



# التعليم عالي

## RE-AUTHORIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ABU DHABI

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Standards & Procedure Manual – 2023

# | Foreword

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

This [NOL](#) is a prerequisite to apply for a renewal of the license with the Commission of Academic Accreditation (CAA) of the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE).

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

Our approach to HEI re-authorization is driven by aspirations of:

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

This procedure manual applies to all [HEIs](#) in Abu Dhabi—federal, Abu Dhabi government-funded, inbound and outbound cross-border higher education (CBHE) providers and private [HEIs](#)— and is subject to regular revisions to ensure its lasting value, validity and relevance to socio-economic and cultural needs.



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# I. Introduction

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

All [HEIs](#) in Abu Dhabi (federal government-funded, Abu Dhabi government-funded, inbound and outbound [CBHEs](#), and private institutions) must undergo a quality review by ADEK to obtain an [NOL](#), prior to proceeding with the [CAA](#) procedures.

Entities (i.e., individuals, institutions, providers, consortia, or organizations) are not allowed to advertise, solicit, recruit, enroll, or operate a post-secondary education institution or program in Abu Dhabi without prior authorization by ADEK.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



- Provides transparency in terms of [HEI](#) performance, strengths and areas of improvement for enhanced national and international visibility.
- Supports ADEK in identifying emergent risks and tackling them in a timely manner.
- Reduces the burden of cyclical reviews on the [HEIs](#) for re-authorization purposes.
- Guides financial allocation of the Abu Dhabi government by providing transparent and accurate information on the credibility, trust, and performance of [HEIs](#).

As mentioned above, the [RBR](#) consists of two major stages – identification of risk areas, followed by evaluation of risks:

- **Stage 1:** The identification of risks is conducted solely based on the data submitted by [HEIs](#) to the ADEK data platform and any other intelligence available to ADEK from relevant and trusted sources. It does not require a self-evaluation or an external review and includes:
  - [HEI](#) submission of accurate, up-to-date, justifiable, and evidenced data
  - Review of data and identification of potential risk areas by ADEK
  - Update of the [HEI](#) status in the ADEK Register based on the [RBR](#) and related decisions taken by ADEK
- **Stage 2:** The evaluation of risk areas by external experts is mandatory for [HEI](#) identified with risks and entails a [HEI](#) self-evaluation report by and a site visit (if applicable) by an external panel of experts.

All [HEI](#), regardless of their legal status, are required to submit their data annually to ADEK through its data collection system.

**In case of failure to abide by the regulation, the HEI in violation will be denied a re-authorization, issuance of an NOL, therefore, de-registration from the ADEK Register of Authorized HEIs.**

Upon completion of Stage 1, HEIs without identified risks will not need any further procedures for the given academic year and can receive an [NOL](#) to proceed with the [CAA](#)'s re-licensure. The [NOL](#) is provided upon the written request of the [HEI](#) and in line with the [CAA](#)'s granted validity term for licensure (e.g., 3, 5 and 7 years). [HEIs](#) identified at risk will be required to undergo Stage 2.

The [RBR](#) focuses predominantly on the review at an institutional level. However, risks and warnings related to subject-specific areas or programs (e.g., particular student cohorts) will be considered if the risk area points to a concern.

It is based on four key **principles**:

- **Accuracy:** By obtaining a diverse set of quantitative and qualitative data through multiple measurement methods and sources.
- **Transparency:** Through robust policies and procedures, including publication of results in the ADEK Register.
- **Risk Assessment:** By identifying risks across all areas outlined in the [RBR](#) Evaluation Framework.
- **Robustness:** By analyzing data generated from credible sources.

# RBR Evaluation Framework

The [RBR](#) Evaluation Framework consists of the following critical elements: The risk areas, the dimensions of evaluation expressed through standards, system of confidence levels and final judgments.

**The Risk Areas:** The ADEK [RBR](#) is based on a comprehensive analysis of [HEI](#) performance in terms of three critical risk areas:

- **Risk to students:** The ultimate success of [HE](#) depends on the success of the students and the recognition of the [HE](#) outcomes/awarded qualifications. The measurement metrics in this group, cumulatively, help to form an understanding of potential risks to students and ensure the [HEI](#) takes steps to safeguard students throughout their learning period and beyond.
- **Risk to financial performance:** The financial health of the [HEI](#) is crucial for the sustainability of the institution and its long-term contribution. Hence, the measurement metrics in this group are identified to specifically measure financial performance in terms of viability and long-term sustainability.
- **Risk to Abu Dhabi higher education performance against the set strategic priorities.** The measurement metrics in this group are linked with the Abu Dhabi strategic priorities and cumulatively will form necessary knowledge on the [HEI](#)'s performance quality and relevance.

**Standards:** The risk areas are evaluated against critical dimensions of [HEI](#) functions. The Standards are broken down into the following Modules:

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

Table 1: Modules & Standards

MODULE A: Generic	MODULE B: Online Provisions	MODULE C: Cross-Border Provisions
Mandatory to all types of <a href="#">HEIs</a> regardless of their status	Additional and mandatory only to <a href="#">HEIs</a> aiming to establish and offer blended/ fully online provisions	Additional and mandatory only to <a href="#">HEIs</a> intending to offer cross-border provisions (inbound or outbound)
<p>This encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Governance &amp; administration</li><li>• Programs</li><li>• Research, innovation &amp; development</li><li>• Resources</li><li>• Access &amp; Inclusion</li><li>• Service to Society</li><li>• Internal Quality Assurance</li><li>• Transparency &amp; Academic Integrity</li><li>• International Visibility &amp; Recognition</li></ul>	<p>This encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Online provisions</li><li>• Quality of student experience</li><li>• Resources</li></ul>	<p>This encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The <a href="#">CBHE</a> provision</li><li>• Quality of student experience</li><li>• Culture and context alignment</li></ul>

These standards are measured against pre-defined measurement metrics. Local/contextual specifics and internationally accepted averages are adopted for each data point to set performance thresholds and arrive at a meaningful judgment on the performance of [HEIs](#) and the higher education system at large. The expectation is to refine and gradually increase the threshold level to ensure enhanced performance and competitiveness of Abu Dhabi [HEIs](#) nationally, regionally, and internationally.

**Confidence levels:** Confidence level is the degree of certainty that the likelihood or consequence score (assigned by the risk assessor) reflects reality. Based on the data collected from [HEIs](#) and other available official sources through [RBR](#) Stage 1, ADEK annually generates an in-depth analysis of all registered [HE](#) institutions in Abu Dhabi, with an emphasis on the identification of risks and assigning levels of confidence to [HEIs](#). Depending on the confidence level, a decision is made whether the [HEI](#) is to undergo Stage 2 of the [RBR](#) or not (Table 1).



Table 2: Confidence Levels

Confidence Level	Descriptor & Implications
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>No risks or no issues in operation</li><li>There is clear evidence of the sustainable operations in the foreseeable future</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This classification is exempt from the external review Stage 2 of the <a href="#">RBR</a></li><li>Re-authorization for this classification level is required at least once every seven years</li><li>This classification level is still subject to the annual <a href="#">RBR</a> to maintain their status</li></ul>
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>One, two, three risks or issues for operation</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>If there is clear evidence that the risks and issues could be mitigated in a very short time, then the external review in Stage 2 will only target identified risk areas</li><li>This classification level is still subject to the annual <a href="#">RBR</a> to maintain their status</li></ul>
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>More than three or multiple risks or issues for operation</li><li>There is clear evidence that risks and issues cannot be mitigated in a reasonable timeframe</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This classification is subject to an external review Stage 2 encompassing all three evaluation standards and dimensions (refer to the <a href="#">RBR Evaluation Framework</a> section)</li><li>This classification level is subject to the annual <a href="#">RBR</a></li></ul>
None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Risks or issues for operation across all three evaluation areas and dimensions</li><li>There is clear evidence of continued and repeated problems</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This classification is subject to a de-registration notification and a full review, with all further decisions being aligned with respective federal and/or Abu Dhabi entities</li><li>This classification level is subject to the annual <a href="#">RBR</a> until official de-registration, if any</li></ul>

Judgments

Cyclically and contingent on an annual [RBR](#) or otherwise mandated by relevant government entities (e.g., [CAA](#) 3, 5, or 7-year licensure), the [HEIs](#) are to re-instate their alignment with the ADEK Standards for institutional re-authorization.

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

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

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

Based on the desk review and site visit (if applicable) of at least three external reviewers, the [ERP](#) Chair develops a final joint report for the ADEK Higher Education Authorization Committee (HEAC) to take a decision. The report includes a substantiated conclusion on the quality of [HEI](#) provisions on the same three-point scale, as well as recommendations for follow-up activities.

## IV. Procedure

This section outlines Stages 1 and 2 of the RBR:

Stage 1		
<b>Step 1</b>  <b>Data Submission</b>	Description:	<a href="#">HEI</a> submits performance data through ADEK data collection system.
	Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">HEI</a></li> <li>• ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division</li> <li>• ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li> <li>• ADEK Head of Quality Control (QC)</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	<a href="#">HEI</a> data
	Outputs:	Dashboard
	Timeline:	January – February annually
<b>Step 2</b>  <b>Technical Review</b>	Description:	ADEK conducts the technical review, generates an annual report, identifies risks.

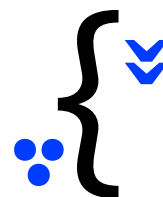
	Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division</li> <li>ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a></li> <li>ADEK Procedure Coordinators</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	<a href="#">HEI</a> data
	Outputs:	Annual report
	Timeline:	March – April annually
<b>Step 3</b> <b>Consultation Meeting</b>	Description:	ADEK conducts consultation meetings with <a href="#">HEIs</a> identified as being at risk and discusses recommendations linked to the level of confidence.
	Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division</li> <li>ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a></li> </ul>
	Inputs:	Annual report
	Outputs:	Minutes of the meeting
	Timeline:	May – June annually
<b>Step 4</b> <b>SER &amp; Risk Mitigation Plan Development</b>	Description:	ADEK requests the submission of a full Self Evaluation Report (SER) from <a href="#">HEIs</a> with medium, low or no confidence. The <a href="#">SER</a> and risk mitigation plan should be analytical in and adhere to applicable ADEK re-authorization standards and guidelines. The <a href="#">SER</a> should be submitted through the ADEK Higher Education Authorization Portal.
	Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">HEI</a></li> <li>ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	Annual report
	Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">SER</a></li> <li>Risk mitigation plan</li> </ul>
	Timeline:	July – August annually
<b>Step 5</b> <b>SER Pre-screening</b>	Description:	ADEK conducts pre-screening of SER, risk mitigation plan and submitted evidence for technical compliance and makes a decision if a further external review is required.
	Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADEK HEPR Division Director</li> <li>ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a></li> <li>ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">SER</a></li> <li>Risk mitigation plan</li> </ul>
	Outputs:	Decision on Stage 2 external review
	Timeline:	September

Stage 2		
<b>Step 6</b>  <b>Selection &amp; Appointment of External Reviewers</b>	Description:	The ADEK Procedure Coordinator identifies potential external reviewers and submits the list for approval to the Chairperson of ADEK <a href="#">HEAC</a> . External reviewers are contracted, and sign required documents (see inputs below).
	Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADEK <a href="#">HEAC</a> Chairperson</li> <li>ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division Director</li> <li>ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADEK policy and procedure for external reviewer selection</li> <li>Shortlist of external reviewers</li> <li>ADEK non-disclosure/confidentiality statements</li> <li>ADEK conflict of interest statement</li> <li>External reviewer's service commitment statement</li> <li>ADEK internal memo Template for appointing external reviewers</li> </ul>
	Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved ADEK internal memo (letter) appointing external reviewers</li> <li>ADEK agreement with external reviewers</li> <li>Signed ADEK non-disclosure/confidentiality statement</li> <li>Signed ADEK conflict of interest statement</li> <li>Signed external reviewer's service commitment statement</li> </ul>
	Timeline:	October – one week upon the shortlist submission to the ADEK <a href="#">HEAC</a> , the external reviewers' panel is appointed
<b>Step 7</b>  <b>Submission of Application for External Desk Review</b>	Description:	The full application package is submitted to the external reviewers for desk review.
	Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a></li> <li>ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The application package</li> <li>ADEK external reviewer's template and guidelines</li> </ul>
	Outputs:	The application package assigned to the ERP
	Timeline:	Within one week of the <a href="#">ERP</a> appointment

Step 8		
<b>Step 8</b>  <b>External Desk Review</b>	Description:	External reviewers conduct the desk review. Close to the end of the review, a one-day session takes place to discuss major findings and areas of further inquiry during the site visit (if any). This meeting is jointly led by the ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a> and Procedure Coordinator and joined by local and international reviewers.
	Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li> <li>ADEK <a href="#">QC</a> Section Manager</li> <li>External reviewers</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	The application package assigned to the <a href="#">ERP</a>
	Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual external reviewer reports</li> <li>Joint draft report with major findings, including summary table with external review results, areas to be further explored, comments and recommendations</li> </ul>
	Timeline:	4 weeks upon the receipt of the application package
Step 9		
<b>Step 9</b>  <b>Site Visit (Optional &amp; Based on External Reviewers Request)</b>	Description:	Led by the ADEK Procedure Coordinator, the <a href="#">ERP</a> undertakes a site visit (either physically or online) to verify and scrutinize provided application data, meet stakeholders and further investigate areas that are not clearly covered in the application package.
	Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">ERP</a></li> <li>ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li> <li>ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a></li> </ul>
	Inputs:	Individual external reviewer reports
	Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint draft report with major findings, including summary table with external review results, areas to be further explored, comments and recommendations</li> </ul>
	Timeline:	Up to 5 working days between October and November

<b>Step 10</b> <b>Joint Report Preparation</b>	Description:	The <a href="#">ERP</a> Chair prepares a joint report and submits it to the ADEK <a href="#">HEAC</a> for decision-making. The joint report is circulated to all external reviewers for confirmation
	Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">ERP</a> Chair</li> <li>• ADEK Head of <a href="#">QC</a></li> <li>• ADEK <a href="#">HE</a> R&amp;L Division Director</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	Joint report template
	Outputs:	Joint report
	Timeline:	November
<b>Step 11</b> <b>Decision Taking</b>	Description:	The final joint report is submitted to the ADEK <a href="#">HEAC</a> for decision-making.
	Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADEK <a href="#">HEAC</a> Chairperson</li> <li>• ADEK <a href="#">HEAC</a> Secretary</li> <li>• ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division Director</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	The joint report
	Outputs:	Session minutes and decisions (i.e., approval/rejection to be issued)
	Timeline:	By December
<b>Step 12</b> <b>Applicant Notification</b>	Description:	The ADEK approval/rejection is issued, signed by the ADEK <a href="#">HEAC</a> Chairperson and sent to the applicant. It will specify the grounds for the decision and reflect the status (meets, partially meets, does not meet the standard).
	Responsibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADEK <a href="#">HEAC</a> Chairperson</li> <li>• ADEK <a href="#">HERL</a> Division Director</li> <li>• ADEK <a href="#">QC</a> Section Manager</li> <li>• ADEK Procedure Coordinator</li> </ul>
	Inputs:	ADEK approval/rejection template
	Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADEK approval/rejection</li> <li>• Letter of recommendation and follow-up (if applicable)</li> </ul>
	Timeline:	By December





# V. Standards

## Module A: Generic Standards

Heading	Standards
1. <b>Governance and Administration</b>	<p><b>1. Mission, vision, values and strategy:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a>'s vision, mission, values, objectives and strategic priorities are in line with the Abu Dhabi strategic, economic, social and cultural priorities and needs.</p> <p><b>2. Nomenclature:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> presents solid evidence that the nomenclature of the HEI reflects its capabilities and functions.</p> <p><b>3. Governance, administration, and structure:</b> The governance model is based on robust accountability and autonomy approaches. The HEI ensures independent decision-making, and efficiency in administration, management, and operations.</p> <p><b>4. The Governing Board:</b> The Governing Board ensures a meaningful and beneficial stakeholder engagement that leads to smooth steering of the strategies and independent decision-making.</p> <p><b>5. Integrity:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has a robust policy and related procedures in place to underpin integrity in its functions and operations, and to ensure adherence to the highest standards of integrity in governance, administration, and management.</p> <p><b>6. Transparency:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> operates in a transparent manner and ensures that all decision-making processes underpin the transparency principle, transparency mechanisms and tools are an integral part of the institution's governance model.</p> <p><b>7. Partnerships:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has secured a trustworthy and well-reputed partner, if any, to support its formation and sustain feasible functions in Abu Dhabi. The partner engagement is meaningful and ensures trust and credibility in the <a href="#">HEI</a> provisions in the short and long terms.</p> <p><b>8. Management Information System:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> deploys a robust data collection and management system and supports data-driven decision-making.</p>



<p><b>2. Programs</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Program design:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has policies and procedures for the designing, approval, monitoring and review of programs and courses in line with the Qualifications Framework for the Emirates (QFEmirates).</li> <li><b>2. Relevance of learning outcomes and qualifications offered:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> clearly articulates intended learning outcomes for its programs, which are relevant to socioeconomic and cultural needs and strategic priorities of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.</li> <li><b>3. Recognition of the awarded qualifications:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has robust policies and procedures in place to ensure the recognition of awarded qualifications at national, regional, and international levels. The policy is supported and driven by a robust Quality Assurance (QA) mechanism.</li> <li><b>4. Recognition of Prior Learning:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has robust policies and procedures in place for the recognition of prior learning. The policy is supported and driven by a robust <a href="#">QA</a> mechanism.</li> </ol>
<p><b>3. Research, Innovation, and Development</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Promotion of research, innovation, and development:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> deploys mechanisms and processes that support research profiles and activities, enhance research quality and productivity, as well as promote innovation and development.</li> <li><b>2. Research outputs and outcomes:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> deploys mechanisms and processes that ensure the research outputs and outcomes are visible and impactful at the national, regional and international levels.</li> </ol>
<p><b>4. Service to Society</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. General community service:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> sets community service as one of its strategic priorities, has and allocates relevant financial and human resources to deliver those services.</li> <li><b>2. Charity and volunteer work:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> promotes charity and volunteering activities to benefit society at large.</li> </ol>
<p><b>5. Resources</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Faculty and staff:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has distinct policies and procedures to employ qualified and sufficient faculty and staff to deliver its programs, to ensure competent instruction and competitive research. The policies address faculty and staff appraisal and professional development. The <a href="#">HEI</a> also deploys faculty and staff appraisal and professional development mechanisms.</li> <li><b>2. Learning resources:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> secures student access to learning/information resources (e.g., library, laboratories, including resources to support accessibility for Students of Determination (SoD) where required) to ensure achievement of the learning outcomes and the attainment level of curriculum delivery.</li> </ol>

	<p><b>3. Student services:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> secures access to student support services necessary to ensure the learning expected of its students, as well as to promote their career aspirations and their wellbeing. Student support services should also be aware of how to support and guide <a href="#">SoD</a> in their career aspirations.</p> <p><b>4. Physical campus and facilities:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has a purpose-built campus and facilities with adequate and relevant physical resources to ensure constructive and accessible learning environments for students and faculty members.</p> <p><b>5. Financial capacity:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> presents solid evidence that it is financially capable of fulfilling its commitments to program delivery in the longer term and demonstrates long-term financial viability.</p>
<b>6. Access and Inclusion</b>	<p><b>1. Broadening access:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> demonstrates a commitment to broadening access to and inclusion in higher education.</p> <p><b>2. Support for disadvantaged students and SoD:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> allocates human and financial resources to support disadvantaged and/or students of determination.</p>
<b>7. Internal Quality Assurance</b>	<p><b>1. Internal QA system:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures a robust internal quality assurance system which is an integral part of the <a href="#">HEI</a>'s life and enables data-driven decision-making and governance. The Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) incorporates a continually updated data management system.</p> <p><b>2. QA scope:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures that the <a href="#">QA</a> scope covers all qualification levels offered and awarded by the <a href="#">HEI</a>, research activities, and service to society.</p> <p><b>3. Relevance of and trust in QA:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures that the <a href="#">IQAS</a> is regularly revised to ensure relevance and trust in provisions and has approved the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).</p> <p><b>4. Risk and crisis management:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures that the <a href="#">IQAS</a> embeds robust processes, and procedures to proactively identify, manage and mitigate possible disruptions, potential threats, unanticipated events, and other risks and their consequences at the institutional level and in situation-based circumstances.</p>

<p><b>8. Transparency and Academic Integrity</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Academic integrity:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has a robust policy, related procedures, monitoring, and review mechanisms to underpin academic integrity, including admission, teaching and learning, and research integrity in all modes of delivery.</li> <li><b>2. Transparency:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures key information regarding teaching and learning, research and service to society is publicly available, including strategies, annual reports, and external reports.</li> </ol>
<p><b>9. International Visibility and Recognition</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. International accreditation:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> establishes quality assurance mechanisms to pursue international accreditation of its programs, if applicable.</li> <li><b>2. International visibility:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has robust mechanisms and processes in place steadily leading to international visibility (e.g., through such instruments as global rankings).</li> <li><b>3. Recognition:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has policies, procedures, and feasible plans in place to ensure its outcomes and outputs (teaching and learning, research, service to the society) are recognized nationally, regionally and internationally.</li> </ol>

## Module B: Online Provisions

Heading	Standards
<p><b>1. Online Provisions</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Alignment with the mission:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has policies, procedures, and feasible plans in place to ensure that blended/ fully online modality is a strategic endeavor of the <a href="#">HEI</a>, aligned with the mission and vision of the <a href="#">HEI</a>, and supported by respective and relevant governance structures to oversee the design, implementation, and evaluation of the blended/ fully online modality.</li> </ol>



	<p><b>2. Quality assurance:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has the necessary quality assurance measures in place for safeguarding their blended/ fully online learning provision and the reputation of education in Abu Dhabi. The <a href="#">IQAS</a> also enables an institution-wide culture of continual educational enhancement.</p> <p><b>3. Curriculum:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures that the curriculum content is current, research-informed and specifically developed for blended/ fully online modality and contextualized to the society at large and strategic needs of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.</p> <p><b>4. Academic integrity:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> has robust policies and procedures in place to ensure that the implementation of blended/ fully online learning upholds the virtues of academic integrity and honesty.</p> <p><b>5. Awarded qualifications:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures robust policies and procedures in place to ensure the awarded qualifications are recognized at national, regional, and international levels.</p>
<b>2. Quality of Student Experience</b>	<p><b>1. Student learning:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures that the blended/ fully online educational experiences of all students are enriching, participatory and lead to the successful achievement of the intended learning outcomes.</p> <p><b>2. Student support:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> provides adequate student support services for blended/ fully online delivery to ensure learning experiences that instill confidence.</p>
<b>3. Resources</b>	<p><b>1. Learning environments/technology:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures that the learning environment(s) and associated technologies facilitate blended/ fully online modality, and ensure inclusive teaching, learning and assessment practices.</p> <p><b>2. Faculty capacity:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures that faculty teaching blended/ fully online learning courses/programs are subject-matter experts, master the pedagogical aspects of blended/ fully online learning, and ensure scholarly methods in creating, enabling and evaluating meaningful blended/ fully online learning interactions.</p> <p><b>3. Finances:</b> The <a href="#">HEI</a> ensures special financial provisions to meaningfully support its blended/ fully online learning mission and is suitable to maintain and enhance its current blended/ fully online learning provision.</p>



# Module C: Cross-Border Provisions

Heading	Standards
1. The CBHE Provision	<p><b>1. The CBHE Provision:</b> The <a href="#">CBHE</a> provider ensures that it is a legally recognized provider in the home country and its provisions are quality assured as per the home country regulations.</p> <p><b>2. The content:</b> The <a href="#">CBHE</a> provider ensures that the proposed <a href="#">CBHE</a> provision is of comparable standards to those in its home country and across its delivery modalities (face-to-face, blended/ fully online).</p> <p><b>3. The delivery:</b> The <a href="#">CBHE</a> provider ensures that the admission, student assessment, and graduation requirements are comparable to the home country and across all modalities and ensure achievement of the intended learning outcomes.</p> <p><b>4. Awarded qualifications:</b> The <a href="#">CBHE</a> provider deploys robust policies and procedures to ensure the awarded qualifications are recognized at national, regional, and international levels.</p>
2. Quality of Student Experience	<p><b>1. Learner experience:</b> The <a href="#">CBHE</a> provider ensures the student learning experience is comparable to that of the home country in terms of the exposure to the faculty qualifications, body of knowledge, resources for learning achievement of intended learning outcomes and application of knowledge and internships.</p> <p><b>2. Quality assurance:</b> The <a href="#">CBHE</a> provider ensures that robust <a href="#">QA</a> procedures and mechanisms are in place to attest the effectiveness of a student experience.</p>
3. Culture and Context Alignment	<p><b>1. Culture and context:</b> The <a href="#">CBHE</a> provider considers the socioeconomic needs and cultural peculiarities in the delivery of teaching and learning, research, and service to society. The <a href="#">CBHE</a> provider is guided by the Abu Dhabi strategic priorities.</p>

## VI. ADEK Register

The ADEK Register of Authorized [HEIs](#) is a database that operates in the jurisdiction of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. To be enrolled in it, [HEIs](#) will need to undergo a full procedure of authorization with ADEK<sup>1</sup>. Based on the results of the ADEK [RBRs](#) and cyclical re-authorizations for existing [HEIs](#), the changes in the Register will occur.

<sup>1</sup>The [HEIs](#) whose ADEK (re)-authorization validity period is current will be automatically listed in the ADEK Register.



- The panel should be chaired by one of the panel members based on an internal agreement between the panel members themselves or the chair is appointed by ADEK's Procedure Coordinator.
- The panel's independence is guided by the ADEK Conflict of Interest Policy and [ERP](#) members must sign a declaration of independence/conflict of interests and confidentiality prior to commencing the review process.

## External Reviewer Qualifications

External reviewers, both national and international, must possess the following qualifications to be eligible for ERP selection:

### Administrators & managers:

- A PhD in the related field of study
- A proven track record of experience in higher education management
- At least 5 years of teaching is desirable
- Experience in developing study/academic programs
- Experience in review and [QA](#) (desirable)
- Fluency in English is mandatory, fluency in Arabic is preferred

### Faculty members:

- A PhD in the related 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 [QA](#) (desirable)
- Fluency in English is mandatory, fluency 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 negatively affect, compromise, or be incompatible with his/her obligations as an ADEK external reviewer:

- **A conflict of time commitment** occurs when the external reviewer is involved in and committed to unauthorized activities that interfere with his/her obligations to ADEK thus delaying the review procedure.
- **A conflict of relationship interest** occurs when an external reviewer has a relative (up to a second degree) that is employed by the [HEI](#) under scrutiny, which might restrict or impair the reviewer's ability to perform the external evaluation of the case objectively and independently.

- **A conflict of financial interest** occurs when an external reviewer is either employed or has been employed by the [HEI](#) for the last five years or financially benefits (either directly or indirectly) from the [HEI](#) under scrutiny.
- **A conflict of competitor interest** occurs when the external reviewer has an interest in producing a biased report that might question the objectivity and independence of the review.
- **A conflict of discipline-specific interest** occurs when the nature of the external reviewer's discipline could cause situations that, while not implicating one of the conflicts listed above, could question the independence of the review.

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

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

## External Reviewer Selection Procedure

The expert selection procedure has the following steps:

1. The ADEK [HE](#) Executive Director sends a nomination request, along with the external reviewer qualification requirements, to [HEIs](#) to nominate professionals in different fields to be assessed and included in the ADEK [HE](#) expert pool. For international reviewers, the nomination request is sent to the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE) and other recognized [QA](#) entities. An open call to invite external reviewers is also possible through the ADEK Higher Education Authorization Portal.
2. Once nominations have been received, ADEK contacts the nominees to submit their Curriculum Vitae (CV) along with a statement of interest to serve as an external reviewer.
3. The ADEK Head of [QC](#) collects all CVs and arranges for an initial candidates' discussion.
4. Following an initial evaluation, the list of shortlisted candidates is submitted to the ADEK [HEAC](#) for approval and inclusion in the ADEK database of external reviewers.



- 5. Upon receiving an external review request/mandate, the ADEK Procedure Coordinator selects the external reviewers based on their qualifications from the ADEK database and conducts a conflict-of-interest check.
- 6. The list of proposed panel members is first submitted to the ADEK [HERL](#) Division Director for approval before sending it to the ADEK [HEAC](#) for an appointment. In case one or several candidates are rejected, replacements will be selected from the same database.
- 7. Once appointed, external reviewers sign the ADEK agreement/service commitment statement, a conflict-of-interest statement, as well as a non-disclosure/confidentiality agreement prior to commencing the external review.

**X. Interventions & Sanctions**

ADEK will impose an intervention when risks are identified, warning signs are raised, or if there is a likelihood of non-compliance.

The initial input usually comes from annual reports (like the [RBR](#)) or other official sources. Once a flag is raised, ADEK will have an open discussion with the [HEI](#) to understand the reasons and explore management and mitigation opportunities before the risk turns into an issue. In case the [HEI](#) fails to provide strong mitigation evidence, ADEK will prepare an intervention plan.

The following factors will be considered before ADEK takes an intervention decision:

- Risk nature and extent of seriousness
- The potential amount of damage or aggravation the risk might cause
- The source through which ADEK became aware of the risk:
  - Flags raised by the [HEI](#) themselves will be considered as a mitigating factor
  - Flags raised through the [RBR](#), thematic and external reviews or complaints are subject to intervention
- Any gain (financial or otherwise) made by the [HEI](#) as a result of its operations

ADEK’s policy on interventions ranges from enhanced monitoring of [HEIs](#) (referenced below as “Conditions for improvement”) up to imposing formal sanctions, and removal from the ADEK Register:

**1. Conditions for improvement**

If the [HEI](#) has been classified at the “medium confidence level” with a minor breach that has been properly acknowledged and addressed, no additional sanction(s) will be applied.



# XI. Appeal Procedure

Decisions about an [HEI](#)'s confidence level or status in the ADEK Register can be appealed through the ADEK [HE](#) Appeals Committee, which is established on a case-by-case basis.

The appeal petition must be submitted in writing to the ADEK [HERL](#) Division and should be filed through the ADEK Higher Education Authorization Portal within 30 calendar days of receiving the letter on the level of confidence and/or decision on de-registration.

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

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

The appeals procedure includes the below-outlined steps:

## Step 1: Receive and Review Appeal

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

## Step 2: Receive and Review Appeal

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

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

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

**Step 4: Approve Response**

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

**Step 5: External Review of the Case**

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

**Step 6: Summary of the Report**

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

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

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

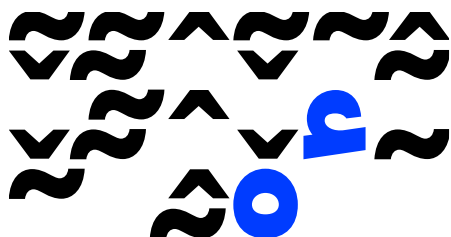
## Step 8: Receive Letter Overturning/Upholding Decision

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

## ANNEX A: Glossary of Terms

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

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





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

<b>Quality Enhancement Plan</b>	<p>This is a multi-year strategic document devised by the institution that focuses on well-defined areas of improvement for attaining educational goals and addresses areas of concerns identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning, and institutional evaluation processes. The <a href="#">QEP</a> also provides a framework for successful stewardship, continual assessment, and flexible modification of strategic goals and major aspects of students' educational experiences. The <a href="#">QEP</a> should demonstrate broad-based engagement of institutional constituencies in the development and implementation of the <a href="#">QEP</a>.</p>
<b>Re-authorization</b>	<p>Re-authorization is a process whereby an existing institution is granted a <a href="#">NOL</a> to function in Abu Dhabi. Re-authorization of existing <a href="#">HEIs</a> is conducted based on the review of risk areas. It is an annual exercise, risk-preventive and proactive in nature specifically designed to safeguard students and ensure the enhancement of <a href="#">HE</a> provisions. It is a prerequisite for applying to the <a href="#">CAA</a> for re-licensure.</p>
<b>Risk</b>	<p>Risks are certain events or circumstances that affect the achievement of one or more goals of the <a href="#">HE</a> provisions. Risks can be defined as the potential impact that can grow from exploiting existing vulnerabilities. The magnitude of a risk is assessed by qualifying the nature of the threat, its probability of occurrence, vulnerabilities within the institution, and the effectiveness of existing control mechanisms.</p>
<b>Risk-based review</b>	<p>This is a risk-preventive and proactive approach to quality enhancement of the <a href="#">HEI</a> provisions and <a href="#">HE</a> system at large. It is based on multiple measurement matrices to monitor the system's performance, collect and aggregate specific purpose-oriented data, identify and focus on critical areas of performance, prevent potential risks and promote data-driven decision-making at <a href="#">HEIs</a> and Abu Dhabi's <a href="#">HE</a> ecosystem.</p> <p>The <a href="#">RBR</a> is specifically designed to identify major risks prior to them turning into major areas of concern. The ADEK <a href="#">RBR</a> focuses predominantly on safeguarding students, financial performance, and potential contribution of the <a href="#">HEIs</a> to the strategic priorities of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. It is also designed to provide a consistent, structured and systematic way of assessing risks and warnings across the diversity of <a href="#">HE</a> institutions in Abu Dhabi.</p> <p>The <a href="#">RBR</a> is an elaborate process of identifying, managing and monitoring risks at the institutional level. This method also facilitates a proactive approach to enhancing risk-aware culture and further empowers the human capacity across the <a href="#">HEI</a> to effectively manage the monitoring of strategic and operational performance.</p>



# ANNEX B: List of Acronyms

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

# ANNEX C: Risk-Based Review (Flowchart)

