



U Q A I B

UNIVERSITY QUALITY ASSURANCE
INTERNATIONAL BOARD

QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL



UQAIB

University Quality Assurance International Board

Quality Assurance Manual

Version 1.2

This document will be reviewed by the end of 2010. While every attempt has been made to make this document as accurate and comprehensive as possible, users should check with KHDA as to whether any updates are available for this version.

The authoritative manual can be downloaded from the KHDA website,
www.khda.gov.ae

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DEFINITIONS

The following abbreviations, acronyms and terms are used in this report. As necessary, they are explained in context. In some cases, URLs are provided to facilitate further enquiries about these acronyms and terms.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

A structured program of study into which a student enrolls, studies and, if successful, graduates from with a higher education qualification (such as a diploma, degree or postgraduate certificate).

CAA

Commission for Academic Accreditation. This is the federal body with responsibility for licensing institutions and accrediting programs in the UAE (see www.caa.ae).

COMMERCIAL LICENSE

The commercial license is the legal registration of an Educational Institution with a Government Authority i.e. Dubai Economic Department and/or one of the Free Zones and permits the Institution to engage in commercial activities related to educational provision (and as predefined in the license) in the Emirate of Dubai.

DIAC

Dubai International Academic City. One of the Free Zones specifically established for the purpose of accommodating education providers.

DKV

Dubai Knowledge Village. Another Free Zone specifically established for the purpose of accommodating education providers.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PERMIT

The Educational Services Permit is the permit obtained by a HEP from the KHDA and permits the HEP to engage in activities related to educational provision to achieve its academic goals leading to the award of qualifications.

EQAA

External Quality Assurance Agency. In the context of higher education this may mean any credible agency independent of a HEP which provides evaluations, reviews, audits or similar services pertaining to that HEP's academic activities. UQAIB is an EQAA.

EQUIVALENCY

A term denoting that the intended learning outcomes and quality of an academic program as offered by a HEP Branch are approximately the same as the intended learning outcomes and quality of that academic program as offered by the HEP Home, even though some of the details may be different in order to fit in with the context (social, political, economic etc.) of Dubai.

EXTRAORDINARY AUDIT

A process whereby KHDA requests that UQAIB convene an external review panel to conduct such investigations as it deems necessary in response to serious allegations that could impact adversely upon its Educational Services Permit or the Validation of its programs. An Extraordinary Audit Panel reports its findings to UQAIB, which may then make recommendations to KHDA about HEP so as to facilitate decisions about its Permit, or make decisions about Program Validation.

FREE ZONE

Zones established in Dubai that allow up to 100 percent foreign ownership and that target specific commercial activities.

HEP APPROVAL

A process of external quality assurance whereby UQAIB is able to conclude to its satisfaction that the HEP Branch has institutional policies, practices and resources in place that are consistent with the HEP Home and that are likely to create learning conditions for students that are similarly conducive to student success as the learning conditions at the HEP Home.

HEP BRANCH AUDIT

A process whereby an external review panel, convened by UQAIB, conducts such investigations as it deems necessary to determine whether or not a HEP Branch has institutional policies, practices and resources in place that are consistent with the HEP Home and that are likely to create learning conditions for students that are similarly conducive to student success as the learning conditions at the HEP Home. A HEP Branch Audit Panel reports its findings to UQAIB, which makes the Approval recommendation to KHDA.

HEP BRANCH

A HEP located in a Dubai Free Zone which acts for, and on behalf of, and in the name of an HEP headquartered outside the Free Zone (usually in another country). It is not necessary that the HEP Branch represents the entire breadth of the HEP Home's activities. A HEP Branch may, for example, pertain to a particular College, Faculty or Graduate School. For more information see section 7.1.

HEP HOME

A HEP at its registered place-of-origin.

HEP

Higher Education Provider (typically a university, college, academy, or institute, which provides academic programs leading to the awarding of higher education qualifications). Sometimes generically referred to as "institution". In this Manual, and where appropriate in context, use of the term HEP without qualifier may be taken to mean the consolidation of a HEP Home and its HEP Branch.

HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATION

An undergraduate diploma or degree, or a graduate or postgraduate certificate, diploma or degree that may be awarded by an appropriately authorized higher education institution to a student in recognition of the successful completion of a credit-bearing program of study. UQAIB will usually only validate higher education qualifications that are provided wholly or partly face-to-face in the Free Zones and that are diploma or degree programs of one year or longer academic duration.

KHDA

Knowledge and Human Development Authority (see www.khda.gov.ae).

REGULATION & COMPLIANCE COMMISSION

The Department of KHDA responsible for issuing Educational Services Permit.

PROBATION

A status denoting that the UQAIB is not yet satisfied that the program offered by the HEP Branch is substantially equivalent to the same program offered by the HEP Home. Probation is for a specific period of time, at the end of which the program will be reconsidered for Validation.

PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION

Program Accreditation by a professional body establishing that graduates have the competencies required for professional practice.

PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

A process of external quality assurance that provides assurance to the public that an academic program meets specific standards. In the UAE, program accreditation is provided by the CAA. It is a comparable but different process to Program Validation.

PROGRAM AUDIT

A process whereby an external review panel, convened by UQAIB, conducts such investigations as it deems necessary to determine whether or not intended learning outcomes and quality of an academic program as offered in a Free Zone by a HEP Branch are equivalent to the intended learning outcomes and quality of that academic program as offered in its place-of-origin by the HEP Home, even though some of the details may be different in order to fit in with the context (social, political, economic etc.) of Dubai. A Program Audit Panel reports its findings to UQAIB, which makes the Validation decision.

PROGRAM REGISTRATION

The process of listing academic programs in the UQAIB Register. This is normally done by UQAIB Program Validation, or by CAA Program Accreditation.

PROGRAM VALIDATION

A process of external quality assurance, undertaken by UQAIB, which provides assurance to the public that a program offered in the Free Zone is equivalent to the same program offered in its place-of-origin. It is a comparable but different process to Program Accreditation.

QA

Quality assurance.

REVIEW

A formal process whereby a HEP or HEP Branch applies to UQAIB to have an Institutional Approval recommendation or a Program Validation decision changed (see Part D).

UAE

United Arab Emirates.

UQAIB REGISTER

A database accessible via the UQAIB's public website (see www.khda.gov.ae/uqaib) that lists all HEPs and HEP Branches in the Free Zones, including their permit status (i.e. whether permit issued, on probation, permit cancelled, or licensed by CAA); and all the Programs provided by those institutions, including their status (validated, on probation, validation cancelled, or accredited by CAA).

UQAIB SECRETARIAT

Personnel employed through KHDA to provide dedicated support to the activities of UQAIB.

UQAIB

Universities Quality Assurance International Board. A Board established and supported by the authority of KHDA, which (a) provides advice to the KHDA on HEP Branch Permits and (b) makes decisions for the KHDA on Program Validation.



PART A

QUALITY ASSURANCE OVERVIEW

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 OVERVIEW

KHDA encourages high quality provision of qualifications and programmes offered by foreign Higher Education Providers (HEPs) as a way of supplementing local supply and accelerating the development of high level human resources in the UAE. However, for the KHDA the quality of such provision must be beyond question and the processes to ensure that quality, whether undertaken abroad or locally, must be credible and effective. To that end, KHDA has set up the University Quality Assurance International Board (UQAIB) consisting of international quality assurance (QA) experts to assist it with oversight of the quality of higher education offered by foreign HEPs operating in the Dubai Free Zones.

All HEPs wishing to operate in the Free Zones must receive an Educational Services Permit from KHDA (for the most up to date list of Free Zones visit the Dubai Export Development Corporation: www.dedc.gov.ae). KHDA grants these Permits based either on approval by UQAIB or on licensure by the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA). KHDA Educational Services Permit must be renewed annually. Details are provided in Part B of this Manual.

All academic Programs (i.e. leading to the award of a higher education qualification) offered in the Dubai Free Zones must be registered with KHDA's Higher Education Department. Registration requires either Program Validation by UQAIB or Program Accreditation by CAA. Details are provided in Part C of this Manual.

In order not to burden foreign HEPs unduly and duplicate QA processes to which such HEPs have already been subjected, UQAIB will, in the primary instance, take account of existing QA reports on the quality of provision of foreign HEPs as well as the effectiveness of the QA systems and procedures in place at those institutions, as long as such reports are fairly recent. UQAIB nevertheless reserves the right to undertake QA processes of its own in cases where external QA reports do not provide clear enough indications of quality provision, or in special circumstances where an extraordinary audit may be warranted.

UQAIB will pay particular attention to the issue of demonstrated quality equivalence of provision in Dubai in relation to the home HEP as well as to the effectiveness of arrangements for quality and quality assurance in relation to cross-border provision.

A HEP has the right to request a review of any decisions or recommendations made by UQAIB that affect its educational service permit or program registrations. Details of the Review process are provided in Part D of this Manual.

This manual provides detailed information about KHDA's educational service permit and Program Registration requirements and processes. For information about CAA Licensing and Accreditation, see www.caa.ae.

This KHDA higher education quality assurance system is designed to meet the unique needs of the Dubai Strategic Plan regarding the provision of higher education at the best international standards. In so doing, the quality assurance system:

- is flexible to accommodate a variety of international higher education programs;
- protects the integrity of foreign degree programs by taking into account the assessment of those programs by other external quality agencies;
- recognises and attends to the unique quality assurance factors associated with maintaining the quality of transnational higher education programs;
- protects students and society from low-quality education provision;
- minimizes any potential confusion and administrative burden on HEPs by avoiding duplication of quality assurance processes; and most importantly
- emphasizes the principle that the primary responsibility for quality belongs to the higher education providers themselves.

1.2 HEPS EXISTING IN THE FREE ZONES PRIOR TO UQAIB

As with all new quality assurance systems, it is expected that it will take some time for full implementation to take effect. A number of HEPs which commenced their operations prior to the instigation of this system may not fit the HEP Branch model. These HEPs will be treated on a case by case basis at KHDA's discretion, until such time as they can be brought within the normal processes of this system or, if necessary, limited adaptations made to accommodate existing institutions and programs.

2 WHAT ARE THE FREE ZONES?

Dubai has established a number of Free Zones designed to facilitate international investment, economic growth and the provision of international higher education. These Free Zones allow foreign HEPs to establish branch campuses (known as HEP Branches) in Dubai, offering HEP Home's diploma and degree programs according to the same standards, policies and procedures. This means that Dubai, and students from the wider region, can have access to a wide range of high-quality international programs, thereby supporting the learning needs of rapidly growing populations and rapidly diversifying economies.

All HEPs operating within Dubai's Free Zones come within the jurisdiction of UQAIB. This model is different from, but complementary to, HEP licensing and program accreditation to UAE standards for HEPs outside the Free Zones.

For the most up to date list of Free Zones visit the Dubai Export Development Corporation: www.dedc.gov.ae.

3 DUBAI'S QUALITY ASSURANCE STRUCTURES

3.1 WHAT IS THE KHDA?

The Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) is responsible for the future growth, direction and quality of education and learning in Dubai. It is the Dubai Government Authority with responsibility for the issuance of educational permits and external quality assurance of higher education provided in the Dubai Free Zones.

3.2 WHAT IS THE REGULATION & COMPLIANCE COMMISSION?

The Regulation & Compliance Commission is the department within KHDA responsible for issuing Educational Services Permits. In carrying out this function it acts upon the advice of the KHDA Higher Education Department and UQAIB.

3.3 WHAT IS THE UQAIB?

The University Quality Assurance International Board (UQAIB) is a board of leading international higher education quality assurance experts established by KHDA Board Resolution No.1 2008 "to ensure that the quality of higher education of the Higher Education Providers is in line with both International and the Emirate standards."

UQAIB has responsibility for approving HEP Branches for the purpose of Institutional Permits and making recommendations to KHDA accordingly; and validating the academic programs of HEP Branches for the purpose of Program Registration. Members of UQAIB (listed in Appendix A) have been selected to ensure that the quality assurance system benefits from international experience of the highest caliber.

3.4 WHAT ARE UQAIB PANELS?

There are four purposes for which UQAIB may need to convene Panels in order to fulfill its HEP Branch Approval and Program Validation functions. These are as follows:

- HEP Branch Audits (see section 8)
- Program Audits (see section 14)
- Reviews (see section 18)
- Extraordinary Audits (see section 22)

3.4.1 CRITERIA FOR PANEL MEMBERS

The four types of panels mentioned above will normally be chaired by a Member of UQAIB. Other members may be contracted from elsewhere as approved by UQAIB. In deciding upon the Panel Members, UQAIB will seek people who are:

- experienced in higher education leadership roles;
- appropriately qualified and experienced in the relevant field of study (for Program Audits);
- trained and/or experienced in quality review processes;
- of good standing in the higher education community;
- familiar with transnational higher education.

Prior to commencing panel responsibilities, each Panel Member will, if necessary, be briefed by the UQAIB Secretariat on:

- the mission and practice of the Free Zones;
- the KHDA model of quality assurance;
- contemporary issues in transnational higher education.

3.4.2 PANEL MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

The following responsibilities are shared by all Panel Members:

- complete and return the UQAIB Panel Member Declaration Form (see Appendix B) and inform UQAIB about any matters that are or could be perceived as possible conflicts of interest;
- read the UQAIB Quality Assurance Manual thoroughly;
- read and evaluate the audit materials assigned to them;
- participate in all Panel meetings and activities (whether face to face or via communication technologies) and undertake any consequential responsibilities assigned to Panel Members during meetings;
- provide feedback on the Audit to the UQAIB as requested;
- be available to assist in responding to a subsequent Review interview if required.

3.4.3 PANEL MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

Panel Members are ambassadors for the UQAIB. As such, they should:

- respect that the primary responsibility for quality education belongs to the HEPs;
- respect that external quality assurance is fundamentally a process conducted with and amongst peers of comparable esteem;
- alert the Chairperson of UQAIB as soon as practicable should any situation arise that may place the reputation or effective and ethical functioning of UQAIB and its various panels in jeopardy;
- act in a positive, ethical and professional manner at all times, and perform duties to the highest standards of honesty, integrity and diligence;
- avoid direct liaison with the HEP during the Audit or Review process, other than the interview sessions. All other liaison with the HEP is to be via the Panel's Executive Officer. If the HEP and a Panel Member have contact during the review process this must be disclosed to the Executive Officer for appropriate consideration;

- maintain positive and constructive relationships with other Panel Members, the KHDA staff and the HEP throughout the process;
- recognise that individual Panel Members do not have a power of veto over the Panel's final report to UQAIB (the Panel Chairperson will decide when the final report is ready to be submitted to UQAIB, and will have exhausted the full audit process before making this decision);
- treat as confidential, within the requirements of the UQAIB processes, all information and deliberations that would not ordinarily be in the public domain, and not publicly disclose any deliberations, discussions or materials of the Panel's process;
- not speak with the media or publicly about the audit.

3.5 WHAT IS THE CAA?

The Commission for Academic Accreditation (see www.caa.ae) is established within the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. Institutions in the UAE which are not located within the Free Zones are required to be licensed by the CAA. They are also required to have their programs accredited by the CAA.

4 QA PROTOCOLS

4.1 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

UQAIB is committed to implementing an independent and impartial quality assurance system. One of the main ways of achieving this is by avoiding any potential conflicts of interest between UQAIB and the Applicant HEPs;

A person may have a personal conflict of interest if, for example, there is:

- An immediate family member or very close friend on the governing body or staff of the HEP or as a student of the HEP;
- Animosity with a person on the governing body or staff of the HEP;
- Financial interest in the HEP, or financial interest in association with a Director or Senior staff of the HEP;
- Bias for or against the Applicant due to some previous event (including the panel member being a graduate or staff member of that HEP).

A person may have a professional conflict of interest if, for example, they:

- are currently, or have been within the past three years, an applicant or prospect for a position with the HEP;
- currently provide, or have provided within the past five years, professional services to the HEP which may impact on the audit/review (such as being an external examiner or accreditor; participating in internal review processes, providing consulting services etc.);
- belong to, or have an interest in, an organisation currently involved in an explicit and important competitive process against the HEP (this is not intended to include normal competitiveness within the sector).

4.1.1 UQAIB MEMBERS

Any member of UQAIB who may have a conflict of interest in respect of an Applicant must declare this potential conflict to the UQAIB Chairperson and may be required to reclude themselves from any UQAIB involvement in that particular Application.

4.1.2 UQAIB PANELS

UQAIB Panel Members may not participate on a Panel if they may have a conflict of interest with the Auditee/Review Applicant institution. Panel Members are asked to declare potential conflicts of interest in the Declaration Form (see Appendix B), which must be completed and returned to UQAIB Quality Manager before the Panel commences its duties. Panel Members will also provide a brief bio to the UQAIB Quality Manager, who will circulate it in confidence to the Auditee/Review Applicant prior to the start of the audit, inviting the Auditee/Review Applicant to advise whether they believe the proposed Panel Member has a conflict of interest, along with the grounds for this belief. The final decision to include or not include a proposed Panel Member rests with the UQAIB Chairperson.

4.2 CONFIDENTIALITY

UQAIB (and its various panels) understand that some of the information necessary to its deliberations will involve information that may be legally, commercially or personally sensitive. UQAIB will ensure that such information is treated in the strictest confidence. In situations whether the Auditee has particular concerns about specific information, it should liaise with the UQAIB Quality Manager to discuss ways in which

the UQAIB can fulfill its responsibilities whilst showing appropriate consideration to the concerns of the Auditee.

4.3 NON-COOPERATION

A hallmark of higher education is the positive and collegial approach taken by both HEPs and external quality agencies to the shared responsibility of assuring the quality of education and research. Sometimes this approach can be jeopardised by a lack of cooperation with the quality assurance process. Non-cooperation towards UQAIB by the HEP may take a number of forms, including, and not limited to, the following:

- deceptive or misleading provision of information;
- plagiarism;
- withholding or untimely provision of relevant information or people.

UQAIB will treat cases of non-cooperation very seriously and may decide to not approve a HEP Branch or Program solely on the basis of that non-cooperation.

4.4 LIAISON WITH OTHER EQAAS

UQAIB reserves the right to liaise with other external quality assurance agencies as is necessary in order to fulfill its responsibilities. Such liaison may include sharing of information about applicant HEPs and their programs.

5 QA PROCESS TIMELINE

Applications for Educational Services Permit and Program Validations will be considered twice per year. An approximate timeline for each round of applications is provided in Table 1. Precise dates will be posted on the KHDA website shortly before each round. In summary:

- First round of applications are due on February 1st for permit decision by June;
- Second round of applications are due on September 1st for permit decision by January.

It is expected that, wherever possible, institutional and program processes would occur concurrently. The same timelines apply for all of KHDA's processes, namely:

- initial HEP Branch permit;
- HEP Branch permit renewal;
- initial program validation;
- program validation renewal.

Table 1. Approximate Timeline for Issuance/ Renewal of permits and Program Validation Applications

Task	First Round	Second Round
Application submitted to the UQAIB Secretariat	February 1 st	September 1st
Academic licensing decision confirmed (subject to any Review being resolved)	June, weeks 1-2	January, weeks 1-2



PART B

INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

6 EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PERMIT

The diagram overleaf provides a basic summary of the permit process. The grey boxes show the normal route for established HEP Branches when seeking a permit through UQAIB approval. The grey boxes show the fastest route to approval; the maroon boxes show a number of variations on that normal route. Note that this diagram is provided for general understanding only. It is essential to read this Manual carefully for more detail. For comment on HEPs existing in the Free Zones prior to the establishment of UQAIB, see section 1.2.

6.1 WHAT IS AN EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PERMIT?

All HEPs wishing to operate within the Free Zones are required to obtain a Permit from KHDA. Permits are issued by the Regulation & Compliance Commission of the KHDA and are for a period of 12 months. A Permit constitutes permission to operate as a HEP in the Free Zone, subject to terms and conditions specified in the Permit. A HEP is deemed to be 'operating' if it formally occupies space in the Free Zone for the purpose of undertaking activities related to the provision of educational programs at diploma level or higher and involving face-to-face teaching.

In order for a HEP in a Dubai Free Zone to obtain a Permit from the KHDA:

- a HEP Branch must be Approved by UQAIB; or
- have a license from the CAA.

The Permit will specify the programs that the HEP Branch is authorized to provide. These programs are registered as per the processes specified in Part C of this Manual.

Note that the KHDA may decide to impose other conditions for Permission from time to time.

6.2 BENEFITS OF AN EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PERMIT

Obtaining a Permit is mandatory. It offers the HEP Branch with the following benefits:

- the right to operate as a provider of higher education within any of Dubai's Free Zones;

- the right to apply for Program Registration (see Part C of this manual);
- the right to promote the HEP as having been successfully reviewed by an independent expert panel and found to provide a learning environment equivalent to the HEP Home (but note that this promotion should NOT specify that particular programs are equivalent to the HEP Home programs unless those specific programs have been Validated in accordance with Part C of this manual).

6.3 EDUCATIONAL SERVICES TARIFF

Educational Services Tariff is charged per annum. A varying schedule of fees reflects the costs incurred in different types of program registration. For the current schedule of fees please contact the KHDA's Regulation & Compliance Commission.

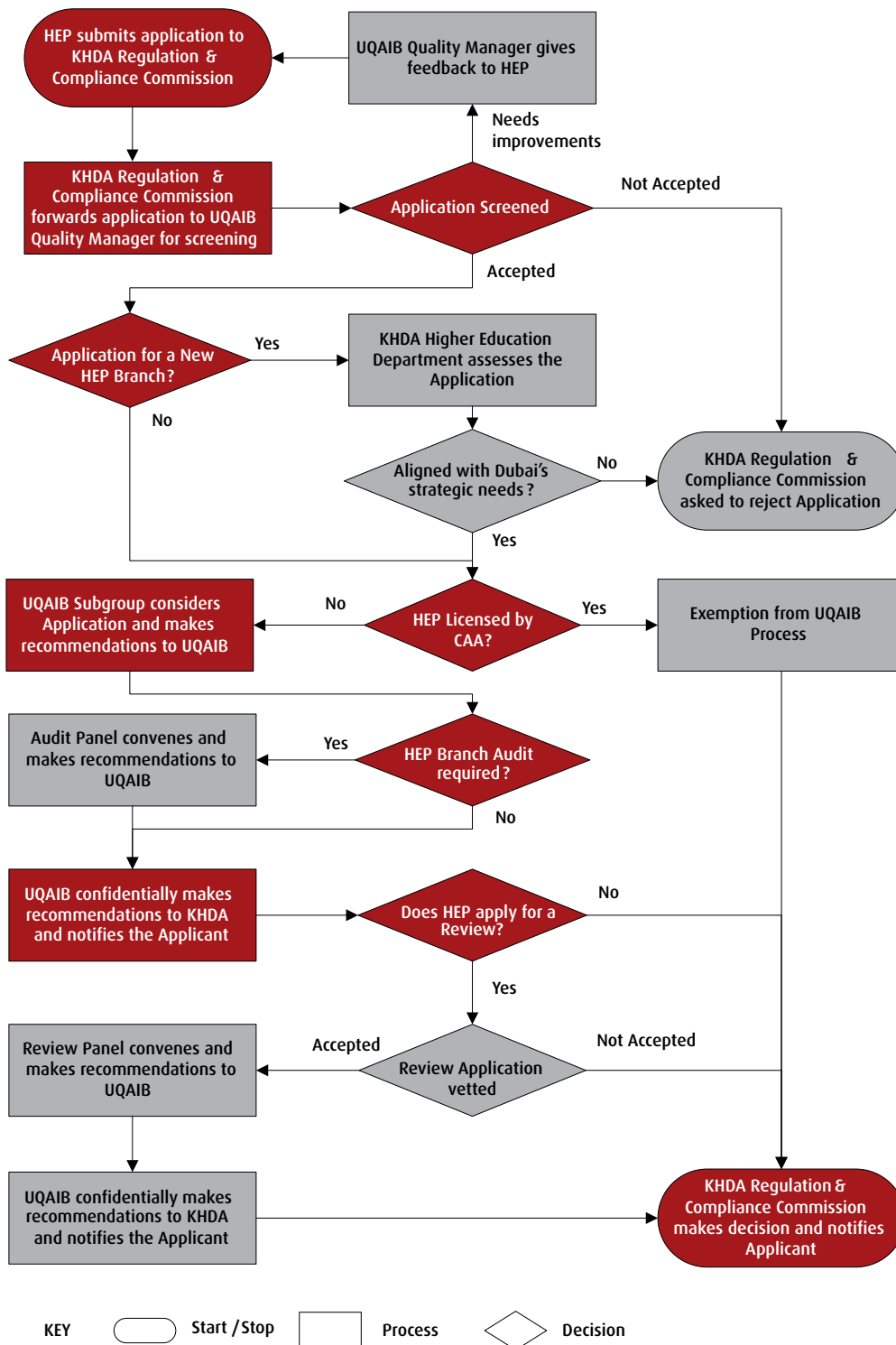


Figure 1. Brief Summary of Academic Licensure Process

7 EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PERMIT BASED ON HEP BRANCH APPROVAL

7.1 WHAT IS HEP BRANCH APPROVAL?

HEP Branch Approval from UQAIB is a process whereby UQAIB obtains satisfaction about two key issues:

1. The HEP Branch has institutional policies, practices and resources in place that are consistent with the HEP Home and create and sustain learning conditions for students that are similarly conducive to student success as the learning conditions at the HEP Home.
2. That the HEP Home is a properly established institution of higher education that is of satisfactory quality (where applicable, this will be determined by whether or not the HEP Home is in good standing with reputable EQAAs, preferably from the HEP Home's place of origin).

7.2 WHAT IS A HEP BRANCH?

For the purposes of the UQAIB system, a HEP Branch has the following characteristics:

- usually it is wholly or partially-owned by the HEP Home, although it may have other investors.
- It is recognised by the HEP Home by way of a formal resolution of the most senior governing body as being a Branch of that HEP Home.
- It uses the same name as the HEP Home and the same brand or a clearly related sub-brand.
- It offers degree programs awarded by the HEP Home.
- The students are students of the HEP Home; the HEP Home accepts full responsibility for their enrolment and guarantees full recognition of all academic credit earned.

There are several possible permutations of the HEP Branch model. For example, a HEP Branch may be a joint venture between more than one HEP Home. In such cases, the legally binding agreements by which the joint venture is formulated will need to clearly specify the arrangements by which institutional equivalency is determined between the HEP Branch and one or more of the joint venture partners.

If the Applicant is uncertain as to whether it qualifies as a HEP Branch it should contact the UQAIB Quality Manager to discuss the matter.

7.3 WHAT IS A HEP HOME?

It may be that the relationship between the HEP Branch and the HEP Home is organised through a number of legal/commercial entities. Each case will be treated individually. However, for the purposes of the UQAIB system, a HEP Home will generally be considered to have the following characteristics:

- It is an institution of higher education properly recognised in its place of origin by the appropriate system/s of that country/region/state.
- It awards higher education qualifications to its students.

7.4 HEP APPROVAL APPLICATIONS

There are three types of HEP Approval application (see Appendix C):

- Initial;
- Renewal;
- Renewal with UQAIB Exemption. This option applies in those years when an Educational Services Permit is renewed while a UQAIB Approval is still in effect. In such cases, a level of information reporting will still be required, but this will not include the full information required by UQAIB for Approval purposes (note the table in Appendix C).

7.5 APPLICATION AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

The HEP Branch Approval Application Form is available either from KHDA Higher Education Department or the UQAIB website (www.khda.gov.ae/uqaib), or in Appendix C of this Manual. It must be submitted to the UQAIB Secretariat by the due date (see section 4 above) along with all the required items of information, and annually thereafter. The items should be stored on a CD as PDF files, each one named using its respective Item Code. The CD should also include a PDF version of the scanned application form. Two (2) copies of the Application Form and accompanying CD should be submitted to the UQAIB Secretariat. Two (2) hard copies should also be provided.

7.6 APPLICATION SCREENING

The UQAIB Quality Manager will conduct a preliminary screening of the application in order to determine whether:

- to accept the application and forward it to a UQAIB Subgroup for Approval consideration;
- to request that the Applicant make amendments to the Application within a specific time frame; or
- to reject the application, and provide reasons to the Applicant. In the event of a rejection the Applicant may wish to seek an Academic License from the CAA or may resubmit to the UQAIB Secretariat at a later date.

In the process, the Quality Manager will consider a range of issues including, but not limited to, the following:

- whether the application and fees have been received by the due date;
- whether any and all outstanding fees have been fully paid;
- whether all the required information has been provided;
- whether the quality of the presentation (legibility; organisation and clarity of meaning) is adequate to assist the UQAIB in its deliberations.

7.7 KHDA STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

Once the Application has been accepted, it is forwarded to the KHDA Higher Education Department. This department has a responsibility to ensure that the Permit application is consistent with the strategic needs of Dubai, having regard for the Dubai Strategic Plan, the extant provision of higher education and new demographic and economic trends. KHDA reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject an Application on this basis alone.

KHDA also has a responsibility to consider the appropriateness of any investor partners, having regard for their experience with higher education investments and activities.

7.8 UQAIB DELIBERATIONS

Each HEP Branch Approval application will be submitted to a subgroup of UQAIB, which will consider the application and make recommendations back to the full Board. The Approval process is designed to rely primarily on secondary sources of evidence (such as external institutional accreditation and evidence of transnational quality

assurance, as indicated in section 1.1). As such, in most cases the UQAIB subgroups may form their recommendations based solely on the submitted documentation. In cases where there is insufficient information to determine that adequate transnational quality assurance processes are in effect to ensure equivalency, the subgroup may require this information to be augmented with a report from a HEP Branch Audit Panel (see section 8).

UQAIB will meet twice a year to consider the recommendations from the subgroups. UQAIB has the power to seek additional information if it deems this to be necessary. UQAIB may also ask to meet with HEP Branch representatives.

The Chairperson of UQAIB will not be a member of UQAIB's subgroups in order to ensure that he/she remains as independent as possible in the event that a Review is subsequently required.

7.9 UQAIB RESULTS

The following are the possible results from UQAIB:

- HEP Branch Approval for between 1 and 5 years;
- HEP Branch Probation for a period of up to one year (extendable to two years);
- HEP Branch Declined; or
- Refer the Applicant to the CAA.

UQAIB will provide its advice to the KHDA Higher Education Department, which will liaise with the Regulation & Compliance Commission for the purposes of the annual Educational Services Permit. Institutions with UQAIB approval for more than one year will still have to renew their Permit annually.

A copy of the advice will also be sent to the HEP. UQAIB may also provide the Applicant with a brief report containing recommendations pertaining to the reasons why:

- Approval has not been granted; or
- a probationary period has been imposed.

The Applicant has the right to apply for a Review of the UQAIB result (see Part D for details).

7.10 PERMIT DECISIONS & PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Permit related decisions are issued by the Regulation & Compliance Commission. They may involve factors other than the UQAIB advice (such as alignment with the Dubai Strategic Plan – see section 7.6), and as such are not subject to the Review process.

The Regulation & Compliance Commission will normally be the first point of contact for HEP Applicants, and will be the body that sends final decisions about academic services permit issuance to the Applicants. Decisions will also be copied to the UQAIB Secretariat, which will publish them (including the period of any HEP Branch Approval or Probation and any other information deemed appropriate by UQAIB) on the UQAIB Register (see www.khda.gov.ae/uqaib).

8 HEP BRANCH AUDIT

On occasion, a HEP Branch may meet the structural and strategic requirements for approval but is unable to provide satisfactory evidence from an appropriate external quality agency and from its own transnational quality assurance processes that the HEP Branch has institutional policies, practices and resources in place that are consistent with the HEP Home and create and sustain learning conditions for students that are similarly conducive to student success as the learning conditions at the HEP Home. In such cases, UQAIB may decide to conduct a HEP Branch Audit. A HEP Branch Audit involves an external panel collecting, analysing and reporting to UQAIB such information that would be necessary in order for UQAIB to Approve the institution as a HEP Branch. A set of HEP Branch Standards are used to guide this audit. These standards are provided in Appendix D. Upon notification that an audit is to take place, the HEP Branch may be asked by the UQAIB Secretariat to submit a report against some or all of these standards.

8.1 HEP BRANCH AUDIT PANEL MEMBERSHIP

- A HEP Branch Audit Panel shall comprise between two and five members, depending upon the nature of the matter being investigated.
- The Panel will normally be chaired by a member of UQAIB.
- The other members will be appointed by the Chairperson of UQAIB (using the criteria set out in section 3.4).
- All Panel Members will be required to sign a Declarations Form prior to commencing their responsibilities (see Appendix B).
- Secretarial support will be provided through the UQAIB Secretariat.

8.2 HEP BRANCH AUDIT PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

A HEP Branch Audit Panel is tasked with the following responsibilities:

- to write, through the UQAIB Secretariat, to the HEP Branch requesting any information from the HEP Home and HEP Branch that the Panel deems necessary, particularly having regard for the HEP Branch Standards (Appendix D);
- to visit the HEP Branch premises and interview staff, students and other stakeholders as may be necessary;
- under exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to visit the HEP Home or to request personnel from the HEP Home to attend the HEP Branch for discussions;
- to provide a report to UQAIB.

9 EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PERMIT ON PROBATION

A previously KHDA approved HEP Branch that no longer fully satisfies the UQAIB approval criteria (and other KHDA conditions) may be placed on probation for up to one year. The probation notification will set out the specific reasons why the HEP branch does not satisfy the full requirements for Approval. The purpose of probation is to provide the HEP Branch with a specific period of time in which to satisfactorily address those reasons. At the end of that period, the HEP Branch will be reconsidered by UQAIB. If it meets the requirements, it will be Approved; if not, the probationary period may be extended for one further year (the total probationary period may not be longer than two years) or the UQAIB may revoke its Approval, which may lead to its Permit being cancelled by the Regulation & Compliance Commission (see section 11).

During probation, the HEP Branch will hold a Permit and continue to operate. However, UQAIB may rule that the HEP Branch may not enroll new students during the probationary period. This is to minimize the potential impact on students in the event that the HEP Branch is not successful in having its Permit renewed by the end of the probationary period.

Probation, in the context of the KHDA quality assurance system, does not mean or refer to an initial or start-up phase of institutional approval.

10 RECOGNITION OF CAA LICENSURE

KHDA recognises licenses for HEPs that are issued by the CAA. HEPs in the Free Zone will still need to obtain an Educational Services Permit from KHDA, but the process is less involved because it places a level of reliance on the quality assurance processes of the CAA. An application is still required each year, providing details of the CAA license and core information necessary to enable KHDA to strategically manage higher education provision in the Free Zones. The application form is provided in Appendix F. It should be submitted to the KHDA Regulation and Compliance Commission each year by either of the two due dates (see section 4 above), and annually thereafter.

11 EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PERMIT CANCELLATION

KHDA has a moral obligation to protect students and society from poor quality higher education. In the final analysis, this may require the cancellation or non-renewal of an institution's Permit. Such an action would not be taken lightly, and will usually be preceded by a number of other stages, including Probation.

A HEP may not operate in the Free Zones without an Educational Services Permit from KHDA. Therefore, the cancellation or non-renewal of such a Permit must result in the cessation of all higher education activities by the HEP in the Free Zone. KHDA will normally provide a time frame (usually no more than one semester) within which activities must cease.

It is a condition of Educational Services Permission that a HEP Home agrees to accept full responsibility for ensuring that students are not disadvantaged in the event of the HEP Branch losing its Permit (see the HEP Guarantee template in Appendix E). In particular, the HEP Home is expected to provide appropriate opportunities for each student to be able to complete the Programs in the normal time frame. Provisions may include transfer of a student to the HEP Home; transfer of the student's mode of study to distance/online education; or transfer of the student to another licensed HEP at no additional cost to the student.



PART C

PROGRAM QUALITY ASSURANCE

12 PROGRAM REGISTRATION

HEPs have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their programs of study leading to the award of formal higher education qualifications are of high quality. KHDA, through UQAIB, acts on behalf of the public to provide independent assurances that HEPs have appropriate and effective quality assurance processes in place.

This part of the Manual details the process for Program Registration. Each program needs to be registered through a separate application. However, wherever possible these applications will be processed concurrently.

For comment on programs of study existing in the Free Zones prior to the establishment of UQAIB, see section 1.2.

12.1 WHAT IS PROGRAM REGISTRATION?

All programs offered by KHDA approved HEPs that have been issued an educational services permit requires registration. HEP Branches in the Free Zones must be registered each year by KHDA. This Register is posted on the UQAIB public website, to provide the public with confidence that the programs on offer in the Free Zones have been independently reviewed and satisfied UQAIB's quality assurance requirements.

There are two methods by which Registration may be granted:

- The programs may be validated by UQAIB (see section 13 below); or
- The programs may be accredited by the CAA (see section 16 below). Programs that are accredited by the CAA are exempt from the UQAIB Validation process, but must still be registered with KHDA before they are offered in the Free Zones.

A HEP Branch may not advertise or recruit students into a program until it is registered.

12.2 PROGRAM REGISTRATION DATA

Each annual Program Registration application, whether via UQAIB Program Validation or CAA Accreditation, must be accompanied by the completed data requested in Appendix H.

12.3 PROGRAM REGISTRATION FEES

Registration Fees are charged per program. A varying schedule of fees has been set to reflect the additional costs incurred in different types of program registration. For current details about fees please contact the KHDA's Regulation & Compliance

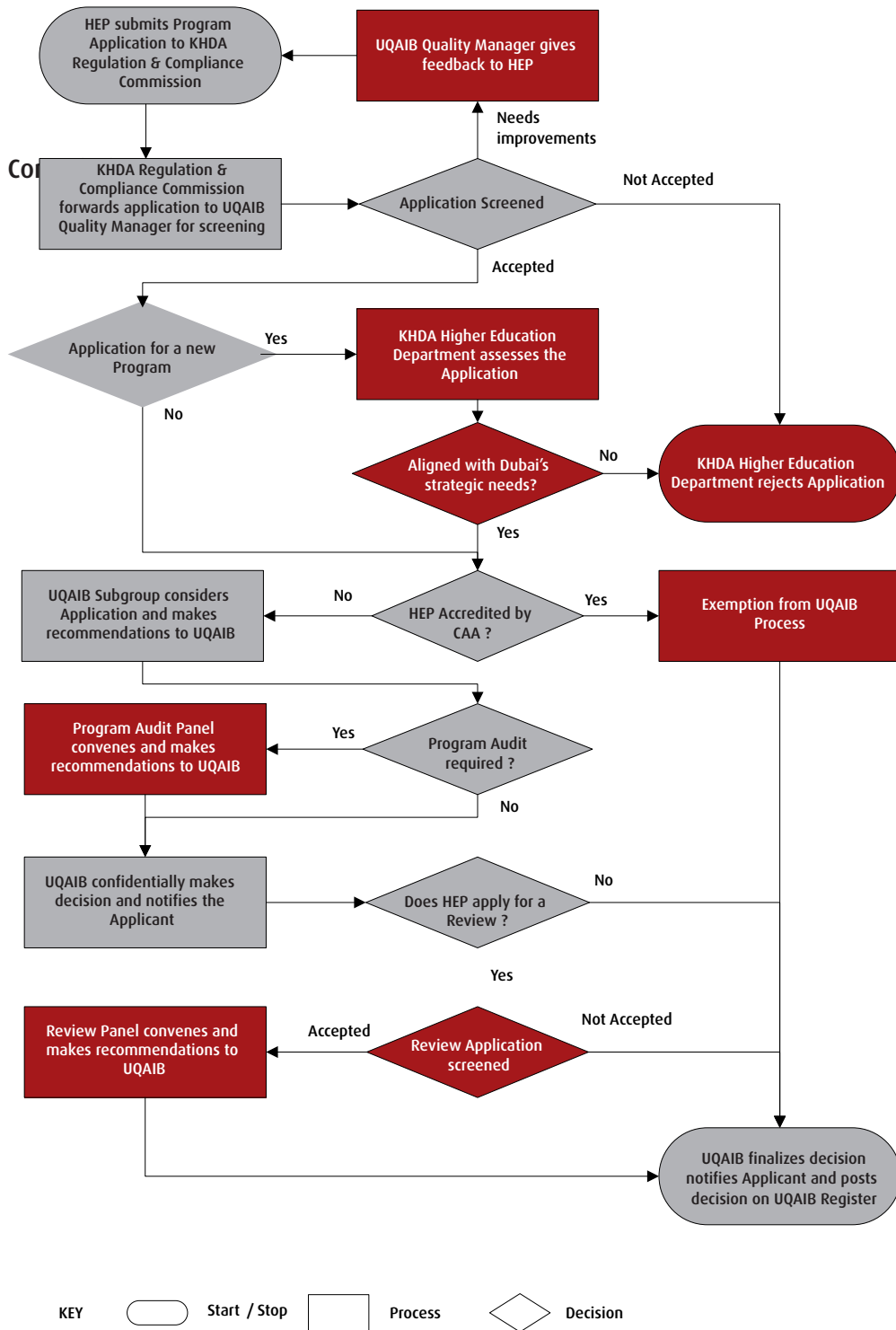


Figure 2. Brief Summary of Program Validation Process (NB usually conducted concomitantly with the HEP Branch Approval process)

13 PROGRAM REGISTRATION BASED ON VALIDATION

Validation is a process of external quality assurance, which provides the public with confidence that the learning outcomes and quality of an academic program as offered in a Free Zone by a HEP Branch are substantially equivalent to the learning outcomes and quality of that academic program as offered in its place-of-origin by the HEP Home, even though some of the details may be different in order to fit in with the context (social, political, economic etc.) of Dubai. It constitutes permission to provide the program in the Free Zone, subject to terms and conditions imposed by KHDA (such as a specific period of time). Usually, a program cannot be validated if the institution providing it is not a permitted HEP Branch.

Specifically a program offered in the Free Zones requires validation if it meets any of the following criteria:

- it is awarded by the HEP Home, when that HEP Home is located outside of the UAE;
- it is provided in full or in part by the HEP Branch in a Free Zone;
- the students are required to be physically present in the Free Zone for all or part of their studies for that program.

13.1 PROGRAM VALIDATION APPLICATION AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

The Program Validation Application Form is available either from KHDA or its website (www.khda.gov.ae/uqaib) or in Appendix G of this Manual. It must be submitted to the UQAIB Secretariat by either of the two due dates (see section 5 – HEPs are advised to consider these dates carefully, as late applications or exceptions to the timetable will not normally be permitted by UQAIB), along with all the required items of information, and annually thereafter. The items should be stored on a CD as PDF files, each one named using its respective Item Code. The CD should also include a PDF version of the scanned application form. Two (2) copies of the Application Form and accompanying CD should be submitted to the UQAIB Secretariat. Two hard copies should also be provided.

Multiple Program Validation Applications may be included on the same CD. However, in such cases two hard copies of each program application and two (2) copies of the CD should be provided.

Note that HEP Approval Applications and Program Validation Applications are usually submitted at the same time and considered concomitantly. Therefore, they may also be stored on the same CD for convenience. However, a Program Validation may be sought independently provided that the HEP has a current Educational Services Permit.

13.2 APPLICATION SCREENING

The UQAIB Quality Manager will conduct a preliminary screening of the application in order to determine whether:

- to accept the application and forward it to a UQAIB Subgroup for validation consideration;
- to request that the Applicant make amendments to the Application within a specific time frame; or
- to reject the application, and provide reasons to the Applicant.

In the process, the Quality Manager will consider a range of issues including, but not limited to, the following:

- whether the application and fees have been received by the due date;
- whether any and all outstanding fees have been fully paid;
- whether all the required information has been provided;
- whether the program meets the criteria for a transnational program;
- whether the quality of the presentation (legibility; organisation and clarity of meaning) is adequate to assist the UQAIB in its deliberations.

13.3 KHDA STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

Once the Application has been accepted it is forwarded to the KHDA Higher Education Department. This office has a responsibility to ensure that the program registration application is consistent with the strategic needs of Dubai, having regard for the Dubai Strategic Plan, the extant provision of higher education and new demographic and economic trends. KHDA reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject an Application on this basis alone.

13.4 UQAIB DELIBERATIONS

Each Program Validation Application will be submitted to a subgroup of UQAIB, which will consider the application and make recommendations back to the full Board. In most cases, this will be the same subgroup that is considering the HEP Branch Approval (see section 7.8 above). The Validation process is designed to rely primarily on secondary sources of evidence (such as external program accreditation and evidence of transnational quality assurance). As such, in most cases the UQAIB subgroups may form their recommendations based solely on the submitted documentation. In cases where there is insufficient information to determine adequate transnational quality assurance processes are in effect to ensure equivalency, the subgroup may seek for this information to be augmented with a report from a Program Audit Panel (see section 14 below).

UQAIB will meet twice a year to consider the recommendations from the subgroups. UQAIB has the power to seek additional information if it deems this to be necessary. UQAIB Members may also ask to meet with HEP Branch representatives.

The Chairperson of UQAIB will not be a member of UQAIB's subgroups in order to ensure that he/she remains as independent as possible in the event that a Review is subsequently required.

13.5 VALIDATION RESULTS

The following are the possible results from UQAIB:

- Program Validation for a period not exceeding 5 years.
- Program Probation for a period of up to one year (extendable to two years – see section 15 below).
- Program Declined.

UQAIB will provide its decisions to the Regulation & Compliance Commission, which shall then communicate with the Applicant. UQAIB will then update the Program Registration information in its online Register.

UQAIB may provide the Applicant with a letter containing recommendations arising from the UQAIB findings. This letter may require the HEP Branch to report back to UQAIB on progress against the recommendations.

Programs that receive UQAIB validation for more than one year would still have to be registered annually. In such cases, a level of information reporting will still be required during the Registration renewal process, but this will not include the full information required by UQAIB for validation purposes (note the table in Appendix G).

The Applicant may choose to apply for a Review of the UQAIB result (see Part D for details).

14 PROGRAM AUDIT

If a HEP Branch is unable to provide satisfactory third party quality assurance of its programs, then UQAIB may undertake a Program Audit (this will not apply to program registration based on CAA accreditation). The purpose of a Program Audit is to collect, analyse and report to UQAIB sufficient information so as to determine whether the intended learning outcomes and quality of an academic program as offered by a HEP Branch are equivalent to the intended learning outcomes and quality of that academic program as offered by the HEP Home, even though some of the details may be different in order to fit in with the context (social, political, economic etc.) of Dubai.

14.1 VALIDATION PANEL MEMBERSHIP

A Validation Panel shall comprise between two and five members, depending upon the nature of the matter being investigated.

The Panel will normally be chaired by a member of UQAIB. The other members will be appointed by the Chairperson of UQAIB on the advice of the Board Members. In making these appointments, the Chairperson will ensure that the appointees are suitably qualified and experienced in the program's field of study; experienced in program review processes; and fully briefed on the principles of the Free Zones and the KHDA model of quality assurance.

All Panel Members will be required to sign a Declaration Form prior to commencing their responsibilities (see Appendix B).

Secretarial support will be provided through the UQAIB Secretariat.

14.2 VALIDATION PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

A Validation Panel is tasked with the following responsibilities:

- to write, through the UQAIB Secretariat, to the HEP Branch requesting any information from the HEP Home and HEP Branch that the Panel deems necessary;
- to visit the HEP Branch premises and interview staff, students and other stakeholders associated with the program as may be necessary;
- where deemed necessary owing to exceptional circumstances, to visit the HEP Home or to request personnel from the HEP Home to attend the HEP Branch for discussions;
- to provide a report to UQAIB that will assist with the Board's Program Validation decision.

15 PROGRAM REGISTRATION PROBATION

A program that does not yet satisfy the UQAIB validation criteria may be placed on Probation for a period of up to 12 months. The Probation notification will set out the specific reasons why the program does not yet satisfy the criteria. The purpose of Probation is to provide the HEP Branch with a specific period of time in which to satisfactorily address those reasons.

UQAIB may rule that the HEP Branch may not enroll new students into the program during the Probationary period. This is to minimize the potential impact on students in the event that the HEP Branch is not successful in having the program Validation renewed by the end of the Probationary period.

16 PROGRAM REGISTRATION BASED ON CAA ACCREDITATION

The programs of HEPs that are licensed by CAA are subject to accreditation by the CAA. A list of these programs and related statistical data is required annually by KHDA through the process of CAA License Recognition (see section 10 and Appendix F).

17 PROGRAM REGISTRATION CANCELLATION

KHDA has a moral obligation to protect students and society from poor quality higher education. In the final analysis, this may require the cancellation or non-renewal of a Program's Registration. Such an action would not be taken lightly, and will usually be preceded by a number of other stages, including Probation.

A Program cannot be provided in the Free Zones without being listed on the UQAIB Register. Therefore, the cancellation or non-renewal of Program Registration will result in the cessation of that program in the Free Zone. KHDA will normally provide a time frame (usually no more than one semester) within which all program activities must cease.

It is a condition of Educational Services Permission that a HEP Home agrees to accept full responsibility for ensuring that students are not academically or financially disadvantaged in the event of the HEP Branch losing a Program Registration (see the HEP Guarantee in Appendix E). In particular, the HEP Home is expected to provide appropriate opportunities for each student to be able to complete the program in the normal time frame. Provisions may include transfer of a student to the HEP Home; transfer of the student's mode of study to distance/online education; or transfer of the student to another licensed HEP at no additional cost to the student.



PART D

REVIEW PROCESS

18 WHAT IS A REVIEW?

A HEP or HEP Branch may apply for a Review of the following UQAIB actions:

- Institutional Approval recommendations to KHDA, including a recommendation to not approve, or to place on probation (note that actual Educational Services Permit decisions by KHDA are not subject to Review);
- Program Validation decisions (including a decision to not validate a program, or to place it on probation).

Specific criteria and process apply to a formal Review, and these are set out in the following sections.

19 REVIEW PANEL

The Review Panel is an ad hoc committee established as needed by the UQAIB to consider applications for a Review. The Review Panel shall contain between two and five people, with the precise number being determined and appointed at the discretion of the UQAIB Chairperson using the criteria in section 3.4.1 and taking into consideration the scale and seriousness of the matter. Each Review Panel shall comprise a Chairperson who will normally be Member of the UQAIB (and who was not also a member of the Subgroup that considered the initial Application).

Each Member of the Review Panel is required to complete a Panel Member Declaration Form (see Appendix B) prior to commencement of the Review process.

20 REVIEW PROCESS

20.1 WHAT MAY BE REVIEWED?

20.1.1 HEP EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PERMIT

A HEP is entitled to apply for a Review of any of the following:

- the period of Institutional Approval granted by UQAIB;
- a recommendation by UQAIB to KHDA to not grant an initial Educational Services Permit;
- a recommendation by UQAIB to KHDA to not renew an Educational Services Permit;

- a recommendation by UQAIB to KHDA to cancel a current Educational Services Permit;
- a recommendation by UQAIB to KHDA to place a HEP on Probation and/or the period of the Probation.

20.1.2 PROGRAM VALIDATION

A HEP is entitled to apply for a Review of any of the following:

- the period of Validation granted to a Program;
- a decision to not grant a Program initial Validation;
- a decision to not renew a Program Validation;
- a decision to cancel an existing Program Validation;
- a decision to place a Program on Probation and/or the period of the Probation.

20.2 GROUNDS FOR A REVIEW

The grounds for a Review are as follows:

- procedural errors in the quality assurance processes upon which the recommendation or decision was based; and/or
- the recommendation or decision was manifestly at odds with the evidence submitted at the time.

20.3 REVIEW PROCESS

An application for a Review of a UQAIB result, using the template in Appendix I, must be lodged with the UQAIB Secretariat within ten (10) working days of the HEP being notified of the result.

The Chairperson of UQAIB will receive the application and consider whether or not there are prima facie grounds for the Review to proceed. If so, a Review Panel will be convened and the HEP notified. In making this decision, the Chairperson may direct the Review Panel to investigate certain issues.

From the date of notification, the HEP has a further twenty (20) working days to lodge its full case and supporting evidence with the UQAIB Secretariat.

If a Review Panel is convened, then the permission/permitted status of the HEP or program that is the subject of the Review shall prevail until the Review has been completed.

The Review Panel will refer the complaint to the UQAIB Subgroup and/or any Panel that may have been involved and request a written response.

The Review will be based on the evidence available at the time of the initial process. If the HEP wishes to include additional evidence as part of its case, it must be evidence that existed at the time of the process, and the HEP must provide reasons for why that evidence was not part of the initial process.

The Review Panel may revisit the material that was involved in the initial Application, and may also request further information from the HEP. It may also request to meet with the parties and ask questions.

The Review Panel will meet in confidence to consider the evidence.

20.4 REVIEW RESULT AND NOTIFICATION

The Review Panel makes recommendations back to the UQAIB, which then makes a final decision on the outcome of the Review. The Review Applicant will be informed of this decision, which is final, by the KHDA's Regulation & Compliance Commission. No further application for review or appeal may be made.



PART E

CONTINUOUS QUALITY ASSURANCE

21 OBLIGATION TO REPORT MATERIAL CHANGES

UQAIB's deliberations rely, in large part, on the honesty, accuracy and comprehensiveness of reporting by the HEPs. Each HEP issued a permit in the Free Zones has an obligation to report changes in its circumstances that may impact on its Permit status or on the validation of its programs. Such changes may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Withdrawal, or change of status (including the introduction of conditions), of the HEP Home's institutional or program accreditation.
- A termination or change of relationship with the HEP Home.
- A successful legal case brought against either the HEP Home or HEP Branch, which impacts negatively upon its reputation as a provider of quality education.
- A change in operating conditions (such as sudden and unmanageable shortage of academic staff) that could seriously disadvantage a cohort of students.
- A significant and material negative change in financial position.
- Withdrawal, or change of status (including the introduction of conditions), of CAA accreditation (if applicable).
- Change of investor or other significant venture partner, or a significant alteration in the nature of the relationship.

The HEP must notify KHDA Higher Education Department of the existence of such changes either in writing or in person within two weeks of the information becoming known to the HEP Branch. KHDA may require a more detailed report of the details of the change within a specific period after the initial notification, or may request UQAIB to conduct an Extraordinary Audit (see section 22 below).

22 EXTRAORDINARY AUDITS

22.1 WHAT IS AN EXTRAORDINARY AUDIT?

KHDA is committed to ensuring that the quality of higher education in Dubai is maintained at all times. Annual HEP Permit and program validations and the obligation on HEP Branches to report changes in their circumstances combine to provide assurance that quality is being maintained. However, there may be circumstances in which a matter is drawn to the attention of KHDA that is so serious that it would be inappropriate to wait until the next Educational Services Permit renewal or Program Registration before taking action. It is envisaged that such occasions would be rare but, should they arise, KHDA may request UQAIB to undertake an Extraordinary Audit at the expense of the Auditee.

Before referring the matter to UQAIB, the KHDA Higher Education Department will determine whether:

- there is sufficient evidence to suggest that there is a serious matter to address that could affect the HEP permit or Program Validation;
- the matter is sufficiently urgent to not await the next annual Educational Services Permit Renewal or Program Validation;
- the case would not be more appropriately addressed either by the HEP's own internal processes or by another more appropriate authority (such as the police).

22.2 EXTRAORDINARY AUDIT PANEL MEMBERSHIP

An Extraordinary Audit Panel shall comprise between two and five members, depending upon the nature of the matter being investigated.

The Panel will be normally chaired by a member of UQAIB. The other members will be appointed by the Chairperson of UQAIB. In making these appointments, the Chairperson will ensure that the appointees are suitably qualified; experienced in external review processes; and fully briefed on the principles of the Free Zones and the KHDA model of quality assurance.

All Panel Members will be required to sign a Declaration Form prior to commencing their responsibilities (see Appendix B).

Secretarial Support will be provided through the KHDA.

22.3 EXTRAORDINARY AUDIT PANEL RESPONSIBILITIES

An Extraordinary Audit Panel is tasked with the following responsibilities when investigating serious complaints referred to it by KHDA:

- to prepare letters to the HEP Branch (to be sent by the UQAIB Chairperson) outlining the nature of the allegations and seeking a responses, along with any other information that may be necessary;
- to visit the HEP Branch premises and interview staff, students and other stakeholders as may be necessary;
- under exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to visit the HEP Home or to request personnel from the HEP Home to attend the HEP Branch for discussions;
- to report to the full UQAIB, which may then make new recommendations to KHDA in respect of HEP Approval and/or take a new decision in respect of Program Validation.

22.4 EXTRAORDINARY AUDIT FEES

The Branch HEP is liable for the full costs of an Extraordinary Audit. These will be determined on a case by case basis and may be payable in advance. The Audit Panel will endeavour to undertake its responsibilities in as expeditious and cost-effective a manner as possible.

23 FINANCIAL PROVISIONING

The HEP Home bears the ultimate responsibility for the students enrolled through the HEP Branch. KHDA strongly urges that the HEP Home ensures adequate financial provision in the event that cancellation of the Educational Services Permit or Program Registration occurs. Such provisioning may occur by way of cash reserves or business continuity insurance policies (KHDA does not prescribe the precise method). Such provisioning needs to be maintained throughout the life of the HEP Branch.

Whilst UQAIB will be mindful of financial provisioning, oversight of this matter rests with the KHDA Regulation & Compliance Commission.

24 DISPUTES WITH VENTURE PARTNERS

It is expected that the agreement between the HEP Home and any venture partners it may have in the HEP Branch (such as investors or academic infrastructure providers) will provide a clear process for dispute resolution. In the event that a dispute arises between the HEP Home and a venture partner which does not resolve itself in a timely fashion and which, in the opinion of KHDA, places the HEP Branch, its students and/or the reputation of KHDA at significant risk, then KHDA reserves the right to intervene. Such intervention may involve summary cancellation of the Permit or the imposition of conditions on the continuance of the Permit, which may include arbitrarily excluding the venture partner from the licensed activity.

Whilst UQAIB will be mindful of dispute resolution provisions, oversight of this matter rests with the KHDA Regulation & Compliance Commission.

APPENDIX A.

UQAIB MEMBERSHIP

The Membership of UQAIB may vary from time to time. For the most current membership, please refer to the UQAIB website at www.khda.gov.ae/uqaib. At the time of publishing this Manual, the membership of UQAIB is as follows:

DR WARREN FOX (CHAIRPERSON)

Executive Director, Higher Education Department, KHDA

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

PROFESSOR ROGER FIELD

Vice-Chancellor, Lincoln University

and Chairperson, New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee
New Zealand

PROFESSOR STEPHEN PARKER

Vice-Chancellor, University of Canberra

Australian Capital Territory, Australia

DR AHMED AL EISA

President, Al Yamamah College

Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

DR RICHARD VOORHEES

President, Voorhees Group
Colorado, United States of America

DR MALA SINGH

Professor of International Higher Education Policy, Centre for Higher Education Research and Information, Open University United Kingdom

MR PETER CHEUNG

Secretary-General, Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions
Hong Kong SAR

PROFESSOR LEE HARVEY

Professor, Copenhagen Business School
Denmark

DR RALPH WOLFF

President and Executive Director, Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and
Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges
United States of America

DR PRASAD KRISHNA

Department of Mechanical Engineering, National Institute of Technology Karnataka,
India.

MR MARTIN CARROLL

Consultant.

APPENDIX B.

UQAIB PANEL MEMBER DECLARATION FORM

This form should be used ONLY once a person has received a specific invitation from UQAIB to join a Panel. Persons who receive such an invitation must photocopy, complete and return this form to the UQAIB office before their participation on the Panel can be confirmed.

NAME OF PANEL MEMBER (PRINT):

Type of Panel: HEP Branch Audit.....
 Program Audit
 Review
 Extraordinary Audit

Name of HEP Branch under consideration:

Name/s of Program/s under consideration (if applicable):

Date of Process (month/yyyy):.....

I HEREBY DECLARE:

- that I have read and will abide by the requirements of the UQAIB Quality Assurance Manual, taking particular note of the responsibilities of Panel Members set out in section 3.4.2 and the professional code of conduct as set out in section 3.4.3;
- that I know of no conflict of interest (as set out in Section 4.1 of the UQAIB Quality Assurance Manual) that would jeopardize my participation on this Panel;
- that I will not accept paid work from the HEP under consideration for a period of 12 months following the completion of the audit (except with written consent from the Chairperson of UQAIB);
- that I have provided accurate and up to date biographical information to the UQAIB as required, and that I consent to this information being edited and used as appropriate by UQAIB for the purposes of the audit and publicity associated with the audit.

Panel Member's signature:.....

Date:.....

Please complete and send by fax to +971 4 3640001

APPENDIX C

HEP BRANCH APPROVAL APPLICATION FORM

Name of Institution:

Date of
Submission.....

Type of Application: Initial Application.....
 Renewal Application
 Renewal Application with UQAIB Exemption*

* To be eligible a HEP Branch must already hold a UQAIB Approval that is still within its valid period.

If a Renewal, please provide HEP Branch Permit number:

Please complete the following checklist and attach the required items on a CD. Each item of information should be stored in PDF files, with each file named in accordance with the Item Code (if an item has more than one file, use A##a, A##b etc.). Two hard copies of this application form and two copies of the CD should be submitted to the UQAIB Secretariat by the due date. Applicants are kindly asked to not submit anything other than the information which is requested. UQAIB reserves the right to request additional information at its discretion from the applicant.

Item Code	Item Description	Applicable to the following type of Application			Check
		Initial	Renewal	Renewal with Exemption	
A01	<p>Report including the following:</p> <p>Name of HEP Branch and a brief description (including history, mission and vision, legal status and staffing profile)</p> <p>Names and contact details of owners of the HEP Branch</p> <p>Name of HEP Home and a brief description (including history, mission and vision, and legal status)</p> <p>Names and contact details of the senior executive officers of the HEP Home</p>	✓	x	x	
A02	Copy of any applicable agreement (e.g. MoU) with partners involved in the HEP Branch.	✓	✓	x	
A03	Copy of any currently applicable HEP Home accreditation status (or equivalent approval)	✓	✓	x	
A04	Copy of most recent independent quality assurance report (e.g. QAA Quality Audit Report) of the HEP Home	✓	✓	x	
A05	Approval from HEP Home to establish the HEP Branch	✓	x	x	

A06	A letter from the HEP Home's relevant external quality assurance agency confirming that they have been formally advised by the HEP Home of the full extent of activities (i.e. the list of programs and approximate student numbers) at the HEP Branch.	✓	✗	✗	
A07	Student Grievance Policy & Process (including explanation of any variances from the policy and processes in use at the Home HEP)	✓	✓	✓	
A08	The full list of programs offered by the HEP Branch for the forthcoming academic year.	✓	✓	✓	
A09	The Guarantee from the HEP home as provided in Appendix E.	✓	✓	✗	
A10	Details of the institutional transnational quality assurance system and processes, and contact details for the persons at the HEP Home and HEP Branch with primary responsibilities for these processes.	✓	✓	✗	

- ✓ The most recent evidence must be submitted. In the case of A09, a new guarantee must be provided – resubmitting previous guarantees will not suffice.
- ✗ Previously submitted evidence will be deemed to remain valid and will not need to be resubmitted. However, if the HEP is aware that the validity of the information has changed in any way, then the updated information will need to be provided.

The signatory below confirms that the information provided in this application form and the accompanying CDs is true and accurate as of the date of submission, and that there are presently no reasons to believe the information will change substantively over the next twelve months.

Name (please print):

Signature:

Position*

* Must be either HEP Branch Principal Officer or a Senior Executive Officer from the HEP Home.

Please complete and send by email (preferred) to uqaib.secretariat@khda.gov.ae or by fax to +971 4 3640001.

APPENDIX D.

HEP BRANCH CRITERIA

In the event that a HEP Branch Audit is required, the Audit Panel will be guided, in part, by the following standards. These are designed to focus attention on issues that particularly impact upon cross-border higher education, but do not constitute a comprehensive set. The Audit Panels may explore any or all of these standards, as well as any other issues they deem pertinent to their task.

1. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

- The HEP Home demonstrates an appropriate level of commitment to the HEP Branch.
- Students of the HEP Branch are students of the HEP Home, with all the incumbent rights and responsibilities. Any differences in these rights and responsibilities necessitated by local contexts are clearly identified and appropriately addressed.
- The HEP Home conducts appropriate, rigorous and timely reviews of the HEP Branch and its programs to ensure equivalency.
- The HEP Branch monitors its activities using accurate, comprehensive and timely information.
- The legal and administrative arrangements between the HEP Home, the HEP Branch and any other parties give enough scope for the HEP Home to maintain effective control over academic quality at the HEP Branch.
- Students are clearly informed of all fees and charges and related financial obligations prior to enrolment.
- The HEP Home has appropriate risk management strategies in place to protect students from risks to the HEP Branch operations (including financial provisioning and dispute resolution procedures).

2. PROGRAM QUALITY

- The promotional materials for programs are timely, comprehensive and unambiguous.
- Clear policies and procedures exist to ensure that course management, teaching and assessment practices at the HEP Branch are consistent with those at the HEP home.
- Variances in curriculum content (e.g. case studies; laboratory exercises internships) between the HEP Home and the HEP Branch are clearly identified and addressed in such a manner that equivalent student learning outcomes may be achieved.
- Assessment of student work is undertaken by appropriately qualified and experienced faculty and is subject to effective moderation.
- Students receive constructive and timely feedback on their work that will assist with their learning.
- Comparative analyses are undertaken of HEP Branch and HEP Home student results and appropriate action is taken in light of the results to maximize equivalency between student learning outcomes at the two locations.
- The HEP Branch encourages feedback from students about all aspects of their learning experience, and acts upon this feedback in a constructive manner.
- Faculty at the HEP Home and HEP Branch engage regularly and constructively in the design, teaching and assessment of the programs.
- Effective systems are in place to ensure the security of academic activities including, for example, invigilation of examinations and security of student results.
- Students are educated about respect for intellectual property, and effective procedures are in place to prevent plagiarism.
- For research programs, the level and quality of supervision is equivalent to that at the HEP Home and students have appropriate access to resources.

3. STUDENTS

- Students satisfy the entrance criteria (including language criteria) of the HEP Home.
- The HEP Branch monitors student progression, retention, attrition and takes appropriate action on the results to improve student learning.
- The HEP Branch monitors graduate destinations and takes appropriate action on the results to improve student learning outcomes.
- The HEP Branch has systems for receiving and responding to students' academic grievances and general complaints that are fair, effective and in accordance with the rights and responsibilities of students at the HEP Home.

4. STAFF

- Teaching staff have at a minimum a qualification related to, and at least one level higher than, the ones in which they are teaching.
- Teaching staff have, and avail themselves of, adequate access to appropriate professional development opportunities.
- The HEP Branch has means for monitoring and improving teaching practices.

5. INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- The HEP Branch pursues appropriate relationships with professional bodies and ensures students are quite clear about the accreditation status or otherwise of its programs in the UAE and in the program's place of origin.
- The HEP Branch pursues appropriate relationships with local industry, as necessary, for the purposes of student placements, career opportunities and other purposes related to the educational programs.

6. QUALITY OF SUPPORT SERVICES

- Students at the HEP Branch have, and avail themselves of, appropriate and adequate access to information resources (hard copy and electronic) and services (e.g. library induction; help with searches) for their programs.
- Students at the HEP Branch have, and avail themselves of, appropriate and adequate access to information technology resources and services (e.g. program-specific software; internet access; helpdesk support) for their programs.
- Students have, and avail themselves of, appropriate, accurate and effective academic advisory and student learning support services.
- The teaching facilities and resources are satisfactory for the programs.
- The student information management systems are appropriate, fair and secure.
- The HEP Branch's website is useful, accurate, up to date and accessible.

APPENDIX E

HEP HOME GUARANTEE

The following template contains the essential elements of a letter of guarantee to be provided to KHDA by the HEP Home. The letter should:

- be on the official letterhead of the HEP Home;
- be authorized with the witnessed signature of the CEO of the HEP Home.

The text of the letter should read approximately as follows. Any exceptions should be fully explained.

We the undersigned, acting for and on behalf of [NAME OF HEP HOME] guarantee:

- That it fully financially underwrites the HEP Branch;
- That all the programs at the HEP Branch are equivalent to the programs at the HEP Home;
- That all students of the HEP Branch are enrolled students of the HEP Home;
- That all students of the HEP Branch will receive their qualification from the HEP Home;
- That the HEP Home bears the same legal and financial liabilities towards the HEP Branch students as towards the HEP Home students;
- That, in the event of an academic program or the entire HEP Branch being closed, the HEP Home will take full responsibility for ensuring the students have reasonable opportunities to complete their academic program without suffering undue disadvantage;
- That no investor, academic infrastructure provider or other venture partner will be permitted to interfere in the academic decision making of the HEP Branch.

APPENDIX F.

APPLICATION FORM FOR RECOGNITION OF CAA LICENSE IN THE FREE ZONES

This is an application for an Educational Services Permit from KHDA based upon CAA licensure.

Name of Institution:

Date of Submission:

Type of Application:.....

Initial Application:

Renewal Application:

CAA License number:

Please complete the following checklist and attach the required items on a CD. Each item of information should be stored in PDF files, with each file named in accordance with the Item Code (if an item has more than one file, use A##a, A##b etc.). Two hard copies of this application form and two copies of the CD should be submitted to the UQAIB Secretariat by the due date. Applicants are kindly asked to not submit anything other than the information which is requested. KHDA reserves the right to request additional information at its discretion from the applicant. Note that all information provided may be shared with the CAA.

Item Code	Item Description	Applicable to the following type of Application		Check
		Initial	Renewal	
A01	Names and contact details of owners of the HEP	✓	x	
A02	A brief description of institution (including mission, vision and staffing profile)	✓	x	
A03	Copy of current CAA License	✓	✓	
A04	Student Grievance Policy & Process	✓	x	
A05	The full list of programs offered by the HEP for the forthcoming academic year, and their current CAA accreditation status.	✓	✓	
A06	Statistics for each program as per the tables in Appendix H.	✓	✓	

- ✓ The most recent evidence must be submitted.
- * Previously submitted evidence will be deemed to remain valid and will not need to be resubmitted. However, if the HEP is aware that the validity of the information has changed in any way, then the updated information will need to be provided.

For each program, data must be provided to the KHDA each year in conjunction with the Program Registration renewal application.

The signatory below confirms that the information provided in this application form and the accompanying CDs are true and accurate as of the date of submission, and that there are presently no reasons to believe they will change substantively over the next twelve months.

Name (please print):

Signature:

Position:

* Must be either HEP Branch principal officer or a Senior Executive Officer from the HEP.
Please complete and send to KHDA Regulation and Compliance Commission.

APPENDIX G.

PROGRAM VALIDATION APPLICATION FORM

Note: A separate Program Validation Application is required for each program or program nest (a program nest is when a degree program includes diploma exit points).

Name of Institution:

Type of Application:.....

Initial Application:

Renewal Application:

If a Renewal, please provide Program Validation number:.....

Date of Submission:

Long name of Program:.....

Short name (abbreviation) of Program.....

Number of semesters of study:.....

If there are other diploma or certificate exit points nested within the program, please provide the long and short names of the Diplomas and/or certificates, along with the

number of semesters of study:

.....

Name of Program Coordinator at HEP Home:.....

Email of Program Coordinator at HEP Home:

Name of Program Coordinator at HEP Branch:

Email of Program Coordinator at HEP Branch:

Mode/s of Study

Internal (face to face):

Fully Distance/Online*

Blended:

* A KHDA representative will contact the HEP Branch to discuss this matter further. It may be that the program is not eligible for Validation.

Please complete the following checklist and attach the required items in a CD. Each item of information should be stored in PDF files, with each file named in accordance with the Item Code (if an item has more than one file, use B##a, B##b etc.). Two hard copies of this application form and two copies of the CD should be submitted to the UQAIB Secretariat by the due date. If the program application is being made concomitantly with a HEP Branch Application, then the Program items may be included on the same CDs as the HEP items. Applicants are kindly asked to not submit anything other than the information which is requested. UQAIB reserves the right to request additional information at its discretion from the applicant.

Item Code	Item Description	Type of Application		Check
		Initial	Renewal	
B01	Program prospectus and a side-by-side comparison of the HEP Branch program with the HEP Home program (incorporating student learning outcomes, major content areas and assessment schedules). Any variances should be accompanied with an explanation. Note: UQAIB does NOT require all the teaching materials.	✓	x	
B02	Description of target market and evidence of student and employer demand. Evidence that the program includes some localized industry element integrated into the curriculum.	✓	x	
B03	Approval from HEP Home to offer the program in Dubai and confirmation from senior executive in HEP Home that the HEP Branch program is equivalent to the HEP Home program (if not already covered in A09)	✓	x	
B04	Current accreditation or other valid form of external approval of the HEP Home program	✓	x	
B05	Report and/or results from the most recent independent review of the HEP Home program (may include professional accreditation) and the HEP Home's response.	✓	x	

B06	A sample of the most recent moderators' and/or external examiners' reports of the HEP Branch program	x	✓	
B07	Confirmation of the language/s to be used in: teaching materials assessment	✓	x	
B08	Current and proposed tuition fees (including any additional fees clearly demarcated)	✓	✓	
B09	A report from the HEP Home Librarian attesting to the adequacy of access to Library materials and support at the HEP Branch.	✓	✓	
B10	Completed statistical tables set out in Appendix H of the UQAIB Quality Assurance Manual.	x	✓	
B11	Any other evidence the HEP chooses to provide which will demonstrate that the HEP Branch program and the HEP Home program are equivalent (e.g. comparative analysis of graduate destinations).	✓	✓	

x Previously submitted evidence will be deemed to remain valid and will not need to be resubmitted. However, if the HEP is aware that the validity of the information has changed in any way, then the updated information will need to be provided.

The signatory below confirms that the information provided in this application form and the accompanying CDs are true and accurate as of the date of submission, and that there are presently no reasons to believe they will change substantively over the next twelve months.

Signature

Position*

* Must be either HEP Branch Principal Officer or a Senior Executive Officer from the HEP Home.

Please complete and send by email (preferred) to uqaib.secretariat@khd.gov.ae or by fax to +971 4 3640001.

APPENDIX H.

PROGRAM STATISTICAL REPORTS

For each program, the following tables must be provided to the KHDA each year in conjunction with the Program Registration renewal application.

Table 1. Enrolments by Program as of Last Completed Academic Year

Type of Enrolment	Ethnicity	Year of Study			
		1	2	3	4
New Enrolments ¹	UAE Nationals				
	Other GCC Nationals				
	Other Arab Nationals				
	Other Nationals				
	Total				
Returning Enrolments ²	UAE Nationals				
	Other GCC Nationals				
	Other Arab Nationals				
	Other Nationals				
	Total				
Withdrawn Enrolments ³	UAE Nationals				
	Other GCC Nationals				
	Other Arab Nationals				
	Other				
	Total				

¹ Students who are enrolled in the program for the first time at this HEP.

² Students who are continuing in the program having completed the previous year of the same program at the same HEP (whether they passed and are taking the subsequent year, or failed and are repeating the year).

³ Students who have withdrawn their enrolment prior to final assessment (and in accordance with the HEP policy for accepting withdrawals).

Table 2. Program Enrolment Projections

Ethnicity	Current Academic Year			Next Academic Year			Next Academic Year +1		
	New	Cont. ¹	Total ²	New	Cont.	Total	New	Cont.	Total
UAE Nationals									
Other GCC Nationals									
Other Arab Nationals									
Other Nationals									
Total									

¹ Students who are continuing in the program having completed the previous year of the same program at the same HEP (whether they passed and are taking the subsequent year, or failed and are repeating the year).

² New plus Continuing students.

Table 3. Benchmarked Program Graduation Statistics

Program Graduates	Graduating Year		
	Last academic year -2	Last academic year -1	Last academic year
Number of HEP Branch graduates			
Number of HEP Branch graduates as a percentage of the cohort's initial enrolments ¹			
Number of HEP Home graduates as a percentage of the cohort's initial enrolments			
Benchmark variance ($\pm\%$) ²			

¹ The number of students graduating at the end of the normal period of study (e.g. 8 semesters for a bachelors degree) as a percentage of the number of students who enrolled at the start of that period of study.

² For example, if 67% of HEP Branch students graduate on time, and 78% of HEP Home students graduate on time, then the variance is -11%.

Table 4. Comparative Analysis of Students’ Academic Results for Each Course/Module in the Program Major

	Grade Distribution by Percentage of Cohort ¹							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	DNC ²	WD ³
HEP Branch (most recent course offering)								
HEP Home (most recent course offering)								
HEP Branch (2 nd most recent course offering)								
HEP Home (2 nd most recent course offering)								
HEP Branch (3 rd most recent course offering)								
HEP Home (3 rd most recent course offering)								

1 The actual grades shown here are indicative only. HEPs should use their own grading system. Intra-grade differentials (e.g. A+, A, A-) should be aggregated for the purposes of this table.

2 Students who did Not Complete the course.

3 Students who withdrew from the course without academic penalty.

The HEP should provide explanations of any significant variances in these comparative analyses.

Table 5 . Academic Staff in the Program by Qualifications

Academic Level ¹	No. Academic Staff by Highest Disciplinary Qualification						No. Academic Staff with formal Higher Education Teaching Qualification ²
	Bachelor		Master		Doctor		
	Part time	Full time	Part time	Full time	Part time	Full time	
Teaching Assistant							
Lecturer							
Snr Lecturer / Asst. Prof.							
Associate Professor							
Professor							
Total							

1 Use these classifications. If the HEP uses a different classification for Academic Levels, then provide a conversation table.

2 A formal higher education qualification, in addition to the normal discipline-based degrees, that focuses specifically on higher education teaching (e.g. Graduate Certificate in Higher Education).

APPENDIX I.

APPLICATION FORM FOR A REVIEW

This form should be used ONLY in the event that a HEP believes it has serious grounds for contesting UQAIB results. The completed form must be lodged with the UQAIB Secretariat within ten (10) working days of receipt of the UQAIB result.

Name of HEP Branch.....

Name/s of Program/s under consideration (if applicable):

Date of Submission:

Type of QA Process: HEP Approval.....
 Program Validation.....
 Extraordinary Audit.....

Grounds under which this application is made (tick one or both):

Procedural errors in the quality assurance process on which the UQAIB result was based.....

The UQAIB result is manifestly at odds with the evidence.....

Brief statement of why a Review is required (if this application is accepted, a fuller statement will be required within 20 working days):

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Name (print) and Signature.....

Position*

* Must be either HEP Branch Principal Officer or a Senior Executive Officer from the HEP Home.

Please complete and send by email (preferred) to uqaib.secretariat@khd.gov.ae or by fax to +971 4 3640001.

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