دائرة التعليم والمعرفة
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE

CRITERIA, GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR AUTHORIZATION OF NEW PROGRAMS IN THE EMIRATE OF ABU DHABI

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v.1.2

FOREWORD

The current *Criteria, Guidelines and Procedures for New Program Authorization* in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi provides the necessary information for HEIs in their process of application to the Abu Dhabi Department of Education & Knowledge to obtain a 'No Objection Letter for offering a new study/academic program – bachelor and above - in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. This document provides information regarding:

- Fundamental principles of ADEK upon which the new program authorization procedure is based;
- ADEK's approach to authorization of new programs to function in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi;
- Requirements a new program proposal must meet in order to obtain ADEK's 'No Objection'.

To ensure coherence with ADEK's strategic priorities the ADEK authorization criteria underpin their operationalization through spelling those priorities out in the principles that underpin the ADEK's procedures.

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

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 new programs bring to the HE system and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi society at large.

The ADEK's 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 set by the socio-economic and cultural needs in alignment with Abu Dhabi's strategic priorities.

The ADEK criteria, guidelines and procedures for authorization of new programs are developed based on the good practice at the international level with particular consideration of the standards set by the 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 HE providers in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi; federal, governmental 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
MOHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NQA	National Qualifications Authority
P&R	Policy and Regulation
QA	Quality Assurance
QC	Quality Control
QF Emirates	Qualifications Framework of Emirates
QI	Quality Improvement
QID	Quality Improvement Division

CONTENTS

STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY 05
THE QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK IN THE EMIRATE OF ABU DHABI 06
CRITERIA FOR THE NEW PROGRAM AUTHORIZATION: THE SET UP 07
PREREQUISITES FOR ESTABLISHING NEW PROGRAMS 08
GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA 12
PROCEDURE 23
Procedural steps 24
Scheduling the procedure 30
Expenses related to the procedure 30
THE EXTERNAL REVIEW 31
Composition of the Panel 31
External Reviewer Selection Procedure 32
Criteria for External Reviewer Selection 33
Conflict of Interests Policy and Confidentiality 34
External Evaluation: the approach 35
APPEALS 36
ANNEXES 41
ANNEX A: New Program Authorization Procedure (Flowchart) 41
ANNEX B: Appeals Procedure (Flowchart) 42
ANNEX C: Confidentiality Statement (template) 43
ANNEX D: Conflict of Interests Statement (template) 44
ANNEX E: Application Cover Page for a New Program Authorization 45
ANNEX F: Learning Outcomes Matrix Template (sample) 48
ANNEX G: External Review Template and Guidelines 49
ANNEX H: Summary Review Template 53
ANNEX I: Glossary of Terms 58

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.

The Abu Dhabi Department of Education & Knowledge (ADEK) 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.

A HEI interested in offering a new program in the EAD must follow the criteria, guidelines and procedures as outlined in this manual to obtain a "No Objection Letter" from the ADEK before filing an application with the Ministry of Education (MOE) Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) for initial accreditation. No entity (e.g. individuals, institutions, consortia or organizations) may advertise, solicit, recruit, enroll, or offer a new program 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 the 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 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 new program 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 21st 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 MoHESR CAA. To be effective the HEIs and programs are to renew their license/accreditation on a five (5) 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 level, in the EAD in particular, 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 distinctive 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 proposals submitted to ADEK for authorization of new HEIs and programs as well as re-authorization of existing HEIs to function in Abu Dhabi should underpin fitness 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 quality assurance procedures sequentially precede CAA's (re)-licensing and initial accreditation procedures for new HEIs, new programs, existing HEIs and substantive changes. ADEK's No Objection Letter is a prerequisite for the applicants to apply to the CAA for respective procedures.

The current guidelines offer the detailed approach that ADEK underpins and the HEIs should follow while conducting authorization of new programs in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

CRITERIA FOR THE NEW PROGRAM AUTHORIZATION: THE SET UP

The new higher education programs to be offered in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi are required to undergo an authorization procedure to obtain a 'No Objection Letter' from ADEK to apply for the CAA initial accreditation. While CAA's initial accreditation of new programs looks at the extent to which the new programs meet the institution's mission and its set objectives, the ADEK quality assurance framework specifically looks at the extent to which the newly proposed program meets the socio-economic and cultural needs of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and promotes its strategic goals. Thus, all the proposals submitted to ADEK to establish a new program of study should follow relevance to the socio-economic and cultural needs frame of reference/analysis.

ADEK's framework for authorization of new programs refers to the programs that fall within the QFEmirates levels leading to a bachelor degree and above and focuses on the following questions:

- To what extent does the program meet the socio-economic and cultural needs of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi? Is the business case of the program sustainable and feasible?
- How does the program fit the strategic development scheme of Abu Dhabi and what is its market niche? What is the value added of the program as compared to the similar existing programs (if any)? What is the differentiated edge?
- What are the goals and objectives of the program?
- What are the major learning outcomes and qualifications the program aims to offer?
- Are there enough existing/planned resources to ensure the students achieve the set learning outcomes?
- Is the funding model of the program feasible and sustainable?
- How does the program management intend to safeguard and enhance the quality of its provisions?

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

PREREQUISITES FOR ESTABLISHING NEW PROGRAMS

To be considered for authorization review of its new programs the higher education provider should comply with the following prerequisites:

- Any potential higher education provider seeking to establish a new program in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi must consult ADEK prior to submitting the application.
- The higher education providers filing applications for authorization should partner with internationally **highly ranked** and **reputable** counterparts 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.

A failure to comply with the prerequisites set by ADEK will result in the rejection of an application

CRITERIA FOR NEW PROGRAM AUTHORIZATION

Criteria	Sub-criteria	Indicators
1. Fitness to Socio-economic and Cultural Needs	**1.1 Alignment with Abu Dhabi's strategic priorities:** The proposal clearly demonstrates how the new program goals and objectives are aligned with Abu Dhabi's socio-economic and cultural vision and contribute to the promotion of its strategic priorities. **1.2 Response to socio-economic and cultural needs:** There is a clear articulation of the socio-economic and cultural needs that graduates from this program would fulfil. **1.3 Employability of graduates:** The HEI is tracking the employment of its graduates to raise their employability as well as to better serve the needs of the market.	- Status of national and international accreditation - Employer satisfaction rate - Graduate satisfaction rate - % of employment within nine months of graduation
2. Sustainable and Differentiated Provision	**2.1 Value-added of the program:** The proposed program is differentiated from existing programs offered in Abu Dhabi HEIs, and offers a uniqueness that will add scope and value to existing provision. **2.2 Feasibility and sustainability of the program:** The proposed program is feasible and sustainable in the medium and long-term.	- % of programs aligned with Abu Dhabi strategic plan - Board of trustees formation is in accordance with the 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 with the qualification framework:** The learning outcomes of the program are in line with the Emirates Qualifications Framework (QFEmirates) at the defined level and ensure development of skills in the field of research and/or the professional practice.	- % of colleges with established Advisory Board - % of programs aligned with QFEmirates - % of international students on sponsorship

CRITERIA FOR NEW PROGRAM AUTHORIZATION

3. Programs (Cont.)	**3.2 The learning outcomes:**[1] The intended learning outcomes of the program are clearly stated with regard to knowledge, skills, and competencies and are aligned with international requirements.	- % of programs with integrated practicum/internship
4. Research and Innovation	**4.1 Research innovation:** The proposal clearly states the institutional intentions related to research and development in line with Abu Dhabi's socio-economic and cultural needs, defines the proposed areas of research and the potential research endeavors and thus promotes a culture of innovation and a knowledge- based society. **4.2 Research outputs and outcomes:** The research outcomes and outputs are visible at the 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 - # and value of external research grants - Field-weighted citation impact - Publications in top journal percentiles (%) - 25%
5. Resources	**5.1 Faculty and administrative staff:** The planned faculty and staff recruitment approach is clear and effective. It ensures faculty have the necessary qualifications to enable students effectively to achieve the intended learning outcomes. **5.2 Learning resources:** The institution has secured student access to learning resources (e.g. library, labs) to ensure achievement of the learning outcomes. **5.3 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. **5.4 Physical resources:** The planned campus and facilities (infrastructure) are sufficient for the successful implementation of the program and achievement of the intended learning outcomes.	- % of full-time faculty members - % of faculty with PhD - % of faculty with qualifications from top 500 internationally ranked institutions (e.g. QS, 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

[1] For PhD programs additional requirements leading to alignment with the internationally accepted practices are provided in the guidelines below.

CRITERIA FOR NEW PROGRAM AUTHORIZATION

5. Resources (Cont.)	**5.5 Funding:** The funding model is feasible and sustainable; the projections ensure implementation of the program objectives and guarantee achievement of the learning outcomes/qualifications by the students.	- Student satisfaction with student services and career guidance - 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
6. Quality Assurance	**6.1 Quality assurance:** There is a well-planned robust process for assessing program effectiveness internally and externally (plans for national and international accreditations). It is planned to safeguard quality of existing provision as well as promote enhancement. **6.2 National and international accreditation:** the institution has a strong track record of international accreditation of its existing programs and has a robust plan for ensuring international accreditation of the new ones	- Ranking of the HEI by international agencies - % of programs with international accreditation

GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA

CRITERION 1: FITNESS TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL NEEDS

The overall guideline for filling in an application for authorization of a new program is each sub-criterion should be addressed through an in-depth analysis as described in the current manual and justified with respective facts, figures and evidence.

1.1 Alignment with Abu Dhabi's strategic priorities: The proposal clearly demonstrates how the new program goals and objectives are aligned with Abu Dhabi's socio-economic and cultural vision, and contribute to the promotion of its strategic priorities.

1.2 Response to socio-economic and cultural needs: There is a clear articulation of the socio-economic and cultural needs that graduates from this program would fulfil.

1.3 Employability of graduates: The HEI is tracking the employment of its graduates to raise their employability as well as to better serve the needs of the market.

Guidelines:

1.1 The proposal should demonstrate how the proposed program is aligned with Abu Dhabi's labor market, socio-economic and cultural needs, guided by Abu Dhabi's strategic priorities. It should be clearly demonstrated how the program contributes towards building a knowledge-based economy, what the value added is and what the expected impact would be. Further, the program should have clearly set goals reflected in specific objectives, which should be in line with the mission statement of the HEIs and AD strategic priorities.

1.2 To justify this sub-criterion the proposal should provide an analysis of labor, socio-economic and cultural needs followed by a clear statement of the problems and the opportunities. Considering the new program authorization procedure pursues a relevance-to-the-market-needs frame of reference, all the analysis and descriptions should be delivered from that particular perspective. While describing the fitness of the program to the socio-economic and cultural needs a clear link between the objectives of the program and the socio-economic and cultural needs should be drawn. The analysis should cover demand and supply, and should consider where there is evidence of unmet need:

- **Demand:** A clear articulation of what occupations/jobs the program/qualification prepares the graduates for should be provided. There should be clear evidence of prior consultation with potential employers and prospective students, the understanding of existing/potential capacity gaps and the Emiratization agenda. Any available evidence of employment rates among graduates of similar or broadly comparable programs should be presented.

GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA

- **Supply**: Evidence should be provided that the program will attract a pipeline of students and should include a detailed elaboration on the likely background or profile of the expected student body.

1.3 The HEIs applying for establishment of a new program should provide justifications and evidences of their prior success with the existing programs with regards to employability and the extent to which they are able to meet the market demands.

Required Documents:

- A feasibility study of the proposed program in the context of Abu Dhabi labor market, including an analysis of labor market demand and the proposed supply of the pipeline of students.

CRITERION 2: SUSTAINABLE AND DIFFERENTIATED PROVISION

2.1 **Value-added of the program:** The proposed program is differentiated from existing programs offered in Abu Dhabi higher education institutions, and offers a uniqueness that will add scope and value to existing provision.

2.2 **Feasibility and sustainability of the program:** The proposed program is feasible and sustainable in the medium and long-term.

Guidelines:

2.1 This sub-criterion requires elaboration on how the proposed program will value-add to, and be different from, existing programs in other Abu Dhabi HEIs that are similar or broadly comparable; and how it will be perceived by prospective students as superior and offering good job prospects. Please provide a description of how the program can/will meet any specific market need that is not being addressed by similar or broadly comparable programs.

2.2 Evidence is required to show that the proposed number of students will be sufficient to enable the program to be sustained in the medium- and long-term. Furthermore, clear evidence of sufficient capacity of existing infrastructure and resources to support and sustain the proposed program, its prospect for success and the ability to maintain the benefits of the program in the Abu Dhabi labor market overtime should be demonstrated. The design of the program should demonstrate how the objectives are translated into strategies to be pursued for the upcoming four years and have a respective operational plan revealing feasibility of the program in relation to the activities to be undertaken.

GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA

The major concepts underpinned in the mission statement of the HEI should be reflected in the strategies and operational plans of the program.

If the new programs are offered in partnership with renowned HEIs (nationally or internationally, if any), there should be a comprehensive description of the role of the partner, its contribution and its value added in the endeavor.

Required Documents:

- An analysis of the proposed program vs. similar or broadly comparable programs at other Abu Dhabi HEIs, including the business case for the new program to be offered;
- Commitment letter from the partner, if any.

CRITERION 3: PROGRAMS

3.1 **Alignment with the qualification framework:** The learning outcomes of the program are in line with the Emirates Qualifications Framework (QFEmirates) at the defined level and ensure development of skills in the field of research and/or the professional practice.

3.2 **The learning outcomes:** The intended learning outcomes of the program are clearly stated with regard to knowledge, skills, and competencies and are aligned with international requirements.

Guidelines:

3.1 There should be a clear articulation of the value added of the program spelled out in the objectives and intended learning outcomes, which should be in line with the mission statement of the HEI. The proposal should provide a justified analysis on how the proposed level and orientation (bachelor and above) as well as the intended learning outcomes fit into the Qualifications Framework of Emirates (QFEmirates)[2]. The analysis under this sub-criterion should clearly show alignment of each program learning outcome with the respective level qualifications outlined in the QF Emirates. Such an analysis also refers to all the courses/modules offered within the frames of the program, which should demonstrate clear alignment with the QFEmirates. A learning outcomes matrix should be filled in, 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, internships.

[2]QF Emirates Handbook at www.nqa.gov.ae

GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA

3.2 The program design should demonstrate clear learning pathways available for the students. This typically refers to the various courses, programs, and learning opportunities offered by the new program that allow students to earn academic credit and satisfy graduation requirements. It implies an expansion of educational options beyond the course sequences historically offered to students. Considering diversification of educational provisions contributes immensely to the development of students' transferrable knowledge and skills, it is highly recommended to highlight student and faculty mobility as well as encouragement of student and faculty participation in the community services in the program design. In case of partnership with a renowned HEI at the international level, ideally, a program design should demonstrate the potential mobility designed for students and faculty members as well as transfer and accumulation of credits earned by students. The program design should also demonstrate clearly the modes of delivery (e.g. face-to-face; on-line; hybrid).

The proposal should demonstrate how the proposed level ties in with the international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the content and outcomes of the program. The intended learning outcomes of the program should be clearly stated with regard to knowledge, skills, and competencies. There should be a clear justification of the opportunities that the achieved learning outcomes will open up for the students as well as how it will support their successful functioning in the market. A clear link with the labor market, socio-economic and cultural needs as well as alignment with the international requirements in the specific field of study should be demonstrated.

GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA

SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR GRADUATE AND DOCTORAL PROGRAMS

Graduate programs:

Guideline 1: The master's program adheres to the Qualifications Framework Emirates and the MoHESR Standards for Licensure and Accreditation.

Guideline 2: The master's program is in line with the strategies of the HEIs and those of Abu Dhabi's strategic vision. The HEI demonstrates a strong capacity to assume responsibility for ensuring that the master program is designed to meet new challenges and include appropriate professional career development opportunities.

Guideline 3: The master's program is designed in a way to promote systematic understanding and the advancement of knowledge through structured research training and application and meets the needs of an employment market that is wider than academia.

Guideline 4: The program accommodates interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills.

Guideline 5: The HEI has a clear set of policies and procedures for the award of a master's degree, including the criteria for the award, time duration for completion and defense/promotion requirements.

Guideline 6: The institution has secured highly qualified faculty members to fulfil the crucial role of master students' supervision/ advisory support and assessment.

Guideline 7: The institution's resource allocations are appropriate for the development and delivery of quality master programs. The allocated funding ensures sustainability in the provisions and successful completion of the program by master students.

Guideline 8: The institution has clearly set mechanisms for constant enhancement and internationalization of its master programs.

Doctoral programs:

Guideline 1: The doctoral program adheres to the Qualifications Framework Emirates, the MoHESR Standards for Licensure and Accreditation and is guided by the Salzburg principles for doctoral education.

Guideline 2: The doctoral program is in line with the strategies of the HEIs and those of Abu Dhabi's strategic vision. The HEI demonstrates a strong capacity to assume responsibility for ensuring that the doctoral program and research training they offer are designed to meet new challenges and include appropriate professional career development opportunities.

GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA

Guideline 3: The doctoral program is designed in a way to promote advancement of knowledge through original research and increasingly meets the needs of an employment market that is wider than academia.

Guideline 4: The program accommodates interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills.

Guideline 5: Doctoral candidates are enrolled as early stage researchers and are recognized as professionals – with commensurate rights - who make a key contribution to the creation of new knowledge.

Guideline 6: The HEI has a clear set of policies and procedures for the award of a doctoral degree, including the criteria for the award, time duration for completion and defense/promotion requirements.

Guideline 7: The institution has secured highly qualified faculty members to fulfil the crucial role of doctoral candidate supervision and assessment, which is based on a transparent contractual framework of shared responsibilities between doctoral candidates, supervisors and the institution (and where appropriate including other partners).

Guideline 8: The institution's resource allocations are appropriate for the development and delivery of quality doctoral programs. The allocated funding ensures sustainability in the provisions and successful completion of the program by doctoral candidates.

Guideline 9: The institution has clearly set mechanisms for constant enhancement and internationalization of its doctoral programs.

Required Documents:

- Program handbook (should include basic data on the program, e.g. level of the program, other design elements necessary to have a holistic view of the program);
- Program strategic and operational plans;
- Modes of delivery;
- Student prospectus;
- Research strategies in relation to the new program.
- A handbook for PhD students (in case of offering a PhD degree).

GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA

CRITERION 4: RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

4.1 **Research innovation:** The proposal clearly states the institutional intentions related to research and development in line with Abu Dhabi's socio-economic and cultural needs, defines the proposed areas of research and the potential research endeavors and thus promotes a culture of innovation and a knowledge-based society.

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

Guidelines:

4.1 The proposal should demonstrate the areas of research to be pursued by the HEI. The HEI should justify the research functions and processes it is planning to be involved in within the frames of the program and provide adequate evidence demonstrating potential for steady increase in research participation, enhancement of research quality and productivity, promotion of innovation and establishment of a knowledge-based society in the long-term. Links between research and teaching and learning should be clearly described.

4.2 The HEI should be able to demonstrate a stable history of research outputs and innovation achieved within the frames of other programs offered at the institution. The achievements should be visible at national, regional and international levels. As for the new program a clear projection for visibility at national, regional and international levels should be submitted.

GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA

CRITERION 5: RESOURCES

5.1 Faculty and administrative staff: The planned faculty and staff recruitment approach is clear and effective. It ensures faculty have the necessary qualifications to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

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

5.3 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.

5.4 Physical resources: The campus and existing (and any planned) facilities (infrastructure) are sufficient for the successful implementation of the program and achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

5.5 Funding: The funding model is feasible and sustainable; the projections ensure implementation of the program objectives and guarantee achievement of the learning outcomes/qualifications by the students.

Guidelines:

5.1 The quality of a program largely depends on the number of faculty and their qualifications, experience and engagement in scholarly activities. The HEI should have a clearly planned approach to faculty recruitment for the new program, which should be transparent and ensure the adequate qualifications to actually contribute to the formation and achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The number of faculty must be sufficient to ensure appropriate student and faculty ratio and, therefore, 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 turnover. There must be a sufficient number of full-time faculty with relevant qualifications and experience in teaching the intended learning outcomes of the program in the major location where the program is delivered. Involvement of faculty members from highly ranked HEIs is an added value to the program.

The management of the program is at the heart of the program's success, thus, the HEI should have a responsible person for the program design, implementation, monitoring, review and enhancement. There should be explicit academic leadership to ensure the management, development and monitoring of the program. A clear focus should be made on the qualifications of the staff member responsible for the program. The qualifications of the manager should enable an effective and efficient management of the program. The management and administration should be skilled enough to exercise quality assurance mechanisms to further enhance the program.

GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA

5.2 The location should have all the necessary instructional resources and media appropriate to the program learning outcomes. There should also be descriptions and evidence of any generic or dedicated computing facilities as well as learning centers for students, dormitory, sports and other facilities. 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.

5.3 The institution should demonstrate that it has secured access to student support services necessary to ensure the learning expected of its students as well as promote career aspirations. This includes academic advisory as well as career promotion services. The new program should be in the center of the student services functions. 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.

5.4 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 the program delivery should be adequate for the number of students to be enrolled.

5.5 The HEI should demonstrate a robust funding model by identifying potential sources. There should be enough evidence on the financial stability for provision of sustainable services to meet its obligations to the enrolled students. 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.

Required Documents:

- Faculty and staff recruitment strategy

GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA

- Profiles of the planned faculty members – invited and local – along with a timed action plan for faculty recruitment needed to deliver the program
- CVs of key administrative staff members and the program director
- The revenue model and financial projections for the upcoming five years
- Location plan and supporting documents for the facilities;
- Library stock (the planned reading list).

CRITERION 6: QUALITY ASSURANCE

6.1 **Quality assurance:** There is a well-planned robust process for assessing program effectiveness internally and externally (plans for national and international accreditations). It is planned to safeguard quality of existing provision as well as promote enhancement.

6.2 **National and international accreditation:** the institution has a strong track record of international accreditation of its existing programs and has a robust plan for ensuring international accreditation of the new ones.

Guidelines:

6.1 For efficient implementation of the program, the proposal should demonstrate availability of formal mechanisms for a regular evaluation of its effectiveness. It is crucial to have a robust quality assurance in place to ensure that the program is well-designed, regularly monitored and periodically reviewed, thereby securing its continuing relevance to the socio-economic needs and currency. Such a system should be based on a regular feedback coming from the stakeholders – students, employers, teaching and administrative staff. A student-centered approach is valuable, thus it is important to demonstrate how the students will be involved in the management and quality assurance of the program. It is also highly recommended to conduct comparative analyses (benchmarking) with similar programs at national and international levels to better understand and be enabled to improve the program performance. There should be a clear projection on how the program's quality will be safeguarded to ensure it maintains the set standards as well as takes efforts to enhance it. A clear plan for national and international accreditation by recognized professional bodies should be specified.

GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA

6.2 The HEI applying to offer new programs should be able to demonstrate that it has a strong track record in relation to international accreditation of existing programs and should provide a robust plan for international accreditation of new programs.

Required Documents:

- Documentation laying out the mechanisms to be applied for assessing the program's relevance to the socio-economic needs and effectiveness;
- Plans for promoting program visibility (national and international accreditations);
- Any other evidence related to international accreditation and evaluations.

PROCEDURE

The procedural steps

All HEIs planning to offer a new study/academic program leading to a bachelor degree and above are to apply to ADEK for authorization leading to a grant of a 'No Objection Letter' prior to submitting an application for initial accreditation to the CAA.

Overall, the duration of the procedure is up to 3-4 months (see Annex A for the flowchart). In case there is a need to amend the application for completeness by the applicant, an additional two weeks might apply.

Procedures for authorization of new programs and new concentrations are conducted through two major approaches:

- As a stand-alone program. In this case each program is considered a separate case;
- In a cluster of programs/concentrations. Usually, a group of programs or concentrations that belong to the same subject field.

Depending on the method of evaluation, (stand alone or cluster) the number of peer-reviewers might vary.

STEP 1: PREPARE AND SUBMIT APPLICATION

Description/ Definition:	The HEI planning to offer a new program should fill in the ADEK New Program Authorization application form (Appendix E). The application should be analytical in nature and should adhere to ADEK criteria for new program authorization. The application must be submitted through ADEK's Higher Education Authorization Portal
Responsible:	HEI
Inputs:	• The ADEK New Program Authorization application form • The Application filed by the HEI intending to offer a new study program
Outputs:	The ADEK acknowledgement of the application receipt
Time line:	All the new programs should be submitted at least four months prior to the deadline for submitting the full application for Initial Accreditation to the CAA.

PROCEDURE
PROCEDURE STEPS

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 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, the allocated Procedure Coordinator (P&R Division)
Inputs:	• ADEK letter of application acceptance • ADEK contract with the HEI
Outputs:	The ADEK acknowledgement of the application receipt
Time line:	One week upon 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 • Resubmitted application
Timelines:	Two weeks upon the receipt of the letter of non-compliance.

PROCEDURE
PROCEDURE STEPS

STEP 4: Select and appoint external reviewers

Description/ Definition:	The ADEK P&R 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.
Responsible:	ADEK AQAC
Inputs:	• ADEK policy and procedure for external reviewer selection • List of external reviewers • ADEK non disclosure / confidentiality statement • ADEK conflict of interest statement
Outputs:	• Letter appointing the panel members ADEK contract with external reviewers • Statements of confidentiality and conflict of interests signed by external reviewers
Timelines:	One week 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:	External reviewers are granted full access (via the Higher Education Authorization Portal) to the application for desk-review.
Responsible:	ADEK QC Section Manager
Inputs:	• The application package • ADEK external reviewer's template and guidelines
Timelines:	Within one week after the external panel appointment

PROCEDURE
PROCEDURE STEPS

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-session takes place in ADEK under the QC Section Manager's and Procedure Coordinator's lead to draw the major findings and recommendations for the follow up (if any). The international reviewer(s) will join the session through video conference.
Responsible:	External reviewers and ADEK's QC Section Manager and P&R Procedure Coordinator
Outputs:	Individual Reports of the external reviewers
Timelines:	Three weeks upon being granted full access to the application

STEP 7: Prepare summary report

Description/ Definition:	The panel Chair along with the ADEK P&R Expert prepare a Summary Report to be submitted to the AQAC for decision taking.
Responsible:	ADEK QC Section Manager; P&R Division Director
Inputs:	The summary report template
Outputs:	A signed Summary Report
Timelines:	One week upon the receipt of the Individual Reports.

PROCEDURE
PROCEDURE STEPS

STEP 8: Take decision

Description/ Definition:	The summary report is sent to the ADEK AQAC for decision taking.
Responsible:	ADEK AQAC
Inputs:	The signed Summary Report
Outputs:	Minutes of the session
Timelines:	Within one week upon the submission of the Summary Report.

STEP 9: Inform the applicant on the decision taken

Description/ Definition:	In case of a positive decision a No Objection Letter is issued to the HEI intending to offer a new study/academic program. 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 intending to offer a new study/academic program. The Non Approval Letter is signed by the ADEK Chairman and is sent to the applicant. The new application for this particular program will not be accepted until clear justification of the socio-economic needs is stated by the HEI and is accepted by ADEK. In case the decision taken entails further improvement of a new program a Letter of Recommendations with follow up activities is issued to the applicant.

PROCEDURE
PROCEDURE STEPS

STEP 9: Inform the applicant on the decision taken (Cont.)

Description/ Definition (Cont.):	The decision to further improve the program is taken in case the program is an innovative one and brings value to the Abu Dhabi labor market enhancement, however, the external reviewers evaluated it as partially meeting the criterion. The time-line for a new application is set in the Letter of Recommendations. The Letter of Recommendations and follow up is signed by the ADEK Chairman and is sent to the applicant.
Responsible:	ADEK AQAC; 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
Timelines:	Within one week upon the decision taking.

STEP 10: 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

PROCEDURE
PROCEDURE STEPS

STEP 10: Inform the CAA on the decision taken (Cont.)

Outputs:	• The letter to the CAA on the specific case and decision • The No Objection Letter addressed to the HEI • The Non Approval Letter addressed to the HEI • The Letter of Recommendations and follow up
Timelines:	Within 10 working days upon the decision taking.

PROCEDURE

Scheduling the procedure

The HEIs intending to establish a new program are to file an application for authorization to ADEK at least four months before submission to the CAA for initial accreditation.

Expenses related to the procedure

Considering ADEK re-authorization is conducted with involvement of national and international reviewers, the following expenses apply to each procedure:

- Expenses related to the application handling;
- Expenses related to the external reviewers.

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 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 authorization review of a proposed new program. The panel is assisted by the ADEK P&R Procedure Coordinator, assigned once the application is filed. The external review panel should:

- Be composed of at least 2-4 external reviewers, depending on the majors to be offered.
- Command the following competencies:
  - expertise regarding recent developments and research in the field of study
  - international expertise preferably in the field of study and quality assurance
  - practical experience in the field of study
  - experience in teaching and learning
  - skills in developing study programs.
- Be chaired by one of the panel members based on internal agreement between the panel members themselves or as appointed by the ADEK AQAC.
- Have complementary skills and competencies (to each other).
- Be independent and its independence should be guided by the ADEK Conflict of Interest Policy (see separate section on Conflict of Interest Policy and Confidentiality in this document).
- Sign a declaration of independence/conflict of interest and confidentiality statements prior to commencing the review process.

THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

External Reviewer Selection Procedure

ADEK conducts new program authorization procedures by selecting and appointing external reviewers to ensure objectivity and independence of decision-taking. To ensure transparency of the external review ADEK has adopted a procedure through which it selects and appoints external reviewers. The selection of external reviews has the following steps:

- The ADEK Higher Education Executive Director sends a letter of request to HEIs and potential employers to nominate at least 10 professionals in different subject-specific fields to be assessed and included in the ADEK HE expert database. The letter of request outlines the qualifications expected of the potential external reviewers. In case of international reviewer nominations the letter of request is sent to INQAAHE, ENQA, APQN, ANQAHE and other recognized QA entities. An open call to invite external reviewers, both faculty members and employers, is also possible through the ADEK portal.
- Upon receipt of the nominations/letters of interest ADEK contacts the nominees/applicants to submit their curriculum vitae along with a statement of purpose 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 selected candidates is submitted to the ADEK AQAC for approval and inclusion in the ADEK database of external reviewers.
- Upon receiving an application for a new program authorization, the ADEK P&R QC Section Manager along with the P&R Procedure Coordinator selects potential external reviewers based on their qualifications from the ADEK database of external reviewers. The ADEK Conflict of Interest policy is applied during the selection to minimize the chances of any potential conflict.
- The proposed list of external reviewers 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 contract 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:

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 in English-medium programs; fluency in Arabic is required and in English is preferable in Arabic-medium programs; in case of international candidates English is required and Arabic is preferable.

Employers:

- Be employed in a senior position in the market sector relevant to the program field of study;
- At least 10 years of experience supervising new employees and evaluating employee performance;
- Teaching in respective field (desirable);
- Experience in quality assurance (desirable);
- Fluency in English and Arabic.

THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

Conflict of Interest Policy and Confidentiality Statement

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;

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 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 P&R 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 any 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 interests and ADEK Non-Disclosure/Confidentiality 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.

THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

External Evaluation: the approach

Considering the value of innovative and market-wise valuable programs are the cornerstone of Higher Education's success, ADEK's external evaluation is carried out on a three-point scale to allow for the strong cases with some technical deficiencies to improve their proposals. Thus, the following interpretation of the three-point scale underpins the logic of external evaluation:

Meets the criterion – this scale applies if the proposal is an excellent one and provides all the necessary analysis and evidence, content- and technical-wise, that justify compliance with the criteria, value-added and relevance to the socio-economic needs, in particular.

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

Does not meet the criterion – this scale is applied when there are clear deficiencies in the proposal and it fails to justify the socio-economic needs, relevance and the necessary capacity to offer the program/establish or run a HEI.

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 promotion of the quality and relevance of the proposal/program.

Based on the desk review of the external reviewers, the Panel Chair along with the ADEK Procedure Coordinator develop a proposal to the ADEK AQAC for decision taking. The proposal should include a substantiated final conclusion on **the value-added and relevance** of the program on the same three point scale. The proposal should also include recommendations for any follow-up activities.

APPEALS

ADEK's decisions on authorization of new programs are open to internal appeal to the ADEK's 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 letter of non-approval (see Annex B for the flowchart).

The appeals process involves nomination of two independent external experts (other than those ones involved in the initial procedure) to investigate the case in full, including the whole application submitted by the HEI, the panel's report as well as recommendations. On average, the appeal 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.

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:	• Letter of Non-Approval • Appeals Petition
Timeline:	The petition to appeal must be submitted in writing and must 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 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
Timeline:	Within one week upon submission of the application.

STEP 3: Register Appeal, Schedule Appeal & 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, depending on the majors to be offered. The QC Section Manager prepares a draft 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 draft Response Letter is shared with the P&R Division Director for review.

APPEALS

STEP 3: Register Appeal, Schedule Appeal & Prepare Response (Cont.)

Responsible:	ADEK QC Section Manager
Inputs:	Appeals Petition
Outputs:	Draft Response Letter
Timelines:	Within two weeks upon the case registration.

STEP 4: Approve Response

Description/ Definition	The P&R Division Director reviews the draft 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:	Finalized Response Letter
Timelines:	One day upon the receipt of the Draft 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

APPEALS

STEP 5: External Review of the Case (Cont.)

Output:	The External Reviewers' report(s)
Timeline:	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 the summary of the external reviewers' reports.
Responsible:	QC Section Manager
Inputs:	The reports of the external reviewers
Output:	Summary of the reports
Timeline:	Within one week upon receipt of the reports.

STEP 7: Conduct Appeal Convention & Decide Final Order

Description/ Definition:	The Higher Education 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 a decision based on the documents in the case file including external reviewers' report(s). 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 submitted to ADEK's Chairman for sign off.

APPEALS

STEP 7: Conduct Appeal Convention & Decide Final Order (Cont.)

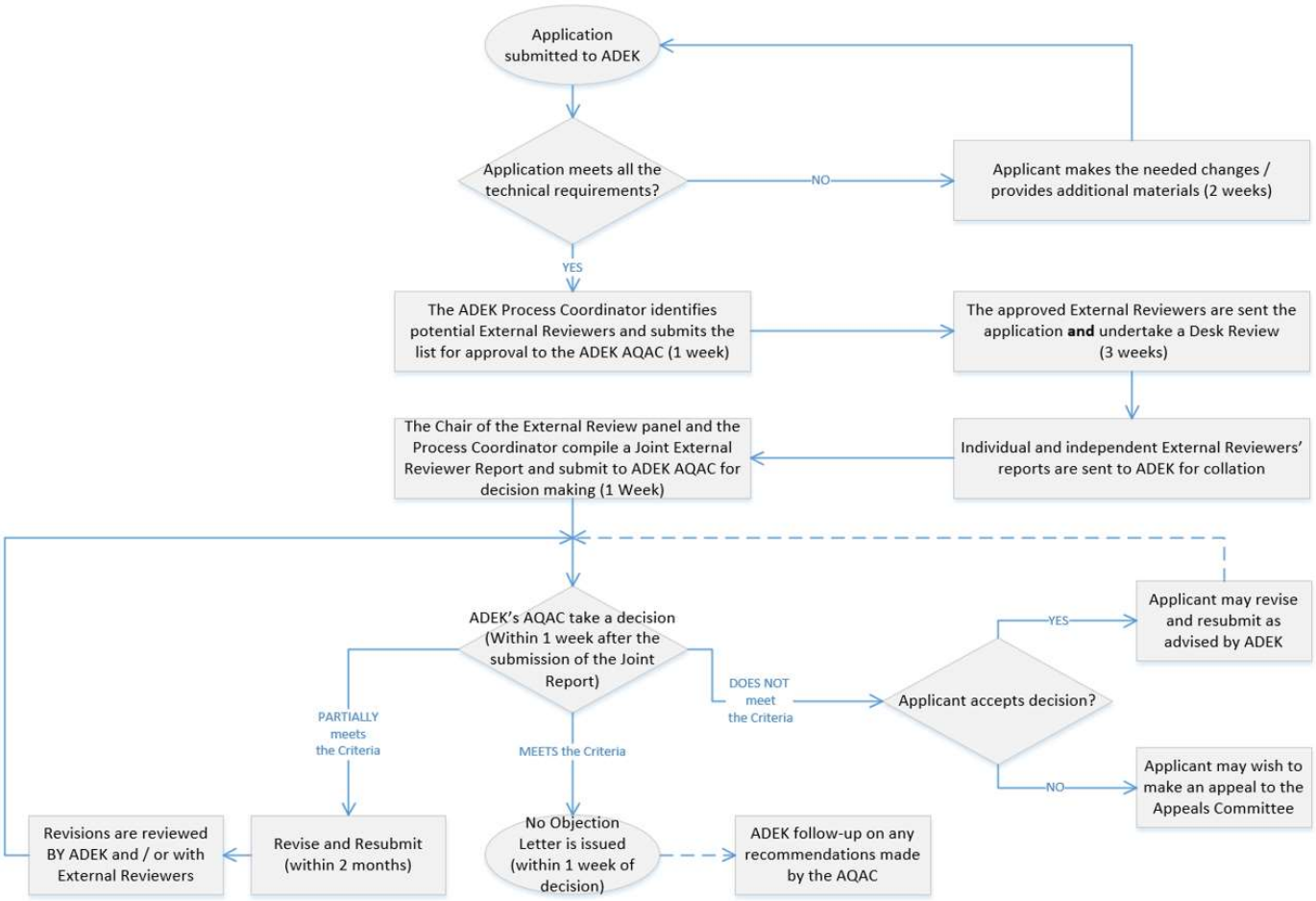
Responsible:	Higher Education Appeals Committee
Inputs:	Case file
Outputs:	Appeal Decision
Timeline:	Within two weeks upon the submission of the summary report

STEP 8: Receive Letter Overturning/Upholding Original Decision

Description/ Definition:	The Appellant receives the final decision made by the Higher Education Appeals Committee and signed off by ADEK's Chairman. If ADEK's prior decision is overturned, the Appellant's application for a letter of No Objection 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 HE Appeals Committee is final and binding.
Responsible:	ADEK Chairman, HE Appeals Committee Chair, ADEK P&R Division Director
Inputs:	Appeal Decision
Timelines:	Within one week after the decision taking.

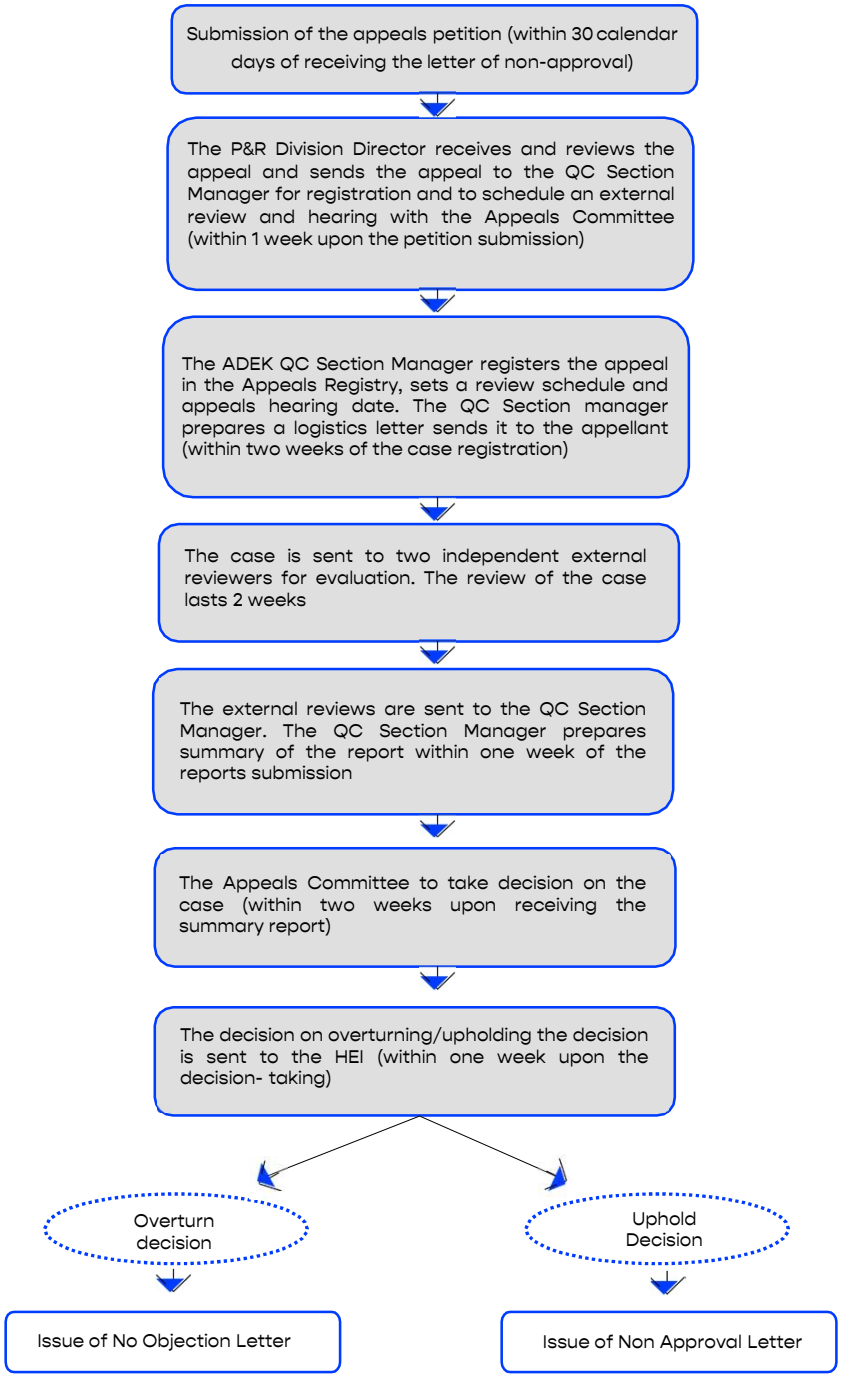
ANNEXES

ANNEX A: New Program Authorization Procedure (Flowchart)



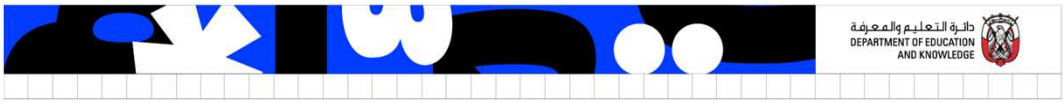
ANNEXES

ANNEX B: Appeals Procedure (Flowchart)



ANNEXES

ANNEX C: Confidentiality Statement (template)



ADEK CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Review procedure case #: _____

Title of the Program 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 program 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: _____

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ANNEXES

ANNEX D: Conflict of Interests Statement (template)

ADEK CONFLICT OF INTERESTS STATEMENT

Review procedure case #: _____

Title of the Program 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 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.

Signature of the reviewer: _____

Date: _____

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ANNEXES

ANNEX E: Application Cover Page for a New Program Authorization

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 new program authorization. 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.

ANNEXES

Application Cover Page
for a New Program Authorization

- **Name of the applicant institution:**
- **Name of School, College, Department or teaching unit offering the new program:**
- **Name and contact details of Head of School / Authorized Officer or Liaison of the Institution:**

Name: _____

Position: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Tel: _____

Mobile: _____

Web-site of the HEI and the program_____

ANNEXES

- **Registration number of the HEI**

- **Registered address of the institution**

- **Data on the HEI status:**

	Response
a) Is your HEI a federal, public non-federal, or private institution?	
b) Does the HEI intend to offer the new program to the national or international students (or both)?	
c) Does the HEI intend to offer the new program to male of female students (or co-educational)?	
d) What type of qualification and degree is the program planning to offer?	

- **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):
_____

ANNEXES

ANNEX F: Learning Outcomes Matrix Template[3] (sample)

Learning Outcomes Matrix

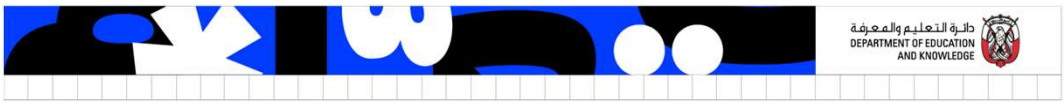
Program title	Course code	Course title	Program Outcomes											
Example:			A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3			
Law	**LC4SXXX**	**Research methods**	**F**		**P**			**F**	**P**					
			A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	B3	C1	C2	C3			
			Occurrence across the course											

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)

3: 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 New Program
Individual Reviewer's Report

Title of the Applicant Institution:	
Title of the New Program:	
Title, Name and Affiliation 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

Please provide a brief (one side a4 max) holistic critique of the case as well as a summarizing narrative of your major findings.

B. Key Issues

Please provide a list of the key issues you identified along with statements justifying why you view each item as being an issue.

C. Criteria Based Assessment[1]

Please provide an 'Assessment Outcome' (i.e. Met, Partially Met or Not Met) of the case for **each criterion** along with a short statement identifying the major reason(s) for the suggested 'Assessment Outcome'.

D. General Overview of the Assessment

Please provide the 'Assessment Outcome' for each criterion in the summary table below. Please only use **Met / Partially Met / Not Met** as possible Assessment Outcomes. i.e. No justification text is needed in the following table: Justification arises from Sections A-C.

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'

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*'

ANNEXES

Criteria			Assessment Outcome
1	Fitness to socio-economic and cultural needs		
	1.1	Alignment with Abu Dhabi's strategic priorities	
	1.2	Response to socio-economic and cultural needs	
	1.3	Employability of graduates	
Overall for Criterion 1			Met / Partially Met/ Not Met
2	Sustainable and Differentiated Provision		
	2.1	Value-added of the program	
	2.2	Feasibility and sustainability of the program	
Overall for Criterion 2			Met / Partially Met/ Not Met
3	Programs		
	3.1	Alignment with the qualification framework	
	3.2	The learning outcomes	
Overall for Criterion 3			Met / Partially Met/ Not Met
4	Research and Innovation		
	4.1	Research innovation	
	4.2	Research outputs and outcomes	
Overall for Criterion 4			Met / Partially Met/ Not Met
5	Resources		
	5.1	Faculty and administrative staff	
	5.2	Learning resources	
	5.3	Student services	
	5.4	Physical resources	
	5.5	Funding	
Overall for Criterion 5			Met / Partially Met/ Not Met
6	Quality Assurance		
	6.1	Quality assurance	
	6.2	National and international accreditation	
Overall for Criterion 6			Met / Partially Met/ Not Met

ANNEXES

E. Recommendations

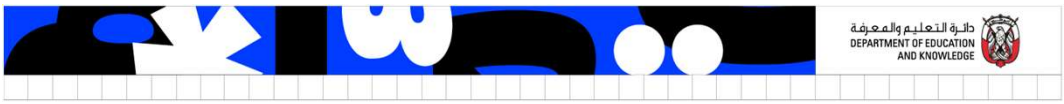
Please provide recommendations for each of the issues you identified in Section B (Key Issues). This Section of your report is intended to inform the follow-up discussions between the HEI and ADEK and will be referred to in the decision-making, as well as follow-up, procedures.

F. Additional Comments

Please provide any other additional comments you would like to raise about the case that have not been noted above.

ANNEXES

ANNEX H: Summary Review Template



External Evaluation of a New Program
Joint Report

Title of the Applicant Institution:	
Title of the New Program:	
Titles, names and affiliations of the external reviewers:	Reviewer 1: Reviewer 2: Reviewer 3:
Date on which the application was received by ADEK:	
Date on which ADEK sent the application package to the external reviewers:	
Site – visit dates (if any):	
Date on which the external reviewers submitted the Joint Report to ADEK:	

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ANNEXES

A. Executive Summary

Please provide a brief overview of the applicant institution and the fit of the program to the institution's strategies and quality assurance processes.

B. Evaluation per criterion (narrative)[1]

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.

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'

CRITERION 1: Fitness to socio-economic and cultural needs

- **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 a 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: Fitness to socio-economic and cultural needs

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

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

ANNEXES

CRITERION 2: Sustainable and Differentiated Provision

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

CRITERION 3: Programs

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

CRITERION 4: Research and Innovation

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

CRITERION 5: Resources

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

CRITERION 6: Quality Assurance

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

ANNEXES

C. Assessment outcome for each criterion

Please provide your individual 'Assessment Outcomes' along with a team-agreed 'Assessment Outcome' for each criterion. Please only use **Met / Partially Met / Not Met** as possible Assessment Outcomes. i.e. No justification text is needed in the following table: Justification arises from Section B.

Criteria			R1	R2	R3	Team agreed
1	Fitness to socio-economic and cultural needs					
	1.1	Alignment Abu Dhabi's strategic priorities				
	1.2	Response to socio-economic and cultural needs				
	1.3	Employability of graduates				
Overall for Criterion 1						
2	Sustainable and differentiated Provision					
	2.1	Value-added of the program				
	2.2	Feasibility and sustainability of the program				
Overall for Criterion 2						
3	Programs					
	3.1	Alignment with the qualification framework				
	3.2	The learning outcomes				
Overall for Criterion 3						
4	Research and Innovation					
	4.1	Research innovation				
	4.2	Research outputs and outcomes				
Overall for Criterion 4						
5	Resources					
	5.1	Faculty and administrative staff				
	5.2	Learning resources				
	5.3	Student services				
	5.4	Physical resources				
	5.5	Funding				
Overall for Criterion 5						
6	Quality Assurance					
	6.1	Quality assurance				
	6.2	National and international accreditation				
Overall for Criterion 6						

ANNEXES

D. Additional Comments

Please provide any other additional comments you would like to raise about the case that have not been noted above.

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.

Names and 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)	The 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. The AQAC 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 applications 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. Authorization 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.
External reviewers	External review 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.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
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.
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.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
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.
QFEmirates	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.
Substantive change	A procedure through which ADEK authorizes the changes undertaken by the HEI within the five-year cycle (in between two cycles of institutional authorization). Each substantive change undertaken by the HEI in between the two cycles of authorization have to be authorized by ADEK.
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.

VERSION CONTROL

V1.1 Aug 2020	Workflow diagrams tidied (Annex A) Elaborations to the external reviewers' submission requirements - Section B of the Joint report (Annex H) 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 within ADEK. Policy and Regulation Division (formally Quality Improvement Division)
V1.2 April 2021	Updated to reflect new ADEK branding