Statement* prior to the launch of the external review.

THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

Criteria for External Reviewer Selection

The following criteria are applied while selecting external reviewers (national and international):

Administrators/managers (national and international):

- A PhD in the respective field of study
- A proven track record of experience in the higher education management
- At least 10 years of teaching and research experience
- Experience in developing study/academic programs
- Experience in review and quality assurance (desirable)
- Fluency in English is required and fluency in Arabic is preferred.

Faculty members (national and international):

- A PhD in the respective field of study
- A proven track record of research conducted in the respective field of study
- At least 10 years of teaching experience
- Experience in developing study/academic programs
- Experience in review and quality assurance (desirable)
- Fluency in English is required and in Arabic is preferred.

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 adversely affect, compromise, or be incompatible with their obligations as an ADEK external reviewer.

A conflict of interest can involve conflict of time commitment, relationship interest, financial interest, competitor's interest, or discipline-specific interests.

A conflict of time commitment occurs when the external reviewer is involved in and committed to unauthorized activities that interfere with their obligations to ADEK thus delaying the review procedure

THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

A conflict of relationship interest occurs when an external reviewer has a blood relative that is employed by the HEI/Program 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 has direct or indirect financial benefits from the HEI/Program under scrutiny

A conflict of competitor's 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 interests 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 QC Section Manager and Procedure Coordinator are expected to provide verbal and written guidance to external reviewers regarding these situations and the external reviewer's obligation is to disclose such conflicts. To ensure this is the case, the external reviewers are asked to sign the ADEK Conflict of Interest statement.

All the reviewers are to sign a declaration of independence/Conflict of Interest and ADEK's Non-Disclosure/Confidentiality statement prior to the launch of the external review. In these declarations, the reviewers attest to having taken note of the conflict of interest and non-disclosure policy. The final report submitted to AQAC for decision taking should include a declaration that the assessment has been carried out independently and the findings may not be disclosed by any other party but the ADEK.

External Evaluation: the approach

ADEK's (re)-authorization of existing HEIs is carried out on a three-point scale to allow for the improvement. Thus, the following interpretation of the three-point scale underpins the logic of external evaluation:

Meets the criterion: This scale applies if the submission is an excellent one and provides all the necessary analysis and evidence, content- and technical-wise, that justify compliance with the criteria.

Partially meets the criterion: This scale applies in exceptional cases when the market need is clearly stated and the value added and impact of the HEI is explicit, however, there are administrative and technical issues still to be addressed to meet the criterion.

THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

Does not meet the criterion: this scale is applied when there are clear deficiencies in the submission and it fails to justify the market needs and impact as well as the necessary capacity to offer educational provisions.

The external reviewers should provide a list of major findings with substantiated analysis for each of their conclusions, as well as provide a list of recommendations for the follow up and further enhancement.

Based on the desk review and site-visit (if applicable) of three independent reviewers the Chair of the panel along with the ADEK Procedure Coordinator develops a final Summary Report for review by the AQAC for decision taking. The Summery Report should include a substantiated final conclusion on the quality of the HEI provisions on the same three-point scale. The Summary Report should also include recommendations for the follow-up activities.

APPEALS

ADEK's decisions on (re)-authorization of new and existing HEIs are open to internal appeal to the ADEK Higher Education Appeals Committee, which is established on case-by-case basis. The petition to appeal should be submitted in writing to the Higher Education Appeals Committee and should be filed within 30 calendar days of receiving the Non Approval Letter (see Annex B for the flowchart).

The appeals process involves nomination of two independent experts (other than those ones involved in the initial procedure) to investigate the case in full, including the whole application submitted by the appellant, the panel report as well as recommendations. On average, the appeals process lasts eight weeks. Depending on the scope of the appeal, the timeline may vary. Having scrutinized the case the invited experts submit a brief report on the findings to the Higher Education Appeals Committee. The Committee takes a decision drawing on the expert report within two weeks. The Higher Education Appeals Committee's decision after internal appeal is final. The new applicants may not submit a new application for the declined case within the next three years.

All the expenses related to the appeals procedure are borne by the appellant.

The ADEK appeals procedure includes the following steps as outlined below:

STEP 1: Submit Appeal for Review

Description/ Definition:	The Applicant aggrieved by the actions of ADEK with respect to denial of No Objection Letter may file a petition to appeal the decision by the independent and non-partisan appeals committee.
Responsible:	Appellant
Inputs:	• Non Approval Letter • Appeals Petition
Time line:	The petition to appeal needs to be submitted in writing and should be filed within 30 calendar days of receiving the letter of non-approval.

APPEALS

STEP 2: Receive & Review Appeal

Description/ Definition:	The ADEK Chairman receives and reviews the appeal, along with any supporting documents provided by the applicant. Upon reviewing and assessing the appeal the Chairman sends the appeal to the Higher Education Sector Executive Director and, thereof, Higher Education Sector Policy and Regulation Division for registration and processing the case.
Responsible:	ADEK Chairman, HE Executive Director, P&R Division Director
Inputs:	• Letter of Non-Approval • Appeals Petition
Outputs:	• Letter of Non-Approval • Appeals Petition
Time line:	Within one week upon submission of the application.

STEP 3: Register Appeal, Schedule Appeals & Prepare Response

Description/ Definition:	The QC Section Manager registers the appeal (with the supporting documents, if any) in the Appeals Registry. A review schedule is set for the appeal. The review panel is composed of two external reviewers. The QC Section Manager prepares a response letter to the Appellant stating the logistics of the review and providing information on any requirements that need to be prepared and submitted. The Response Letter is shared with the P&R Division Director for review.
Responsible:	ADEK QC Section Manager
Inputs:	Appeals Petition
Outputs:	Response Letter
Time line:	Within two weeks upon the case registration.

APPEALS

STEP 4: Approve Response

Description/ Definition:	The P&R Division Director reviews the Response Letter received from the QC Section Manager and identifies any changes that need to be made. Once the Response Letter is finalized, it is sent to the Appellant.
Responsible:	ADEK P&R Division Director
Inputs:	• Response Letter • Appeals Petition
Outputs:	Response Letter
Time line:	One day upon the receipt of the Response Letter.

STEP 5: External Review of the Case

Description/ Definition:	The case is sent to two independent external reviewers for evaluation
Responsible:	External Reviewers
Inputs:	The appeals petition with all the supporting documents
Outputs:	The External Reviewers' reports
Time line:	Two to six weeks upon receiving the case by the reviewers depending on the scope of the appeal.

STEP 6: Summary of the Report

Description/ Definition:	The QC Section Manager prepares a Summary Report – A summary of the external reviewers' reports.
Responsible:	QC Section Manager
Inputs:	The reports of the external reviewers

APPEALS

STEP 6: Summary of the Report (Cont.)

Outputs:	Summary Report
Time line:	Within one week upon receipt of the reports.

STEP 7: Conduct Appeal Convention & Decide Final Order

Description/ Definition:	The HE Appeals Committee convenes to take decision on the case. The Committee's secretary is responsible for recording the notes from the convention, including the decision to be taken. The Higher Education Appeals Committee discusses and makes the decision based on the documents in the case file including external reviewers' report. Once the decision is taken by the Higher Education Appeals Committee, the Committee Secretary prepares the recommendation to be signed by the Committee's Chair and submitted to the ADEK Chairman for sign off.
Responsible:	Higher Education Appeals Committee
Inputs:	Case file
Outputs:	Appeal Decision
Time line:	Within two weeks upon the submission of the Summary Report

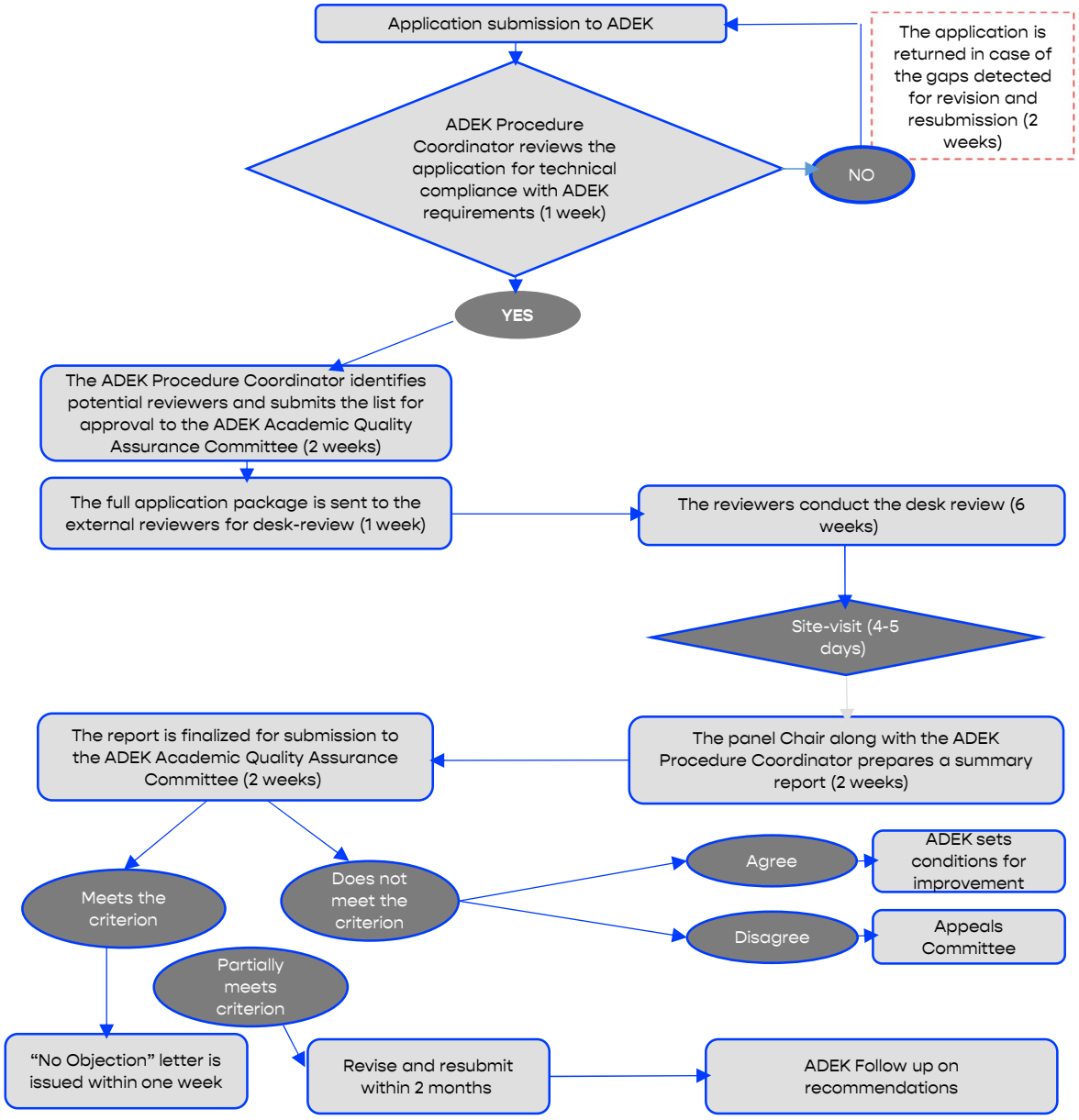
APPEALS

STEP 8: Receive Letter Overturning/Upholding Decision

Description/ Definition:	The Appellant receives the final decision made by the Higher Education Appeals Committee and signed off by the ADEK Chairman. If ADEK's prior decision is overturned, the Appellant's application for a No Objection Letter proceeds. If ADEK's prior decision is upheld in the appeals process, the appellant is not permitted to appeal the decision further and the case file is closed and archived. The decision taken by the Higher Education Appeals Committee is final and binding.
Responsible:	ADEK Chairman, HE Appeals Committee Chair, ADEK P&R Division Director
Inputs:	Appeal Decision
Time line:	Within one week after the decision taking.

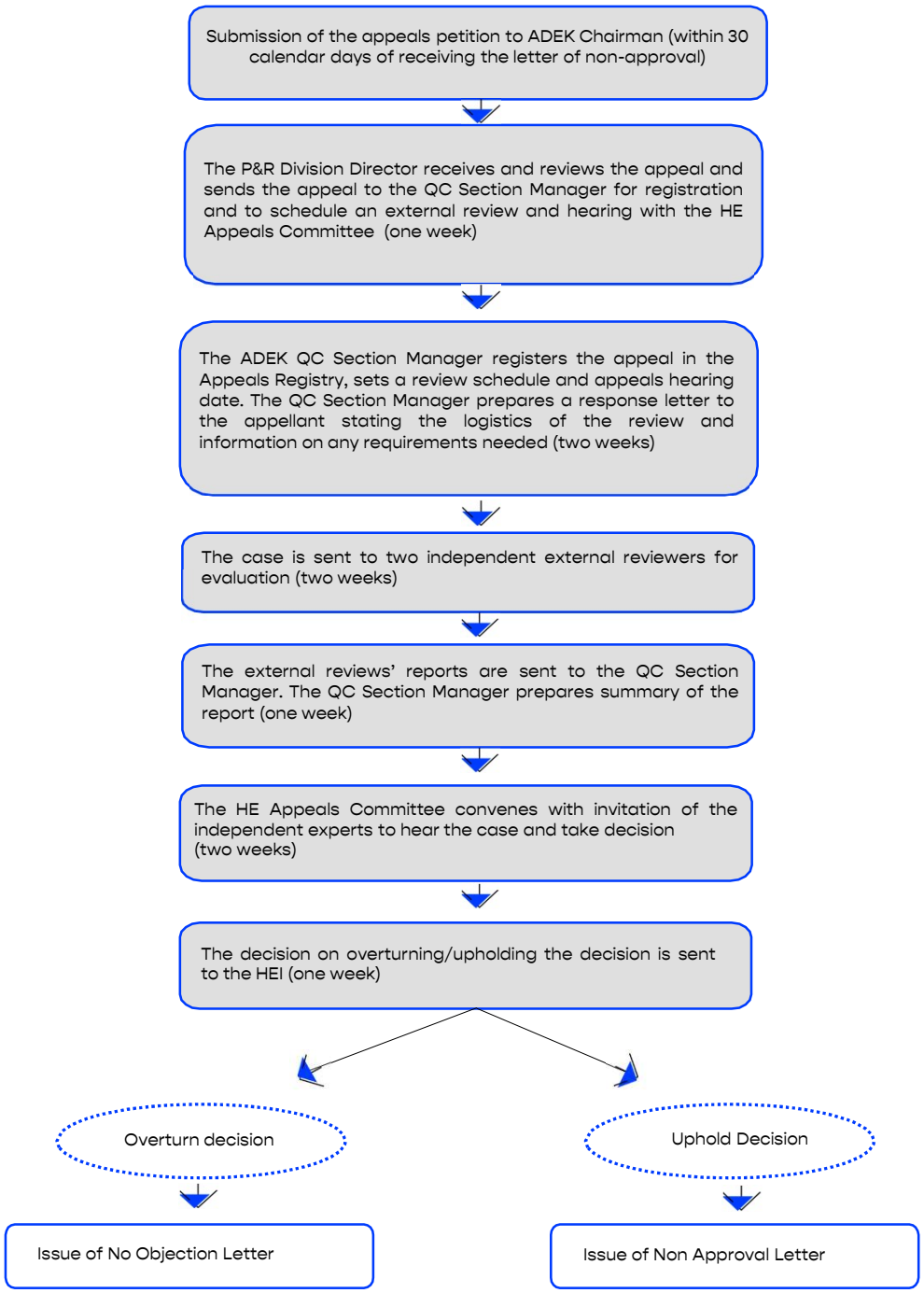
ANNEXES

ANNEX A: (Re) Authorization Procedure for HEIs (Flowchart)



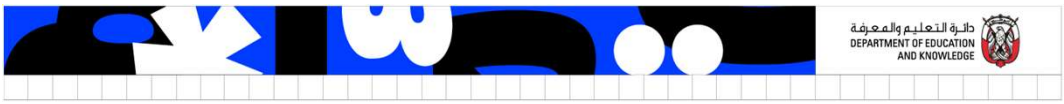
ANNEXES

ANNEX B: Appeals Procedure (Flowchart)



ANNEXES

ANNEX C: Confidentiality Statement (template)



ADEK CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Review procedure case #: _____

Title of the Higher Education Institution under review: _____

Reviewer name and title: _____

I understand that the external review procedure I am invited to conduct entails access to the documentation that is confidential both for ADEK and the HEI that is under review.

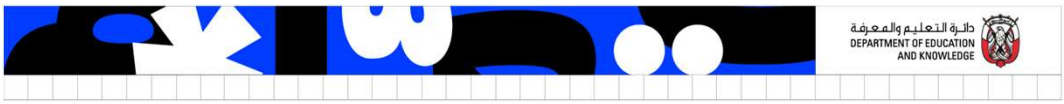
Therefore, I undertake not to divulge any of the information obtained either from ADEK or from the documents that have been entrusted for external review to any third parties until I have received a formal permission from ADEK to do so.

Signature of the reviewer: _____

Date: _____

ANNEXES

ANNEX D: Conflict of Interests Statement (template)



ADEK CONFLICT OF INTERESTS STATEMENT

Review procedure case #: _____

Title of the Higher Education Institution under review: _____

Reviewer name and title: _____

Hereby I declare that I am not involved in any of the conflicts of interests whatsoever that would risk the objectivity and independence of my review including the ones outlined below:

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 blood relative that is employed by the HEI/Program 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 has direct or indirect financial benefits from the HEI and program under scrutiny

A conflict of competitor's interest occurs when the external reviewer rhas an interest in producing a biased report that might question the objectivity and independence of the review

A conflict of discipline-specific interests 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.

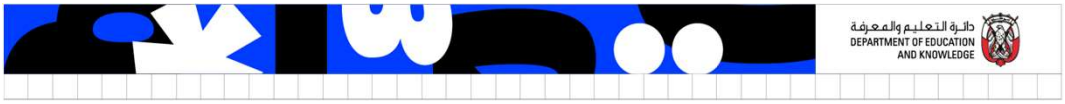
Signature of the reviewer: _____

Date: _____

ANNEXES

ANNEX E: Application Cover Page for a (Re)-Authorization of HEIs

Below is the Application Cover page, which should be duly filled in, signed and submitted to ADEK along with the complete application package. The self-assessment report – the main part of the application package - should be developed in line with the ADEK criteria and guidelines for (re)-authorization of HEIs. This application cover page also serves as a receipt of acknowledgement and a copy of it duly signed by respective authorities will be returned to the HEI upon the receipt and registration of the case.



Application Cover Page

for a New Program Authorization

1. Name of the applicant institution:

2. Purpose of application (please, choose one that applies):

- ❑ Authorization of new HEI
- ❑ Reauthorization of existing HEI
- ❑ Authorization of substantive change
  - Type of substantive change: _____

3. Name and contact details of the Authorized Officer or Liaison of the Institution:

Name: _____

Position: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Tel: _____

Mobile: _____

Web-site of the HEI and the program_____

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4. Registration number of the HEI

5. Registered address of the institution

6. Data on the HEI status:

	Response
a) Is your HEI a federal, public non-federal, or private institution?	
b) What type of qualifications and degrees does the HEI offer?	

7. The required documents (please, provide the list of all the documents in the application package, which support the self-assessment report submitted for the external review)

- _____
- _____

Submitted on (date): _____

Submitted by (title, name and signature of the person): _____

Received by (position, name and signature of the ADEK representative):
_____

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ANNEX F: Learning Outcomes Matrix Template[2]

Learning Outcomes Matrix

Program title	Course code	Course title	Program Outcomes											
Example:			A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3			
Law	**LC4SXXX**	**Research methods**	**F**		**P**			**F**	**P**					
			A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3			
			Occurrence across the course											
A – KNOWLEDGE B – SKILLS C – COMPETENCIES C1 Autonomy and responsibility C2 Self development C3 Role in context			Decide how much a course contributes to the overall program outcomes Fully (F) Partly (P)											

2: Commission for Academic Accreditation, UAE, *Guide to Writing Learning Outcomes at Program and Course Level that Align with QF Emirates*

ANNEXES

ANNEX G: External Review Template and Guidelines

External Evaluation of a Higher Education Institution for (Re)-Authorization
External Reviewer's Report

Title of the Applicant Institution:	
Purpose of Application:	
Title and Name of the External Reviewer:	
Date on which ADEK Sent the Application Package to the External Reviewer:	
Date on which the External Reviewer submitted the report to ADEK:	
Signature of the External Reviewer:	

ANNEXES

A. Introduction & Summary

In Section A the external reviewers are asked to provide a one-page brief introduction to the case as well as the summary of the major findings in a narrative form.

B. Key Issues

In Section B the external reviewer is asked to provide the list of the key issues with respective short descriptions.

C. Criteria Based Assessment

In Section C the external reviewer is asked to provide assessment for each criterion and a short statement on whether the criterion is Met, Partially Met, or not Met. A one sentence clear and precise statement on the major reason for a particular outcome of assessment is required.

D. General Overview of the Assessment

In Section D the external reviewer is asked to provide the general overview of the assessment for each criterion. See table below.

1: For elaborations on the criteria please refer to the ADEK document 'Criteria, Guidelines, and Procedures for authorization of new programs in the emirate of Abu Dhabi'

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Criteria			Assessment Outcome
1	**Alignment with Abu Dhabi's Strategic Priorities**		
	1.1	Positioning in the HE system:	
	1.2	Employability of graduates:	
Overall for Criterion 1			Met/Not Met/Partially Met
2	**Governance and Administration**		
	2.1	Mission, vision and strategy:	
	2.2	Governance, structure and nomenclature:	
Overall for Criterion 2			Met/Not Met/Partially Met
3	**Programs**		
	3.1	Alignment of the programs with the national qualifications framework:	
	3.2	Learning outcomes and qualifications offered:	
Overall for Criterion 3			Met/Not Met/Partially Met
4	**Research**		
	4.1	Promotion of research and innovation:	
	4.2	Research outputs and outcomes	
Overall for Criterion 4			Met/Not Met/Partially Met
5	**Community Services**		
	5.1	General community service:	
	5.2	Charity and volunteer work:	
Overall for Criterion 5			Met/Not Met/Partially Met
6	**Resources**		
	6.1	Faculty and staff:	
	6.2	Learning resources:	
	6.3	Student services:	
	6.4	Physical campus:	
	6.5	Financial capacity:	
Overall for Criterion 6			Met/Not Met/Partially Met
7	**Access**		
	7.1	Broadening access:	
	7.2	Support for disadvantaged students:	
Overall for Criterion 7			Met/Not Met/Partially Met
8	**International Visibility**		
	8.1	Institutional ranking:	
	8.2	Institutional and program accreditation:	
Overall for Criterion 8			Met/Not Met/Partially Met

ANNEXES

E. Areas of Further inquiry

In Section E the external reviewers are asked to list the areas of further inquiry during the site-visit (relevant).

F. Recommendations

In Section F the external reviewers are asked to provide draft recommendations for each key issue outlined in Section B. This part of the external reviewer report is intended for the follow-up by the HEI and ADEK on the current procedure and will be referred to in the decision-making as well as follow-up procedures.

G. Additional Comments

In Section G the external reviewers are asked to provide any other additional comments they found necessary but were somehow left out.

ANNEXES

ANNEX H: Summary Review Template

External Evaluation of a Higher Education Institution for (Re)-Authorization
Summary Report

Title of the Applicant Institution:	
Purpose of Application:	
Titles and Names of the External Reviewers:	**Reviewer 1:** **Reviewer 2:** **Reviewer 3:**
Date on which ADEK Sent the Application Package to the External Reviewers:	
Date on which the External Reviewers Submitted the Report to ADEK:	
Site visit dates (if any):	
Date on which the summary report is submitted to the AQAC:	

ANNEXES

A. Executive Summary

Overview of the applicant Institution.

B. Comments on the Value Added and Impact of the Existing HEI – Criterion based review

As a review team, please provide a team-agreed summary for each criterion. Use the headings and descriptions below to complete your evaluation. Please also refer to the sub-criteria to support your summary.

CRITERION ...

- **Major findings:** Major findings on the criterion that constitute a balanced presentation of *positive developments* and the *areas in further need of improvement*. All the statements need to be supported by evidence.
- **Judgments:** For each statement made under section Major Findings provide a final Assessment Outcome. For the judgement use only one of the following outcomes **Met/Partially Met/Not Met.**
- **Commendations:** For each *positive development*/statement please provide sentence of commendation – these will inform the follow-up discussion between the HEI and ADEK.
- **Recommendations:** For each area identified as needing *further improvement*, please provide a sentence of recommendation. The recommendation should draw on your expertise and awareness of international best practices.

*Using the guidance above, please identify your **collective major findings, collective judgements, collective commendations** and **collective recommendations** for each of the review criterion.*

CRITERION 1: Alignment with Abu Dhabi's Strategic Priorities

- *Major findings:*
- *Judgments:*
- *Commendations:*
- *Recommendations:*

CRITERION 2: Governance and Administration

- *Major findings:*
- *Judgments:*
- *Commendations:*
- *Recommendations:*

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CRITERION 3: Programs

- Major findings:
- Judgments:
- Commendations:
- Recommendations:

CRITERION 4: Research

- Major findings:
- Judgments:
- Commendations:
- Recommendations

CRITERION 5: Community Services

- Major findings:
- Judgments:
- Commendations:
- Recommendations

CRITERION 6: Resources

- Major findings:
- Judgments:
- Commendations:
- Recommendations:

CRITERION 7: Access

- Major findings:
- Judgments:
- Commendations:
- Recommendations

CRITERION 8: International Visibility

- Major findings:
- Judgments:
- Commendations:
- Recommendations:

ANNEXES

C. Summary Assessment

Criteria			R1	R2	R3	Team agreed
1	Alignment with Abu Dhabi's Strategic Priorities					
	1.1	Positioning in the HE system:				
	1.2	Employability of graduates:				
Overall for Criterion 1						
2	**Governance and Administration**					
	2.1	Mission, vision and strategy:				
	2.2	Governance, structure and nomenclature:				
Overall for Criterion 2						
3	**Programs**					
	3.1	Alignment of the programs with the national qualifications framework:				
	3.2	Learning outcomes and qualifications offered:				
Overall for Criterion 3						
4	**Research**					
	4.1	Promotion of research and innovation:				
	4.2	Research outputs and outcomes:				
Overall for Criterion 4						
5	**Community Services**					
	5.1	General community service				
	5.2	Charity and volunteer work				
Overall for Criterion 5						
6	**Resources**					
	6.1	Faculty and staff:				
	6.2	Learning resources:				
	6.3	Student services:				
	6.4	Physical campus:				
	6.5	Financial capacity:				
Overall for Criterion 6						
7	**Access**					
	7.1	Broadening access:				
	7.2	Support for disadvantaged students:				
Overall for Criterion 7						
8	**International Visibility**					
	8.1	Institutional ranking				
	8.2	Institutional and program accreditation:				
Overall for Criterion 8						

ANNEXES

D. Additional Comments

Please provide any additional comments that you might wish to make, that are not captured in the above sections.

E. Signatures

Hereby, the expert panel declares that the assessment has been carried out independently and the findings will not be disclosed by any other party but the ADEK.

Signatures of the External Reviewers:	**Reviewer 1:** _____ **Reviewer 2:** _____ **Reviewer 3:** _____
Signatures of ADEK staff responsible for the Summary Report:	**P&R Division Director:** _____ **QC Section Manager:** _____ **P&R Expert:** _____

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Academic Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC)	Is a decision-taking body established within the ADEK Higher Education Sector to take decisions related to authorization of new HEIs, programs, substantive changes, and re-authorization of existing HEIs. It is comprised of the key stakeholders of the Abu Dhabi higher education system.
Academic/study program	An academic/study program is a combination of courses and/or requirements leading to a degree.
Appeal	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.
Authorization	Authorization is a process whereby a new institution or a new academic/study programs is granted a no objection to function in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. It is a pre-requisite step for new HEIs and new programs prior to their submission to the CAA for initial licensure and initial accreditation.
Criteria	Checkpoints or benchmarks determining the attainment of certain objectives and/or standards. Criteria describe to a certain degree of detail the characteristics of the requirements and conditions to be met and therefore provide the (quantitative and qualitative) basis on which an evaluative conclusion is drawn.
External review	The process whereby ADEK HE Sector Policy and Regulation 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, in order to make a statement about its quality. The external review is usually based on a self-evaluation report provided by the institution and can be used as a basis for indicators 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.

ANNEXES

External reviewers	External evaluation is carried out by a team of external experts, peers, or professionals in the field. The external reviewers have strong background in 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.
External review panel	The external review panel consists of up to 3 faculty members in case of institutional evaluation and up to 3 faculty members and professionals in respective fields in case of study/academic programs. For each procedure ADEK sets a panel by matching the qualifications of the peers and professionals with the submitted initiatives.
Evidence-based evaluation	Evidence-based evaluation is the cornerstone of the culture of evidence. The latter is a mindset acquired in a higher education institution and based on clear ethical values, principles, and rules, which consists of the self-evaluation of its learning outcomes, engaging the teaching staff and the academic administration in a thoughtful, regular collection, selection, and use of relevant institutional performance indicators, 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 a higher education institution implies that the institution is encouraged to be able to provide empirical data proving the consistency of its own mission.
Fitness of purpose	*Fitness of purpose* 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.
Fitness for purpose	*Fitness for purpose* 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.
Follow up	Follow up is shorthand for procedures to ensure that outcomes of review processes have been, or are being, addressed.

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Higher Education Institutions	An educational body which carries out higher education activities based on legally approved study programs leading to a bachelor degree and above. Any higher education institution must follow an external evaluation procedure in order 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. Higher education institutions may differ in size, quality, resources, number of teaching staff and students, etc.
Procedure	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.
QF*Emirates*	The single description, at 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 QFEmirates Handbook sets out the policies, structures, standards, systems and procedures for the national qualifications framework for the UAE, known as the QFEmirates. 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.
Re-authorization	Re-authorization is a process whereby an existing institution is granted a “no objection” to function in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. It is a cyclical procedure and is conducted every five years prior to the HEI submission to the CAA for re-licensure.
Self-evaluation	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 self-study report. 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.

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Substantive change	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 self-study report. 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.
Technical compliance	The first step in external evaluation by the authorization body whereby the quality assurance experts evaluate the submission for compliance against ADEK criteria. The technical check ensures all the criteria are addressed in a due manner and all the required evidences to support the statements are 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 criteria.

ANNEXES

VERSION NUMBER

1.1 Aug 2020	Sub items added to the table in section D (Annex G) and the table in Section C (Annex H) Updated nomenclature (QI becomes QC & QID becomes P&R) to reflect the organizational changes to ADEK. Policy and Regulation Division (formally Quality Improvement Division)
1.2 Apr 2021	ADEK branding applied