



UQAIB

University
Quality
Assurance
International
Board



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Quality Assurance Manual

Version 2.5

University Quality Assurance International Board



Quality Assurance Manual

Version 2.5
2015/2016

Whilst every attempt has been made to make this document as accurate and comprehensive as possible, users should check with KHDA whether any updates to this version are available.

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. Where necessary, they are explained in context. In some cases, URLs are provided to facilitate further enquiries about these acronyms and terms.

ACADEMIC AUTHORISATION

The document issued by KHDA which grants approval for the Academic Institution to carry on its business within the Free Zone.

ACADEMIC INSTITUTION

More commonly referred to by UQAIB as a Higher Education Provider (HEP). An independent academic institution or a branch of an academic institution based in or outside the State to which the KHDA grants an Academic Authorisation to provide higher education and scientific research programmes within the Free Zone. Such an institution grants academic qualifications in any programme for which the length of study is not less than one (1) year to students who have obtained high school or equivalent qualifications. This includes universities, colleges, etc.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

See HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME.

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION

The intermediate diploma or bachelor's degree or equivalent, higher diploma, master's degree or doctorate degree granted by the academic institution in any field of study.

CAA

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

CERTIFICATION

Recognition by KHDA of the academic qualification granted by the academic institution to students who successfully meet the requirements of any academic qualification.

COMMERCIAL LICENSE

The license issued by the Authority which authorizes the academic institution to carry on its business within the Free Zone.

CONDITION

When issuing an Academic Approval or Programme Registration, KHDA may impose conditions with which the HEP Branch must comply for the duration of the Academic Approval or Programme Registration.

COURSE

The smallest unit of study that bears credit hours or credit points and into which a student may enroll. A programme is made up of a number of courses. Courses may also be known as units, modules, papers or subjects.

DIAC

Dubai International Academic City (see www.diac.ae). One of the Free Zones specifically established for the purpose of accommodating education providers.

DKV

Dubai Knowledge Village (see www.kv.ae). One of the Free Zones specifically established for the purpose of accommodating education providers.

EQAA

External Quality Assurance Agency. In the context of higher education this may mean any credible agency independent of an 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 programme as offered by an HEP Branch are approximately the same as the intended learning outcomes and quality of that academic programme 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 Academic Authorisation or the Registration of its programmes. An Extraordinary Audit Panel reports its findings to UQAIB, which may then make recommendations to KHDA about the HEP to facilitate decisions about its Academic Authorisation, or make decisions about Programme Registration.

FREE ZONE

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

HEP

Higher Education Provider (typically a university, college, academy, or institute which provides academic programmes 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 an HEP Home and its HEP Branch.

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

An 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 for the HEP Branch to represent the entire breadth of the HEP Home’s activities. An HEP Branch may, for example, pertain to a particular college, faculty or graduate school.

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 an 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. An HEP Branch Audit Panel reports its findings to UQAIB, which makes the approval recommendation to KHDA.

HEP HOME

An HEP at its registered place of origin.

HEP PROBATION

A status which denotes that UQAIB is not satisfied that the HEP Branch fully satisfies the criteria for Academic Authorisation. Probation is for a specific period of time, at the end of which the HEP Branch will be reconsidered for Academic Authorisation.

HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

A planned series of courses offered by the academic institution that, when successfully completed, qualifies students to obtain an academic qualification. In this manual, a Higher Education Programme is usually referred to as an Academic Programme.

KHDA

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

MODERATION

Moderation is a quality assurance process by which a suitably qualified person (or group), not involved in setting or marking an assessment task, confirms that the assessment is accurately, consistently and fairly conducted.

PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION

Programme accreditation by a professional body establishing that graduates have the competencies required for professional practice.

PROGRAMME

A plan of study that, when successfully completed, leads to the award of a qualification such as a diploma or degree. A programme is made up of a number of courses.

PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

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

PROGRAMME 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 programme as offered in a Free Zone by an HEP Branch are equivalent to the intended learning outcomes and quality of that academic programme 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 Programme Audit Panel reports its findings to UQAIB, which makes the validation decision.

PROGRAMME ENDORSEMENT

A process of external quality assurance, undertaken by UQAIB, which provides assurance to the public that an academic programme offered in the Free Zones is a bona fide degree programme from the HEP Home that meets all the standards and requirements of a degree from that HEP Home, even though it may not be offered at the HEP Home campus. It is a comparable but different process to Programme Accreditation or Programme Validation.

PROGRAMME NEST

A compounding set of programmes in the same field of education, in which the higher level academic qualification incorporates the credit earned from the lower level qualification/s. An example of a programme nest is a diploma which leads into a bachelor degree with advanced standing.

PROGRAMME PROBATION

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

PROGRAMME REGISTRATION

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

PROGRAMME VALIDATION

A process of external quality assurance, undertaken by UQAIB, which provides assurance to the public that an academic programme offered in the Free Zones is equivalent to the same programme offered in its place of origin. It is a comparable but different process to Programme Accreditation or Programme Endorsement.

QA

Quality Assurance.

RECOMMENDATION

When considering applications for Academic Authorisation or Programme Registration, UQAIB may require an HEP or HEP Branch to comply, in a specified time frame, with certain recommendations. Failure to comply with a recommendation may result in UQAIB or KHDA changing the Academic Approval status or Programme Validation status.

REVIEW

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

RPC

Regulation and Permits Commission. The Department of KHDA responsible for issuing Academic Authorisations.

TEACH OUT

In the event of a programme being discontinued, teach out is the situation where the programme continues until current students have completed their studies, but no further students are enrolled on the programme. Programmes can enter teach out mode on the basis of a decision by the HEP, or because of a decision by the KHDA.

UAE

United Arab Emirates.

UQAIB

Universities Quality Assurance International Board. A board established and supported by the authority of KHDA, which (a) provides advice to KHDA on Academic Authorisations and (b) makes decisions for KHDA on Programme Registration.

UQAIB REGISTER

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

UQAIB SECRETARIAT

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

PART A



Quality Assurance Overview

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 OVERVIEW

The Knowledge and Human Development Authority (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 KHDA the quality of such provision must be beyond question and the processes to ensure that quality must be credible and effective, whether undertaken abroad or locally. To that end, KHDA has set up the University Quality Assurance International Board (UQAIB) made up 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 Academic Authorisation from KHDA. KHDA grants these Academic Authorisations based either on approval by UQAIB or on licensure by the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA). KHDA's Academic Authorisations must be renewed annually. Details are provided in Part B of this manual.

All higher education programmes offered in the Dubai Free Zones must be registered with KHDA's Higher Education Department. Registration requires either Programme Validation by UQAIB or Programme 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 first 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 sufficiently clear 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.

An HEP has the right to request a review of any decisions or recommendations made by UQAIB that affect its Academic Authorisation or Programme Registrations. Details of the review process are provided in Part D of this manual.

This manual provides detailed information about KHDA's Academic Authorisation and Programme Registration requirements and processes. For information about CAA Licensing and Accreditation, see www.caa.ae.

The KHDA higher education quality assurance system is designed to meet the unique needs of the Dubai Strategic Plan 2021 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 programmes;
- protects the integrity of foreign degree programmes by taking into account the assessment of those programmes by other external quality agencies;
- recognises and attends to the unique quality assurance factors associated with maintaining the quality of transnational higher education programmes;
- protects students and society from low-quality education provision;
- minimises any potential confusion and administrative burden on HEPs by avoiding duplication of quality assurance processes; and most importantly
- emphasises 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 programmes.

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 programmes 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 programmes, 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 programme accreditation to UAE standards for HEPs outside the Free Zones.

3 DUBAI'S QUALITY ASSURANCE STRUCTURE

3.1 WHAT IS 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 Academic Authorisations and external quality assurance of higher education provided in the Dubai Free Zones.

3.2 WHAT IS THE REGULATION AND PERMITS COMMISSION?

The Regulation and Permits Commission (RPC) is the department within KHDA responsible for issuing Academic Authorisations. In carrying out this function it acts upon the advice of the KHDA Higher Education Department and UQAIB.

3.3 WHAT IS 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 Academic Authorisations and making recommendations to KHDA accordingly; and validating the academic programmes of HEP Branches for the purpose of Programme 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 calibre.

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 Programme Validation functions. These are as follows:

- HEP Branch Audits (see Section 8)
- Programme 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 Programme 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 UQAIB as requested.
- Be available to assist in responding to a subsequent review interview if required.

3.4.3 PANEL MEMBER'S CODE OF CONDUCT

Panel members are ambassadors for 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, 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 higher education programmes 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 HEP;

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).

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.

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 the UQAIB Quality Manager before the panel commences its duties. Panel members will also provide a brief biography 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 where the auditee has particular concerns about specific information, it should liaise with the UQAIB Quality Manager to discuss ways in which 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 with 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 an HEP Branch or academic programme 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 academic programmes.

5 QA PROCESS TIMELINE

Applications for Academic Authorisations and Programme 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:

- The first round of applications are due on February 1st for an Academic Authorisation decision by June.
- The second round of applications are due on September 1st for an Academic Authorisation decision by January.

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

- Initial HEP Branch Academic Authorisation
- HEP Branch Academic Authorisation renewal
- Initial Programme Validation
- Programme Validation renewal.

TABLE 1. APPROXIMATE TIMELINE FOR ISSUANCE/RENEWAL OF ACADEMIC AUTHORISATIONS AND PROGRAMME VALIDATION APPLICATIONS.

Task	First Round	Second Round
Application submitted to the UQAIB Secretariat	February 1st	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. ACADEMIC AUTHORISATION

Figure 1 (page 27) provides a basic summary of the Academic Authorisation process. The grey boxes show the normal route for established HEP Branches when seeking an Academic Authorisation 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 ACADEMIC AUTHORISATION?

All HEPs wishing to operate within the Free Zones are required to obtain an Academic Authorisation from KHDA. Academic Authorisations are issued by the Regulation and Permits Commission (RPC) of KHDA and are for a period of 12 months. An Academic Authorisation constitutes permission to operate as an HEP in the Free Zone, subject to terms and conditions specified in the Academic Authorisation. An 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 academic programmes at diploma level or higher and requiring face-to-face teaching. In order for an HEP in a Dubai Free Zone to obtain an Academic Authorisation from KHDA:

- the HEP Branch must be approved by UQAIB; or
- have a licence from the CAA.

The Academic Authorisation will specify the academic programmes that the HEP Branch is authorised to provide. These programmes are registered as per the processes specified in Part C of this manual.

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

6.2 BENEFITS OF AN ACADEMIC AUTHORISATION

Obtaining an Academic Authorisation is mandatory. It affords the HEP Branch 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 Programme 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. (However, note that this promotion should NOT specify that particular programmes are equivalent to the HEP Home programmes unless those specific programmes have been validated in accordance with Part C of this manual).
- The right to have Academic Qualifications certified (attested) by KHDA.

6.3 ACADEMIC AUTHORISATION TARIFF

The Academic Authorisation tariff is charged per annum. A varying schedule of fees reflects the costs incurred in different types of Programme Registration. For the current schedule of fees please contact RPC at KHDA.

Figure 1. Brief summary of Academic Authorisation process (note that Programme Registration requirements are additional – see Part C of the UQAIB Quality Assurance Manual)

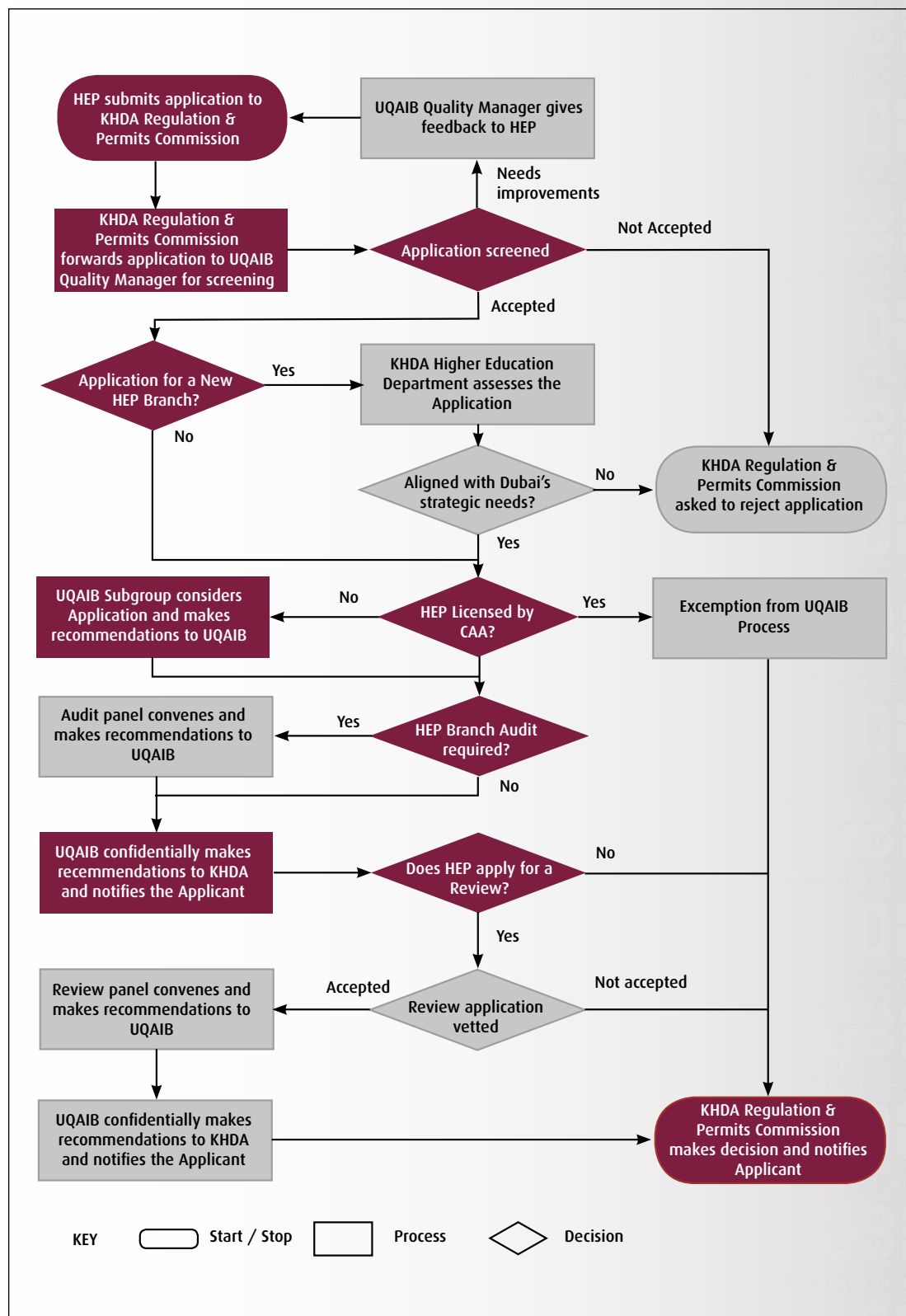


Figure 1. Brief summary of Academic Authorisation process (note that Programme Registration requirements are additional – see Part C of the UQAIB Quality Assurance Manual)

7. ACADEMIC AUTHORISATION 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:

- 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.
- 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 AN 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, an 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.

7.3 WHAT IS AN HEP BRANCH?

For the purposes of the UQAIB system, an HEP Branch should have the following characteristics:

- 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 academic programmes 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, an 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 an HEP Branch, it should contact the UQAIB Quality Manager to discuss the matter.

7.4 HEP APPROVAL APPLICATION

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

- Initial
- Renewal
- Renewal with UQAIB exemption. This applies in those years when an Academic Authorisation is renewed while a UQAIB approval is still in effect. It applies only to those institutions on which UQAIB has conferred multi-year approval and that have no material changes to report (see Section 21). A level of reporting to KHDA is still required, but in most instances will require less information than that which is necessary for initial approval (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), or in Appendix C of this Manual. It must be submitted to the UQAIB Secretariat by the due date (see Section 4), along with all the required items of information, and annually thereafter. The items should be stored on a flash drive as PDF files, each one named using its respective Item Code. The flash drive should also include a PDF version of the scanned application form. Two (2) copies of the application form and accompanying flash drive 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 Licence 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:

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

7.7 KHDA STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

Once the application has been accepted, it is forwarded to KHDA Higher Education Department. This department has a responsibility to ensure that the application is consistent with the strategic needs of Dubai, having regard to 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 an 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 a period not exceeding one year in the case of initial applications
- HEP Branch Approval for between 1 and 5 years in the case of renewal applications:
- A one-year institutional approval may be increased to three years if:
 - The HEP has graduated at least one cohort of students from an academic programme offered at the HEP Branch;
 - The HEP Branch and all of its academic programmes have no current conditions or recommendations of significance (determined by UQAIB) on either its Academic Authorisation or Programme Registration(s);
 - The transnational quality assurance process is well established, involves external review and clear reporting of comparative student data between HEP Home and the HEP Branch.
- A three-year institutional approval may be increased to five years if:
 - UQAIB has high confidence in the performance and outcomes of the HEP Branch over a period of at least five years;
 - The HEP Branch and all of its academic programmes have no current conditions or recommendations of significance (determined by UQAIB) on either its Academic Authorisation or Programme Registration(s);
 - The transnational quality assurance process is well established, involves external review and clear reporting of comparative student data between home HEP and the Dubai branch.
- HEP Branch Probation for a period of up to one year (extendable to two years or, under exceptional circumstances, three years)
- HEP Branch declined
- Applicant referred to the CAA

UQAIB will provide its advice to KHDA Higher Education Department, which will liaise with the RPC for the purposes of the annual Academic Authorisation. Institutions with UQAIB approval for more than one year will still have to renew their Academic Authorisation 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 ACADEMIC AUTHORISATION DECISIONS AND PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Decisions about Academic Authorisations are issued by the Regulation and Permits Commission. They may involve factors in addition to the UQAIB advice (such as alignment with the Dubai Strategic Plan – see section 7.7), and as such are not subject to the review process (see Part D).

The RPC will normally be the first point of contact for HEP applicants, and will be the body that sends final decisions about Academic Authorisation 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).

8. HEP BRANCH AUDIT

On occasion, an 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 an HEP Branch Audit. An HEP Branch Audit involves an external panel collecting, analysing and reporting to UQAIB such information that is necessary for UQAIB to approve the institution as an 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

- An HEP Branch Audit Panel will 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

An HEP Branch Audit Panel is tasked with the following responsibilities. They are required 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);
- visit the HEP Branch premises and interview staff, students and other stakeholders as may be necessary;
- under exceptional circumstances, visit the HEP Home or to request personnel from the HEP Home to attend the HEP Branch for discussions;
- provide a report to UQAIB.

9. ACADEMIC AUTHORISATION ON PROBATION

An HEP Branch that does not fully satisfy 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 Academic Authorisation being cancelled by the RPC (see Section 11).

During probation, the HEP Branch will hold an Academic Authorisation and continue to operate. However, UQAIB may rule that the HEP Branch may not enroll new students during the probationary period. UQAIB may also rule that any or all programmes offered by the HEP Branch be placed on probation. This is to minimise the potential impact on students in the event that the HEP Branch is not successful in having its Academic Authorisation renewed by the end of the probationary period.

10. RECOGNITION OF CAA LICENSURE

KHDA recognises licences for HEPs that are issued by the CAA. HEPs in the Free Zone will still need to obtain an Academic Authorisation 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 licence 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 RPC each year by either of the two due dates (see Section 5 above), and annually thereafter.

11. ACADEMIC AUTHORISATION TERMINATION

An HEP may not provide academic programmes to students without Academic Authorisation.

An HEP may lose its Academic Authorisation if:

- it expires without being renewed;
- it is cancelled by KHDA; or
- the HEP Branch is closed by the HEP.

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 Academic Authorisation. Such an action would not be taken lightly, and will usually be preceded by a number of other stages, including probation.

An HEP may not operate in the Free Zones without an Academic Authorisation from KHDA. Therefore, the cancellation or non-renewal of such an Authorisation 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 Academic Authorisation that an HEP Home agrees to accept full responsibility for ensuring that students are not disadvantaged in the event of the HEP Branch losing its Academic Authorisation (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 programme in the normal time frame, including time reasonably or normally applied by the institution to allow for extenuating circumstances. Provisions may also include transfer of a student to the HEP Home; transfer of the student's mode from internal to distance/online (noting that this may affect the attestation of the completed award by KHDA) or transfer of the student to an equivalent programme in another Dubai-based HEP at no additional cost to the student. Any teach-out arrangement must be approved by KHDA.

PART C



Programme
Quality
Assurance

12. PROGRAMME REGISTRATION

HEPs have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their academic programmes 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 Programme Registration. Each academic programme needs to be registered through a separate application. However, wherever possible these applications will be processed concurrently. Figure 2 (page 40) provides a basic summary of the Programme Registration Process.

For comment on academic programmes existing in the Free Zones prior to the establishment of UQAIB, see Section 1.2.

12.1 WHAT IS PROGRAMME REGISTRATION?

Every academic programme offered by an Academically Authorised HEP in the Free Zones must be registered annually by KHDA. This register is posted on the UQAIB public website, to provide the public with confidence that the academic programmes on offer in the Free Zones have been independently reviewed and satisfied UQAIB's quality assurance requirements.

There are three methods by which registration may be granted:

- An academic programme may be validated by UQAIB (see Section 12.4).
- An academic programme may be endorsed by UQAIB (see Section 12.5).
- An academic programme may be accredited by the CAA (see Section 16). Programmes that are accredited by the CAA are exempt from the UQAIB Validation and Endorsement process, but must still be registered with KHDA before they are offered in the Free Zones.

An HEP Branch may not advertise or recruit students into an academic programme until it is registered.

12.2 PROGRAMME REGISTRATION DATA

Each annual Programme Registration application (via Appendix F or G), whether via UQAIB Programme Validation/Endorsement or CAA Accreditation, must be accompanied by the completed data requested in Appendix H.

12.3 PROGRAMME REGISTRATION FEES

Registration fees are charged per academic programme. A varying schedule of fees has been set to reflect the additional costs incurred in different types of Programme Registration. For current details about fees please contact KHDA's RPC.

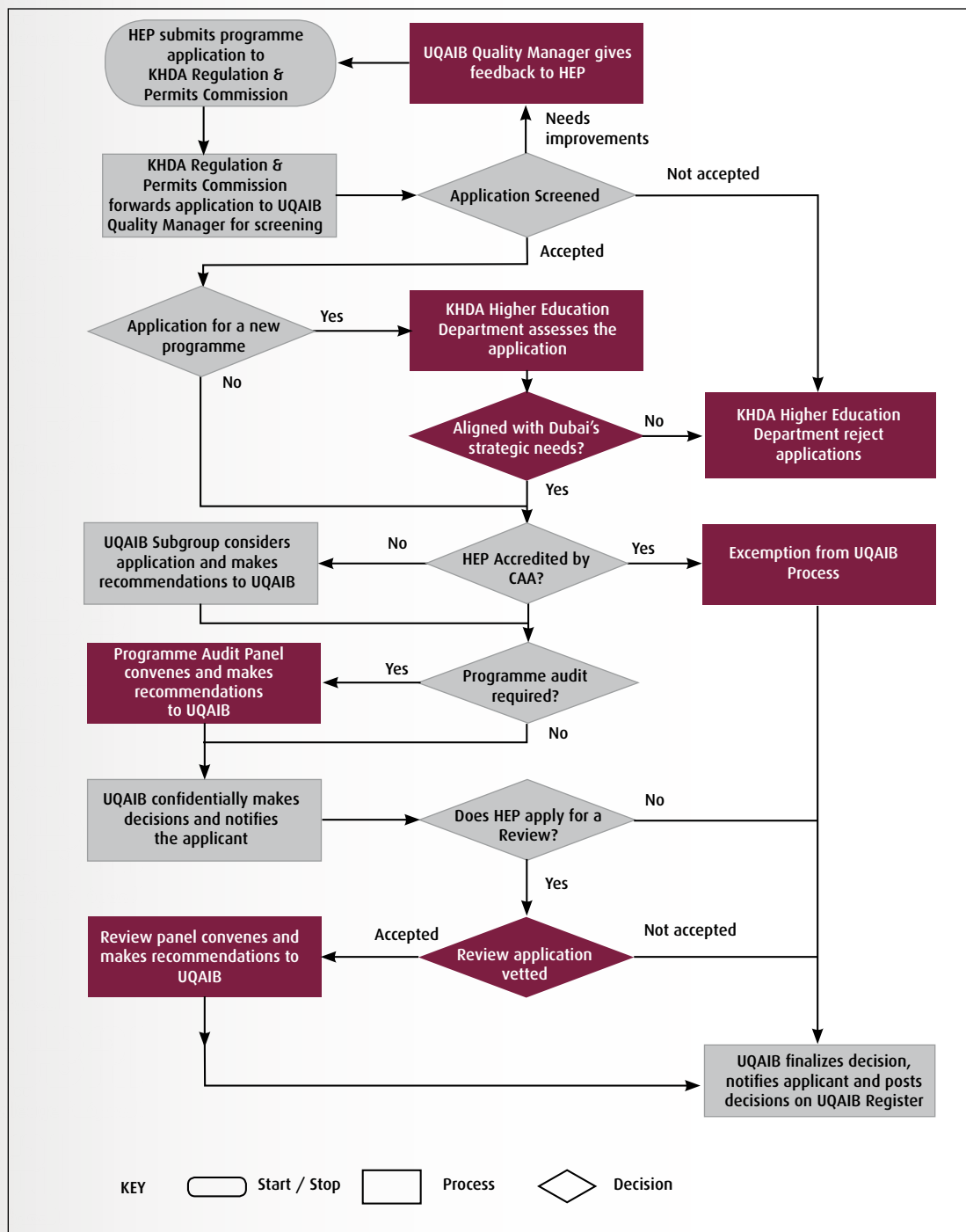


Figure 2. Brief summary of programme registration process (NB usually conducted concomitantly with the HEP Branch Academic Authorisation process)

12.4 PROGRAMME 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 programme as offered in a Free Zone by an HEP Branch are substantially equivalent to the learning outcomes and quality of that academic programme 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 programme in the Free Zone, subject to terms and conditions imposed by KHDA (such as a specific period of time). Usually, a programme cannot be validated if the institution providing it is not a permitted HEP Branch.

Specifically, a programme 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 programme.
- It is also offered at the HEP Home.

12.4.1 VALIDATION FOR CONCURRENT COMMENCEMENT OF NEW PROGRAMMES

Programme Validation normally requires that the academic programme has been run at the HEP Home for a sufficient period of time as to have proven its quality, for example through external reviews, evidence of student learning outcomes and positive graduate destinations. Under exceptional circumstances UQAIB may consider a proposal to register an academic programme that will commence at the HEP Branch and the HEP Home at approximately the same time. In such cases, some of the important items of evidence on which UQAIB bases its confidence in the quality of the programme will not yet be available (see Appendix G1, B05 and B06). UQAIB may, at its sole discretion, waive the requirement for these items of evidence provided that:

- the HEP has established a strong record of performance in Dubai;
- the HEP has demonstrable competence in the broad field of study and level of qualification; and
- there is a compelling rationale for the proposal.

12.4.2 ADAPTATIONS OF VALIDATED PROGRAMMES

A programme that has been validated may seek some adaptations to better suit the Dubai context. Limited adaptation may be permitted in the following circumstances:

- The HEP Branch, has graduated, at least one cohort of students from the programme that the institution seeks to modify.
- The programme has received multi-year Programme Registration from UQAIB (usually the normal length of the programme plus one year).
- There are no unresolved conditions or significant recommendations attached to the Academic Authorisation and Programme Registration.
- The adaptations to the programme have been approved through the existing approval processes of the HEP Home.

A proposal to modify a validated programme should be made using the usual Programme Validation process. The proposal must include a clear case for change that:

- sets out the rationale for the proposed changes;
- takes account of the Dubai context, including provision of evidence of local community, industry and stakeholder consultation as appropriate;
- reassures UQAIB that the adaptation does not constitute major changes that require an application for Programme Endorsement;
- includes copies of minutes or other documentation pertaining to resolutions from the Home HEP academic programme approval processes, at the highest level of institutional decision making.

The proposed adaptation must ensure that:

- the programme objectives of the adapted programme remain substantially equivalent to the programme objectives of the originally validated programme;
- professional accreditation, where applicable, is retained or gained;
- students at the HEP Branch are able to transfer to the programme at the HEP Home without loss of academic standing; and
- students continue to enjoy the same pathways to graduate studies at the HEP as earlier cohorts undertaking the originally validated programme.

Acceptable variations from the original validated programme may include:

- variations in the range of available electives;
- offering some electives online;
- minor variations in core content;
- minor variations in assessment methods.

In exceptional circumstances UQAIB may permit minor adaptations to the name of the programme, provided that all other conditions are met and that a compelling case is presented. Should an alternative name be approved, the HEP Branch programme title should be listed on the HEP Home website and vice versa.

12.5 PROGRAMME REGISTRATION BASED ON ENDORSEMENT

HEPs that have established a strong record of performance in the Free Zones may be eligible to offer academic programmes at the HEP Branch that are not offered at the HEP Home. This process, called Programme Endorsement, constitutes permission to provide the programme in the Free Zone, subject to terms and conditions imposed by KHDA (such as a specific period of time).

The purpose of Programme Endorsement is to enable well-established international institutions to provide degree programmes that have been specifically designed to address educational needs in Dubai, without being constrained by the need to have equivalent programmes at the HEP Home where there may not be an equivalent demand. Programme Endorsement represents a maturation of the Free Zone concept and builds upon the success and robustness of the Programme Validation model of quality assurance. It is intended to reward strong-performing institutions with a higher level of flexibility. However, Programme Endorsement may not be used to establish academic programmes in Dubai that are similar to programmes at the HEP Home but of a lesser academic standard.

- There are three scenarios for which Programme Endorsement applies:
 1. Existing validated programmes which are being phased out at the HEP Home but continuing at the HEP Branch
 2. Existing validated programmes which the HEP wishes to significantly change at the HEP Branch such that they will no longer be equivalent to the academic programme at the HEP Home
 3. Entirely new academic programmes of the HEP that are offered only at the HEP Branch

Note that in all of the above scenarios, the academic programme belongs to the HEP Home and is awarded by the HEP Home. Note also that Programme Endorsement does not apply in a situation where an equivalent programme is offered at the HEP Home.

In order to be eligible to apply for Initial Programme Endorsement, an HEP must normally meet all of the following criteria:

- The HEP Branch must currently hold a multi-year HEP Approval from UQAIB.
- The HEP must have graduated at least one cohort of students from an academic programme offered at the HEP Branch.
- The HEP must have at least one academic programme that currently holds a multi-year Programme Validation from UQAIB.

- The HEP Branch and all of its academic programmes must have no current conditions or recommendations of significance (determined by UQAIB) on either its Academic Authorisation or Programme Registration/s.
- The proposal must include copies of minutes or other documentation pertaining to resolutions from the Home HEP academic programme approval process, at the highest level of institutional decision making.
- The new academic programme being proposed must be within a broad field of education in which the HEP has sufficient experience.
- The new academic programme being proposed must be at a qualification level in which the HEP has sufficient experience.
- The proposal must include the rationale for the proposed changes.
- The proposal must take account of the Dubai context, including provision of evidence of local community, industry and stakeholder consultation as appropriate.

13. PROGRAMME REGISTRATION PROCESS

The Programme Registration application form is available either from KHDA or its website (www.khda.gov.ae) 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 flash drive as PDF files, each one named using its respective Item Code. The flash drive should also include a PDF version of the scanned application form. Two (2) copies of the application form and accompanying flash drive should be submitted to the UQAIB Secretariat. Two hard copies should also be provided.

Multiple Programme Validation applications may be included on the same flash drive. However, in such cases two hard copies of each programme application and two (2) copies of the flash drive should be provided.

Note that HEP Approval applications and Programme Registration applications are usually submitted at the same time and considered concomitantly. Therefore, they may also be stored on the same flash drive for convenience. However, a Programme Registration may be sought independently provided that the HEP has a current Academic Authorisation.

13.1 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 sub-group for validation or endorsement 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:

- Have the application and fees been received by the due date?
- Have any and all outstanding fees been fully paid?
- Has all the required information been provided?
- Does the programme meet the criteria for a transnational programme?
- Is the quality of the presentation (legibility, organisation and clarity of meaning) adequate to assist UQAIB in its deliberations?

13.2 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 Programme Registration application is consistent with the strategic needs of Dubai, having regard to 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.

13.3 UQAIB DELIBERATIONS

Each Programme Registration 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). The deliberative process is designed to rely primarily on secondary sources of evidence (such as external programme 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 (in the case of Validation) or general academic quality (in the case of Programme Endorsement), the subgroup may ask that this information be augmented with a report from an Audit Panel (see Section 14).

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.

13.4 VALIDATION AND ENDORSEMENT RESULTS

The following are the possible results from UQAIB:

- Programme Validation for a period not exceeding one year in the case of initial applications
- Programme Endorsement for a period not exceeding one year in the case of initial applications (a programme that is currently validated is not considered an initial application, even though it may be the first application for Programme Endorsement)
- Programme Validation for a period of between three and five years, provided that this total is not less than three years and not more than five years, in the case of renewal applications
- Programme Endorsement for a period of between three and five years, provided that this total is not less than three years and not more than five years, in the case of renewal applications
- Programme Registration (via either Programme Validation or Programme Endorsement) may be increased to three years if:
 - The HEP has graduated at least one cohort of students from the academic programme offered at the HEP Branch;
 - The academic programme has no current conditions or recommendations of significance (determined by UQAIB);
 - The transnational quality assurance process for the programme is well established, involves external review and clear reporting of comparative student data between HEP Home and the HEP Branch.

A three-year programme approval may be increased to five years if:

- UQAIB has high confidence in the performance and outcomes of the HEP Branch programmes over a period of at least five years.
- The academic programme has no current conditions or recommendations of significance (determined by UQAIB).
- The transnational quality assurance process continues to be well established, involves external review and clear reporting of comparative student data between home HEP and the Dubai branch.
- Programme Probation for a period of up to one year (extendable to two years in exceptional circumstances – see Section 15)
- Programme declined.

UQAIB will provide its decisions to the Regulation and Permits Commission, which shall then communicate with the applicant. UQAIB will then update the Programme Registration information in its online register.

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

Programmes that receive UQAIB Validation or Endorsement for more than one year still have to be registered annually, but the level of information required is less than that required by UQAIB for validation purposes (note the last column “Annual Registration Exempt Validation or Endorsement” in the table in Appendix G).

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

14. PROGRAMME AUDIT

If an HEP Branch is unable to provide satisfactory third party quality assurance of its academic programmes, then UQAIB may undertake a Programme Audit (this will not apply to Programme Registration based on CAA accreditation).

In the case of an application for Programme Validation, the general purpose of a Programme 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 programme as offered by an HEP Branch are equivalent to the intended learning outcomes and quality of that academic programme 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.

In the case of an application for Programme Endorsement, the general purpose of a Programme 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 programme as offered at an HEP Branch are properly accredited by the HEP Home in accordance with its usual standards and processes, that there are adequate resources in place to provide the programme, and that the HEP Home has adequate transnational quality assurance processes to ensure that the quality of the programme is maintained throughout its duration.

14.1 PROGRAMME AUDIT PANEL MEMBERSHIP

An Audit Panel will 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 programme's field of study; experienced in programme 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 PROGRAMME AUDIT PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

An Audit Panel is tasked with the following responsibilities. They are required 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;
- visit the HEP Branch premises and interview staff, students and other stakeholders associated with the academic programme as may be necessary;
- where deemed necessary owing to exceptional circumstances, visit the HEP Home or to request personnel from the HEP Home to attend the HEP Branch for discussions;
- provide a report to UQAIB that will assist with the Board's Programme Validation or Endorsement decision.

15. PROGRAMME REGISTRATION PROBATION

A programme that does not yet satisfy the UQAIB validation criteria may be placed on Probation for a period of up to one year (extendable to two years in exceptional circumstances and at UQAIB's discretion). The Probation notification will set out the specific reasons why the programme 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 programme during the probationary period. This is to minimise the potential impact on students in the event that the HEP Branch is not successful in having the Programme Registration renewed by the end of the probationary period.

16. PROGRAMME REGISTRATION BASED ON CAA ACCREDITATION

The academic programmes of HEPs that are licensed by CAA are subject to accreditation by the CAA and do not require Programme Validation or Endorsement by UQAIB. However, they are still subject to annual Programme Registration by KHDA. A list of an HEP's academic programmes and related statistical data must be submitted through the process of CAA Licence Recognition (see Section 10) and strategically assessed by KHDA (see Section 13.3).

17 PROGRAMME REGISTRATION TERMINATION

An HEP may not provide an academic programme to students without Programme Registration. A Programme Registration may be terminated if:

- it expires without being renewed;
- the HEP closes the programme in Dubai;
- there have been no programme enrolments for a period of 24 months;
- it is cancelled by KHDA.

KHDA has a moral obligation to protect students and society from poor quality higher education. In the final analysis, this may require the termination of a Programme's Registration. Such an action would not be taken lightly, and will usually be preceded by a number of other stages, including Probation. One clear exception to this is where a Programme has not had any enrolments for 24 months. In such cases, Registration will be terminated immediately, given that the circumstances and evidence upon which the Registration approval had been made will be outdated. The HEP may submit a new application for Programme Registration should it so choose.

The termination of a Programme Registration will result in the cessation of that programme in the Free Zone. No new enrolments are permitted, and KHDA will normally provide a time frame within which all programme activities must cease.

It is a condition of an HEP's Academic Authorisation that the 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 Programme 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 programme 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 (noting that this may affect the attestation of the completed award by KHDA), or transfer of the student to another licensed HEP at no additional cost to the student. Any teach-out arrangement must be approved by KHDA.

PART D



Review Process

18 WHAT IS A REVIEW?

An 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 Academic Authorisation decisions by KHDA are not subject to review)
- Programme Validation and Endorsement decisions, including a decision to not validate or not endorse a programme, 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 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 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 RULES

20.1 REVIEW OF HEP ACADEMIC AUTHORISATION

An 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 not to grant an initial Academic Authorisation
- A recommendation by UQAIB to KHDA not to renew an Academic Authorisation
- A recommendation by UQAIB to KHDA to cancel a current Academic Authorisation
- A recommendation by UQAIB to KHDA to place an HEP on Probation and/or the period of the Probation.

20.2 REVIEW OF PROGRAMME VALIDATION AND ENDORSEMENT

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

- The period of Validation or Endorsement granted to a programme
- A decision not to grant a Programme Initial Validation or Endorsement
- A decision not to renew a Programme Validation or Endorsement
- A decision to cancel an existing Programme Validation or Endorsement
- A decision to place a programme on Probation and/or the period of the Probation.

20.3 GROUNDS FOR A REVIEW

Reportable changes at the academic programme level may include, but are not limited to, developments since the last Programme Validation or Endorsement which may impact directly on the quality of the programme. For example, changes of a significant scale in mode of delivery, programme duration, curriculum, intended learning outcomes, admission criteria, availability of appropriate staff, or teaching arrangements with the HEP Home.

20.4 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 programme 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 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.

20.5 REVIEW RESULTS AND NOTIFICATION

The Review Panel makes recommendations back to 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 and Permits 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 an Academic Authorisation in the Free Zones has an obligation to report changes in its circumstances that may impact on its Academic Authorisation status or on the validation of its programmes.

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).

21.1 REPORTABLE INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Reportable changes at the institutional level 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 programme 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.

In the event that there is a change in ownership, control or legal status of the HEP Home, the CEO of the HEP Home shall, within 30 days, submit to KHDA a new HEP Home Guarantee as required in Appendix E.

21.2 REPORTABLE PROGRAMME CHANGES

Reportable changes at the programme level may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Developments since the last Programme Validation or Endorsement, which may impact directly on the quality of the programme, for example, changes of a significant scale in mode of delivery, programme duration, curriculum, intended learning outcomes, admission criteria, or teaching arrangements with the home institution.

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 Academic Authorisations and Programme Validations and Endorsements 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 Academic Authorisation renewal or Programme 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 Academic Authorisation or Programme Validation or Endorsement;
- the matter is sufficiently urgent to not await the next annual Academic Authorisation Renewal or Programme Validation or Endorsement;
- 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 will 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. 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 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 Programme Validation or Endorsement.

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 Academic Authorisation or Programme 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 and Permits 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 Academic Authorisation or the imposition of conditions on the continuance of the Academic Authorisation, which may include arbitrarily excluding the venture partner from the authorised activity.

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

PART F



Appendices

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, Government of Dubai,
United Arab Emirates
- **Dr. Ahmed Al-Eisa**
Director,
Strategic Studies Department, King Abdullah Court,
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- **Professor Roger Field**
Former Vice-Chancellor,
Lincoln University,
New Zealand
- **Professor Lee Harvey**
Editor,
Quality in Higher Education and Higher Education Quarterly,
United Kingdom
- **Dr. Ralph Wolff**
Former 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
- **Professor Martin Carroll**
Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic,
Charles Darwin University, Australia

- **Dr. Eesa Bastaki**

Chief Executive Officer,
Information and Communication Technology Fund,
Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, Government of Dubai,
United Arab Emirates

- **Dr. Freida Brown**

Vice-Chancellor and Secretary to the Board,
United States International University, Kenya

- **Dr. Andrée Sursock**

Senior Adviser,
European University Association,
Belgium

- **Professor Yiu-Kwan Fan**

Executive Director,
Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic
and Vocational Qualifications, Hong Kong

- **Datin Ir. Dr. Siti Hamisah Binti Tapsir**

Deputy Director General
Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia

PAST UQAIB MEMBERS

- Mr. Peter P.T. Cheung, 2008-2011
- Professor Stephen Parker, 2008-2009
- Dr. Mala Singh, 2008-2011
- Dr. Richard Voorhees, 2008-2011

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:

- (a) HEP Branch Audit ☐
- (b) Programme Audit ☐
- (c) Review ☐
- (d) Extraordinary Audit ☐

Name of HEP Branch under consideration:

.....

Name/s of programme/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 jeopardise 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 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:

APPENDIX C

HEP BRANCH APPROVAL APPLICATION FORM

PART A

Name of institution:

Date of submission:

Type of application:

(a) Initial application ☐

(b) Renewal application ☐

(c) Renewal Application with 3 Year Exemption..... ☐

(d) Renewal Application with 5 year Exemption..... ☐

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

If a renewal, please provide Academic Authorisation number:

The signatory below confirms that the information provided in this application form and the accompanying flash drive 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

PART B

Please complete the following checklist and attach the required items on a flash drive. 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.). One hard copy of this application form and one copy of the flash drive should be submitted to the UQAIB Secretariat by the due date. Applicants are requested not to submit anything other than the information which is requested. UQAIB reserves the right to request additional information at its discretion.

Item code	Item description	Applicable to the following type of application		
		Initial	Renewal	Renewal with 3 or 5 Year Exemption
A01	Report including the following: Name of HEP Branch and a brief description (including history, mission and vision, legal status and staffing profile). Names and contact details of owners of the HEP Branch. Name of HEP Home and a brief description (including history, mission and vision, and legal status). Names and contact details of the senior executive officers of the HEP Home.	✓	×	×
A02	Copy of any applicable agreement (e.g. MoU) with partners involved in the HEP Branch.	✓	✓	×
A03	Copy of any currently applicable HEP Home accreditation status (or equivalent approval).	✓	✓	×
A04	Copy of most recent independent quality assurance report (e.g. QAA Quality Audit Report) of the HEP Home.	✓	✓	×
A05	Approval from HEP Home to establish the HEP Branch.	✓	×	×
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 programmes and approximate student numbers) at the HEP Branch.	✓	×	×

Item code	Item description	Applicable to the following type of application		
		Initial	Renewal	Renewal with 3 or 5 Year Exemption
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 programmes 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.	✓	✓	✗
A11	A letter from the Academic Head of the HEP Home to confirm that there are no significant changes at both the institutional or programme levels.	✗	✗	✓

- ✓ 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.

Please submit one copy of the completed form and documents on the CD/flash drive to the UQAIB Secretariat.

APPENDIX D.

HEP BRANCH CRITERIA

In the event that an 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 programmes 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. PROGRAMME QUALITY

- The promotional materials for programmes 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 programmes.
- 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 programmes, 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 a 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 programmes in the UAE and in the programme'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 programmes.

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 programmes.
- Students at the HEP Branch have, and avail themselves of, appropriate and adequate access to information technology resources and services (e.g. programme-specific software, internet access, helpdesk support) for their programmes.
- 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 programmes.
- 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 authorised with the witnessed signature of the CEO of the HEP Home.

The text of the letter should read 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 programmes at the HEP Branch are equivalent to the programmes 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 the HEP Home agrees to report to KHDA any and all material changes as set out in section 21 of the UQAIB Quality Assurance Manual;
- that, in the event of an academic programme 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 programme without suffering undue disadvantage, and that these arrangements will be subject to KHDA approval;
- 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 LICENCE IN THE FREE ZONES

This is an application for an Academic Authorisation from KHDA based upon CAA Licensure.

Name of institution:

Date of submission:

Type of application:

(a) Initial application: ☐

(b) Renewal application: ☐

(c) CAA licence number: ☐

Please complete the following checklist and attach the required items on a flash drive. 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.). One hard copy of this application form and one copy of the flash drive should be submitted to the UQAIB Secretariat by the due date. Applicants are kindly asked not to 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 types of applications	
		Initial	Renewal
A01	Names and contact details of owners of the HEP.	✓	✗
A02	A brief description of the institution (including mission, vision and staffing profile).	✓	✗
A03	A copy of the current CAA licence.	✓	✓
A04	Student Grievance Policy and Process.	✓	✗
A05	The full list of programmes offered by the HEP for the forthcoming academic year and their current CAA accreditation status.	✓	✓

✓ 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 programme, data must be provided to KHDA each year in conjunction with the Programme Registration renewal application.

The signatory below confirms that the information provided in this application form and the accompanying flash drive 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 Permits Commission.

APPENDIX G1

PROGRAMME VALIDATION AND REGISTRATION APPLICATION FORM

Part A

Note: A separate Programme Registration application is required for each academic programme or programme nest (a programme nest is when a degree programme includes diploma exit points).

Name of institution:

Type of application:

(a) Initial Registration by Validation: ☐

(b) Annual Registration by Validation Renewal: ☐

(c) Annual Registration by Validation: 3 Year Exempt..... ☐

(d) Annual Registration by Validation: 5 Year Exempt (Complete G1 Part A & Appendix J only)..... ☐

(e) Annual Registration by Validation Teach Out: ☐

For (b) to (e), please provide Programme Registration number:

Date of application:

Long name of programme:

At HEP Branch:

At HEP Home (any differences between long names at the HEP Branch

and HEP Home will need to be explained):

Short name (abbreviation) of programme

At HEP Branch:

At HEP Home (any differences between short names at the HEP Branch

and HEP Home will need to be explained):

Number of semesters of study:

If there are other degree, diploma or certificate exit awards nested within the Academic Programme, please provide the long and short names of those exit awards, along with the prospectus or course description for each programme:

Name of Programme Coordinator at HEP Home:

Email of Programme Coordinator at HEP Home:

Name of Programme Coordinator at HEP Branch:

Email of Programme Coordinator at HEP Branch:

Mode/s of Delivery:

(a) Internal (face-to-face): ☐

(b) Fully distance/online* ☐

(c) Blended: ☐

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

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

Name:

Signature:

Position*:

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

Part B

Please complete the following checklist and attach the required items in a flash drive. 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.). One hard copy of this application form and one copy of the flash drive should be submitted to the UQAIB Secretariat by the due date. If the Programme Application is being made concomitantly with an HEP Branch Application, then the programme items may be included on the same flash drive as the HEP items. Applicants are kindly asked not to 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			
		(a) Initial Registration by Validation	(b) Annual Registration by Validation Renewal	(c) Annual Registration by Validation: 3 Year Exempt	(e) Annual Registration by Validation Teach Out
B01	Programme prospectus including a clear list of variances between the HEP Branch programme offered in Dubai with the HEP Home programme. These variances, if any, will include differences in intended student learning outcomes, major content differences in the programme, and assessment schedules. These and other variances will be accompanied by an explanation. KHDA does not require submission of all teaching materials. Note: all institutions are also required annually to submit the side-by-side programme comparison template (see B11).	✓	×	×	×
B02	Description of target market and evidence of student and employer demand. Evidence that the programme includes some localised industry element integrated into the curriculum.	✓	×	×	×
B03	Approval from the HEP Home to offer the programme in Dubai and confirmation from the senior executive in the HEP Home that the HEP Branch programme is equivalent to the HEP Home programme (if not already covered in A09).	✓	×	×	×
B04	Current accreditation or other valid form of external approval of the HEP Home programme.	✓	×	×	×
B05	Report and/or results from the most recent independent review of the HEP Home programme (may include professional accreditation) and the HEP Home's response.	✓	×	×	×

Item Code	Item Description	Type of application			
		(a) Initial Registration by Validation	(b) Annual Registration by Validation Renewal	(c) Annual Registration by Validation: 3 Year Exempt	(e) Annual Registration by Validation Teach Out
B06a	A sample of the most recent moderators' and/ or external examiners' reports of the HEP Home programme.	✓	×	×	×
B06b	A sample of the most recent moderators' and/ or external examiners' reports of the HEP Branch programme.	×	✓	✓	✓
B07	Confirmation of the languages to be used in: teaching; materials; and assessment.	✓	×	×	×
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 1, 2, 3 & 4 set out in Appendix H of the UQAIB Quality Assurance Manual.	×	✓	Table H3 & H4 Only	×
B11	Completed statistical tables 5 & 6 set out in Appendix H of the UQAIB Quality Assurance Manual.	✓	✓	×	✓
B12	Any other evidence the HEP chooses to provide which will demonstrate that the HEP Branch programme and the HEP Home programme are equivalent (e.g. comparative analysis of graduate destinations).	✓	✓	×	×

✓ 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.

APPENDIX G2

PROGRAMME ENDORSEMENT AND REGISTRATION APPLICATION FORM

Part A

Note 1: A separate Programme Registration application is required for each academic programme or programme nest (a programme nest is when a degree programme includes diploma exit points).

Note 2: Only HEPs who have been notified in writing by KHDA as being eligible for Programme Endorsement may utilise this application form.

Name of institution:

Type of application

(a) Initial Registration by Endorsement (not applicable to programmes with current Registration): ☐

(b) Annual Registration by Endorsement Renewal ☐

(c) Annual Registration by Endorsement: 3-Year Exemption ☐

(d) Annual Registration by Endorsement: 5-Year Exemption (Complete G2 Part A & Appendix J only) ☐

(e) Annual Registration by Endorsement Teach Out: ☐

If (b) or (c), please provide Programme Registration number:

Date of application:

Long name of programme:

Short name (abbreviation) of programme:

Number of semesters of study:

If there are other degree, diploma or certificate exit awards nested within the Academic Programme, please provide the long and short names of those exit awards, along with the prospectus or course description for each programme:

Name of Programme Coordinator at HEP Home:

Email of Programme Coordinator at HEP Home:

Name of Head of Faculty at HEP Home with responsibility for the programme:

.....

Email of Head of Faculty at HEP Home with responsibility for the programme:

.....

Mode/s of delivery:

(a) Internal (face to face): ☐

(b) Fully distance/online* ☐

(c) Blended: ☐

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

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

Name:

Signature:

Position*:

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

Part B

Please complete the following checklist and attach the required items in a flash drive. 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 flash drive should be submitted to the UQAIB Secretariat by the due date. If the Programme Registration Application is being made concomitantly with an HEP Branch Application, then the programme items may be included on the same flash drive as the HEP items. Applicants are kindly asked not to 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			
		(a) Initial Registration by Endorsement	(b) Annual Registration by Endorsement Renewal	(c) Annual Registration by Endorsement: 3-Year Exemption	(e) Annual Registration by Endorsement Teach-Out
B01	Programme prospectus. KHDA does not require submission of all teaching materials.	✓	×	×	×
B02	Description of target market and evidence of student and employer demand. Evidence that the programme includes some localised industry element integrated into the curriculum.	✓	×	×	×
B03	Approval from the HEP Home to offer the programme in Dubai.	✓	×	×	×
B04	Current accreditation or other valid form of external approval of the academic programme.	✓	×	×	×
B05	[If applicable] Report and/or results from the most recent independent review of the HEP Home programme (may include professional accreditation) and the HEP Home's response.	✓	×	×	×
B06	A sample of the most recent moderators' and/or external examiners' reports of the HEP Branch programme.	×	✓	✓	✓
B07	Confirmation of the languages to be used in: teaching; materials; and assessment.	✓	×	×	×

Item Code	Item Description	Type of Application			
		(a) Initial Registration by Endorsement	(b) Annual Registration by Endorsement Renewal	(c) Annual Registration by Endorsement: 3-Year Exemption	(e) Annual Registration by Endorsement Teach-Out
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 1, 2, 3 & 4 set out in Appendix H of the UQAIB Quality Assurance Manual.	×	✓	Table H3 & H4 Only	✓
B11	Completed statistical tables 5 & 6 set out in Appendix H of the UQAIB Quality Assurance Manual.	✓	✓	×	✓
B12	Any other evidence the HEP chooses to provide in support of this application.	✓	✓	×	×

✓ 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.

APPENDIX H.

PROGRAMME STATISTICAL REPORTS

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

TABLE H1. ENROLMENTS BY PROGRAMME AS OF LAST COMPLETED ACADEMIC YEAR

Name of programme					
Academic Year					
Type of enrolment	Nationality	Year of study			
		1	2	3	4
New enrolments ¹	UAE nationals				
	Other nationals				
	Total				
Returning Enrolments ²	UAE nationals				
	Other nationals				
	Total				
Withdrawn Enrolments ³	UAE nationals				
	Other nationals				
	Total				
TOTAL STUDENTS⁴ (New + returning – withdrawn)					

1. Students who are enrolled in the programme for the first time at this HEP.
2. Students who are continuing in the programme having completed the previous year of the same programme 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).
4. Total number of students should match the total number of students in Table H3.

TABLE H2. PROGRAMME ENROLMENT PROJECTIONS

Name of programme			
Projected Enrolments	Current Year	Next Year	Next Year +1
New			
Returning ¹			
TOTAL ²			

1. Students who are continuing in the programme having completed the previous year of the same programme 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 H3. BENCHMARKED PROGRAMME PROGRESSION STATISTICS¹

Name of programme								
Student status	Number of students							
	Last year		Last year -1		Last year -2		Last year -3	
	Dubai	HEP Home	Dubai	HEP Home	Dubai	HEP Home	Dubai	HEP Home
Total Enrolments ² (New+Continuing- Withdrawn)								
Completed the Year ³ and Continuing								
Completed the year and Graduated								
Did Not Complete ⁴								

1. The purpose is to demonstrate student progression at the HEP Branch with students in the comparable programme at the HEP Home. Total Enrolled should be the total number of students registered on the programme at the start of the academic year under review. Applicants should provide explanations for variances (such as significant differences in proportions of full time and part time enrolments at each location) with supporting evidence.

2. Total enrolled = new + returning students – withdrawn. This should match the total number of students in Table H1.

3. Completed the year = students who have passed assessments and are eligible to continue to the next level.

4. Did not complete = students who have outstanding assessments and cannot continue to the next year of the programme or did not graduate.

TABLE H4. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE FOR A COURSE IN THE PROGRAMME MAJOR OVER THE LAST THREE COHORTS¹

Name of programme									
Code and name of course									
HEP location and offering	Grade distribution by percentage of cohort ^{2, 3}								
	Total Number of Students	A	B	C	D ⁴ Minimum pass	Fail	other Pass ⁵	DNC ⁶	WD ⁷
HEP Branch (most recent cohort)									
HEP Home (most recent cohort)									
HEP Branch (2nd most recent cohort)									
HEP Home (2nd most recent cohort)									
HEP Branch (3rd most recent cohort)									
HEP Home (3rd most recent cohort)									

1. Provide separate completed tables for three courses from the programme's major.
2. Significant variances between the HEP Branch and the HEP Home should be explained with supporting evidence.
3. 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.
4. The HEP must indicate which grade constitutes the minimum pass.
5. To be used for those courses that use results other than grades, e.g. competency based assessment courses with only a pass/fail result.
6. Students who did not complete the course, or who withdrew with academic penalty.
7. Students who withdrew from the course without academic penalty.

TABLE H5A. ACADEMIC STAFF IN THE PROGRAMME BASED AT HEP BRANCH

For each staff member teaching the programme at the HEP Branch, enter in the appropriate cell the person's title (e.g. Mr, Ms, Dr, A/Prof, Prof) and full name. After the name, enter in parenthesis the full time equivalent (FTE) employment load of that person. For example, a person employed at the HEP Branch full time would be 1.0 FTE; whereas a person employed two days out of a five day working week would be 0.4 FTE.

An example of an entry would be: "Dr Abdullah Al-Mood (0.5 FTE)".

The purpose of this table is to provide UQAIB with confidence that the programme is adequately and appropriately staffed at the HEP Branch.

Name of Programme			
Years of teaching service	Highest Qualification		
	Bachelor	Master	Doctor
0 to 3			
>3 to 10			
>10			

TABLE H5B. ACADEMIC STAFF IN THE PROGRAMME VISITING FROM HEP HOME

In some cases, Programmes are taught in whole or in part by staff who travel from the HEP Home to the HEP Branch. In those cases, for each staff member based at the HEP Home who travels to Dubai to teach the programme at the HEP Branch, enter in the appropriate cell the person's title (e.g. Mr, Ms, Dr, A/Prof, Prof.) and full name. After the name, enter in parenthesis the number of days that the person spends teaching that Programme in Dubai per year.

An example of an entry would be: "Prof Betty Frank (12 days per year)".

The purpose of this table is to provide UQAIB with confidence that the programme is adequately and appropriately supported by visiting staff.

Name of Programme			
Years of teaching service	Highest Qualification		
	Bachelor	Master	Doctor
0 to 3			
>3 to 10			
>10			

TABLE H6. PROGRAMME SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON¹

This appendix is intended to provide institutions and UQAIB with a mechanism to compare the structure and content of a programme offered at the HEP Branch to the same programme offered at the HEP Home. Please identify and explain any significant variances such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Programme name
- Courses in either core or elective areas
- Assessment
- Modality (internal, external, blended)
- Credit hours or points.

Designate any elective course(s) that have been developed specifically for the Dubai campus with an asterisk (*). Use as many rows as necessary to describe the components of the programme and delete unused rows.

Institution name					
Length of programme			HEP Branch		
Number of credit hours or points required for qualification					
Number of core credit hours or points required for qualification					
Core courses ²					
HEP Branch			HEP Home		Justification of variance
Course code & title	Credit hours or points	Mode ⁵ (Int/ Ext/ Blend)	Course code & title	Mode ⁵ (Int/ Ext/ Blend)	

Core elective courses ³						
HEP Branch				HEP Home		Explanation of variance (if any)
Course code & title	Credit hours or points	Mode (Int/ Ext/ Blend)	Course code & title	Mode (Int/ Ext/Blend)		
General elective courses ⁴						
HEP Branch			HEP Home			Explanation of variance (if any)
Course code & title	Credit hours or points	Mode (Int/ Ext/ Blend)	Course code & title	Credit hours or points	Mode (Int/ Ext/Blend)	

1. The purpose of this table is to provide UQAIB with precise detail about the comparison of the programme at Dubai and its counterpart offering at the HEP Home. Use as many rows as are necessary to provide the full list of available courses.
2. 'Core' means those courses that are compulsory for the purposes of the qualification's major/specialisation.
3. 'Core Elective' means the list of courses from which students must choose a certain number of credit hours or points for the purposes of the qualification's major/specialisation.
4. 'General Elective' means the list of courses from which students may make any selection up to the total number of required credit hours or points.
5. For each course, list as many modes of delivery as are available to the student in each HEP location.

APPENDIX I.

REVIEW APPLICATION FORM

This form should be used ONLY in the event that an 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 programme/s under consideration (if applicable):

Date of submission:

Type of QA process

HEP Approval: ☐

Programme 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:

Signature:

Position*:

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

APPENDIX J

ANNUAL AFFIDAVIT FOR PROGRAMME RENEWAL BY VALIDATION UNDER 5 YEAR EXEMPTION

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 signature of a senior academic officer of the institution.

Programme Validation Exemption

For programmes on Validation Exemption, the text of the letter should read as follows. Any exceptions should be fully explained.

I, [NAME OF AUTHORISED PERSON], acting for and on behalf of [NAME OF HEP HOME] guarantee that for each of the programmes which are currently under Validation Exemption (listed below):

1. The programme continues to be offered at the HEP Home with active enrolment
2. There have been no significant changes to the programme structure at either the HEP Home or HEP Branch that move these two offerings out of alignment.
3. There have been no adverse changes in the academic accreditation status and/or professional accreditation status of the programme (e.g. accreditation withdrawn, restricted or new conditions imposed).
4. The programme is still offered at least 50% in face-to-face mode at the Dubai campus;
5. There has been no significant reduction in the quantity or quality of programme staffing at the HEP Branch.
6. There are no current unresolved significant complaints from students about the programme lodged with external authorities (such as ombudsmen, commissioners, courts or KHDA)
7. The HEP continues to use a range of internal and external methods to regularly monitor the comparative achievement of students at the HEP Home and HEP Branch, and students at the HEP Branch are continuing to achieve learning outcomes at a standard similar to students at the HEP Home.
8. The HEP intends to continue offering the programme and has no plans to commence teach-out during the period of Exemption.
9. There are no other known reasons that exist or that are expected to arise within the next 12 months that may reasonably impact upon the approval status of the programme by KHDA.

APPENDIX K

ANNUAL AFFIDAVIT FOR PROGRAMME RENEWAL BY ENDORSEMENT UNDER 5 YEAR EXEMPTION

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 signature of a senior academic officer of the institution.

Programme Validation Exemption

For programmes on Endorsement Exemption, the text of the letter should read as follows. Any exceptions should be fully explained.

I, [NAME OF AUTHORISED PERSON], acting for and on behalf of [NAME OF HEP HOME] guarantee that for each of the programmes which are currently under Endorsement Exemption (listed below):

1. There have been no significant changes to the programme structure at the Dubai campus.
2. There have been no adverse changes in the academic accreditation status and/or professional accreditation status of the programme (e.g. accreditation withdrawn, restricted or new conditions imposed).
3. The programme is still offered at least 50% in face-to-face mode at the Dubai campus;
4. There has been no significant reduction in the quantity or quality of programme staffing at the HEP Branch.
5. There are no current unresolved significant complaints from students about the programme lodged with external authorities (such as ombudsmen, commissioners, courts or KHDA)
6. The HEP continues to use a range of internal and external methods to regularly monitor the achievement of students at the HEP Branch.
7. The HEP intends to continue offering the programme and has no plans to commence teach-out during the period of Exemption.
8. There are no other known reasons that exist or that are expected to arise within the next 12 months that may reasonably impact upon the approval status of the programme by KHDA.

NOTES

This image shows a full page of a document template designed for writing. It features a series of evenly spaced, horizontal dashed lines across the entire width of the page. The background is plain white, and there are no margins, headers, or footers visible. This type of template is commonly used for teaching handwriting to children or as a general-purpose note-taking sheet.

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal dotted lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a guide for handwriting practice. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

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This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.