



KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN  
Ministry of Education

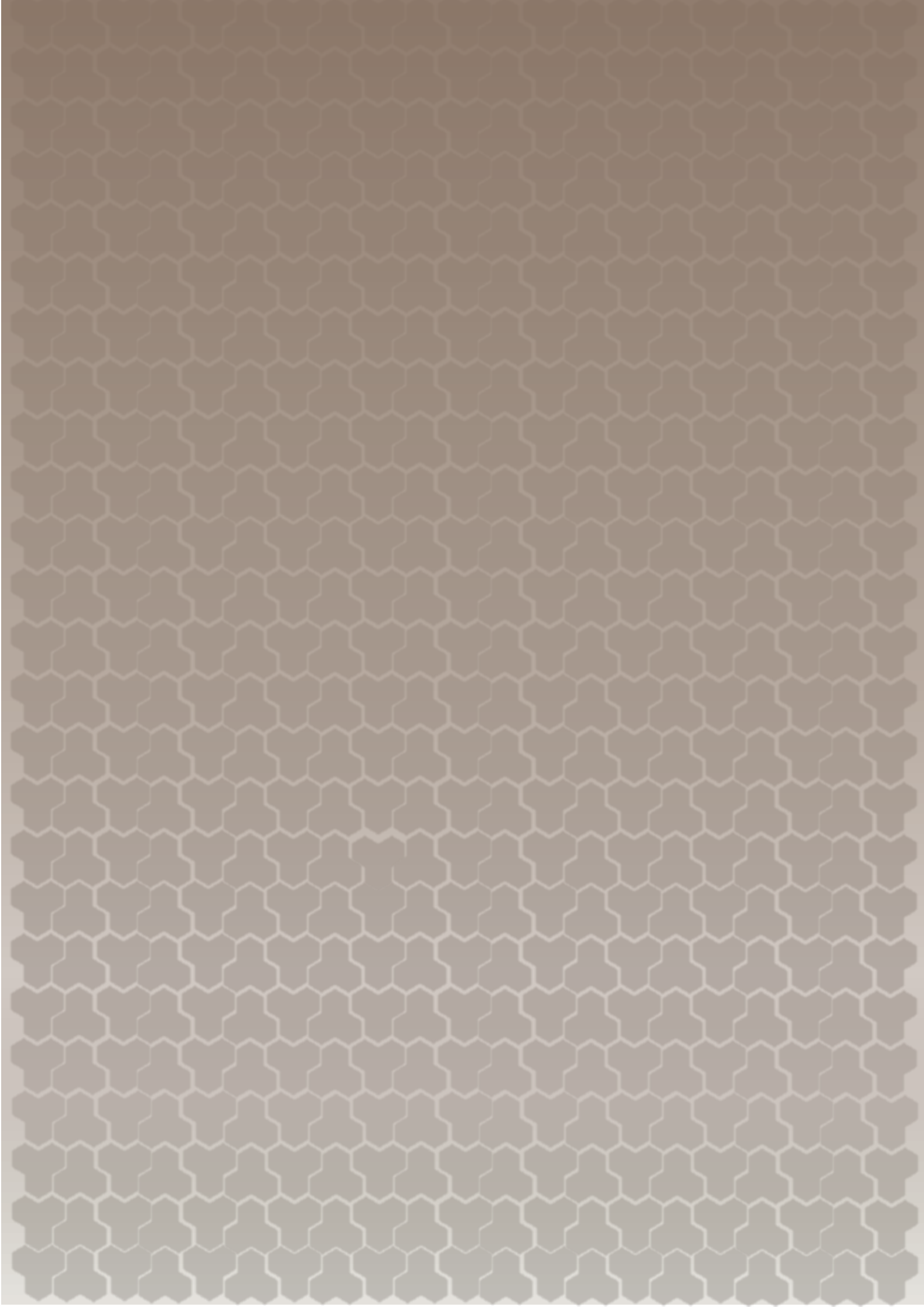


# INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN



Higher Education for Sustainable Development





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PRINCE KHALIFA BIN SALMAN  
AL KHALIFA

THE PRIME MINISTER  
OF THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN



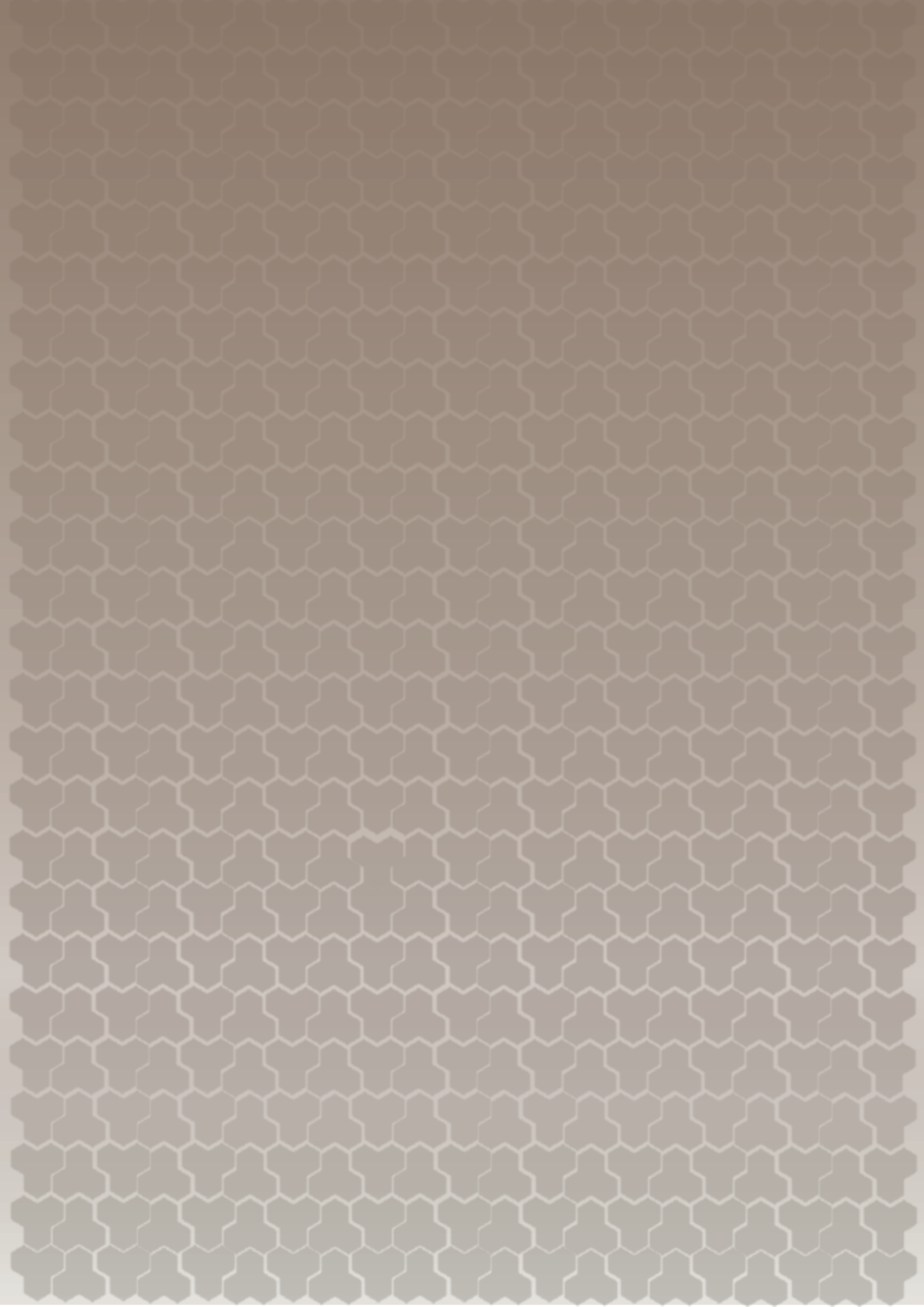
HIS MAJESTY  
KING HAMAD BIN ISA AL KHALIFA

THE KING  
OF THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN



HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS  
PRINCE SALMAN BIN HAMAD  
AL KHALIFA

THE CROWN PRINCE, DEPUTY SUPREME  
COMMANDER AND FIRST DEPUTY PRIME  
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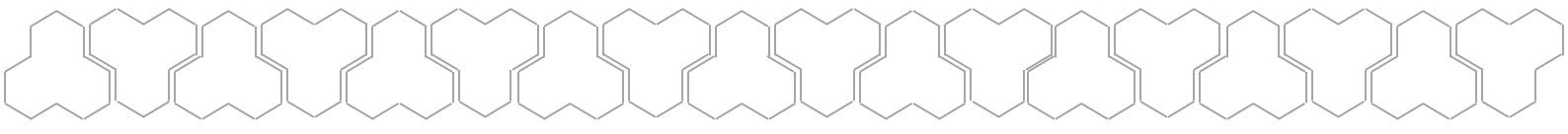
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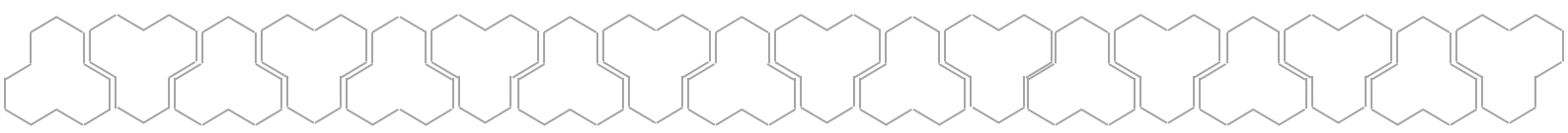
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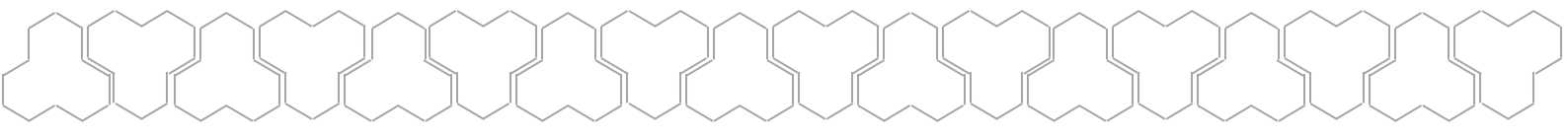
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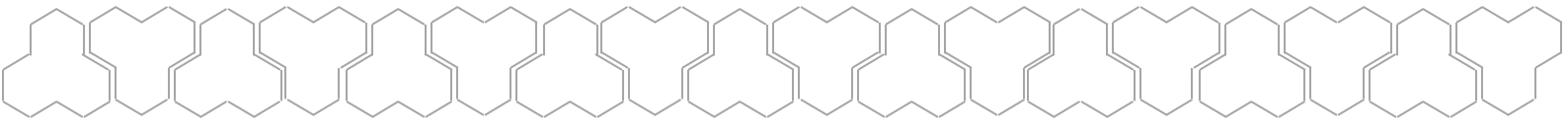
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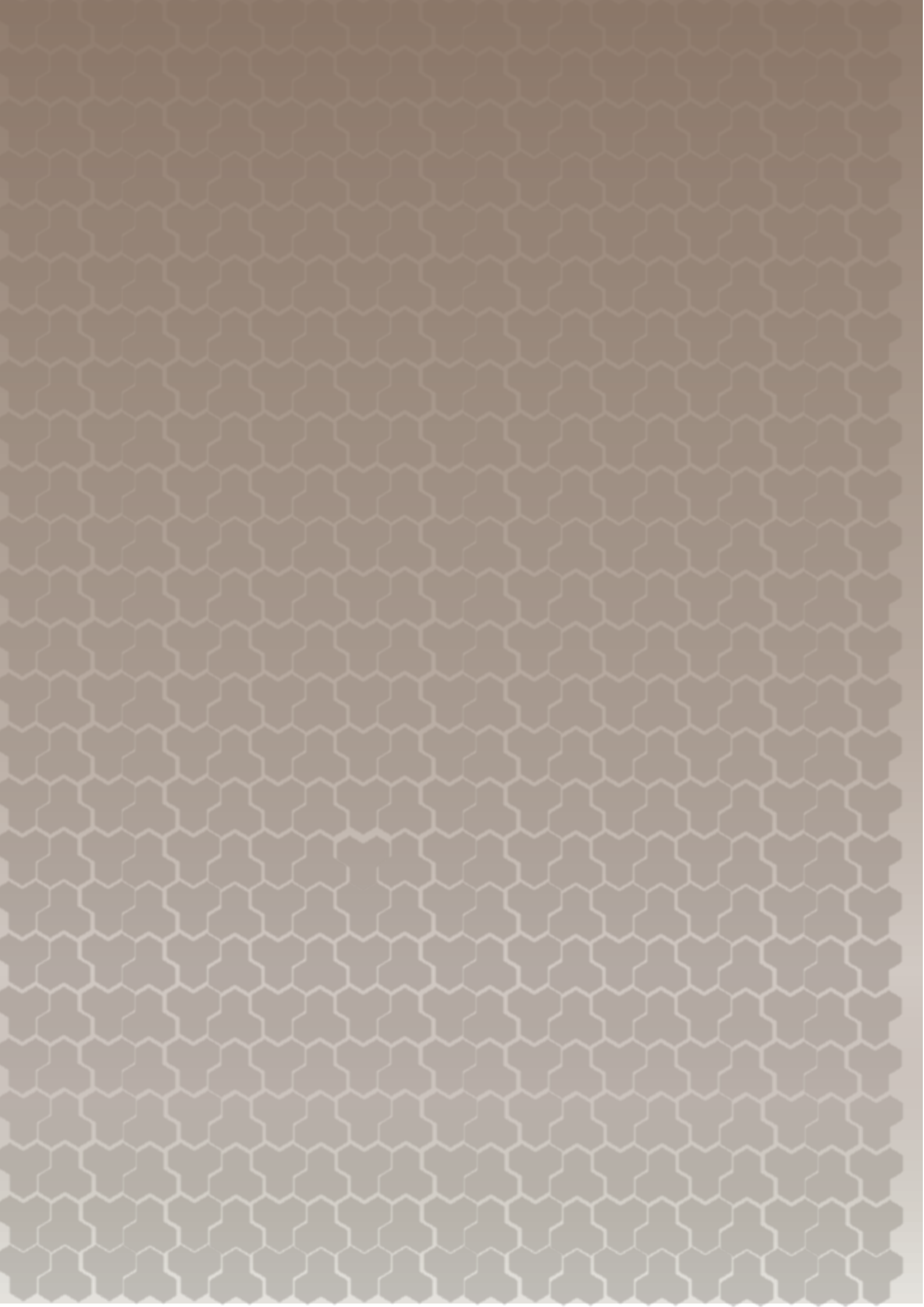
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**THE INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION**  
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# 1. INTRODUCTION TO HEC AND THE ACCREDITATION FRAMEWORK

## 1.1 About HEC

All Higher Education Institutions, both private and public, are controlled by the Higher Education Council (HEC) which was formed according to law No.(3) for the year 2005, in order to regulate, promote and monitor the higher education sector. The Council is chaired by the Minister of Education and it has no fewer than ten members with extensive expertise and high level academic qualifications.

HEC's mandate is three-fold:

1. Improving the performance of universities, monitoring and evaluating provision, and regulating new programs of study.
2. Concerned with various aspects of higher education – administrative, scientific, research and students. These aspects include the preparation of the general policy for higher education and scientific research and creating regulations regarding the admission of students to institutions of higher education.
3. Instrumental in proposing amendments to the laws and regulations of higher education in light of the development of the general policies in the Kingdom and issuing regulations and resolutions organizing the academic, financial and administrative affairs with respect to higher education.

Furthermore, it sets the terms and criteria for the licensing of private higher education institutions. Additional responsibilities include the preparation of annual reports on higher education and scientific research sector performance to be raised to the Cabinet, based on reports raised from the secretariat-general and its teams, annual reports of the higher education institutions and competent governmental authorities, recommending appropriate remedies for such performance and actions for its development. Also Hec is responsible for recommending means for promoting private investment in higher education.

Higher education in the Kingdom of Bahrain aims to:

- Provide the opportunity to study, specialise and explore the fields of knowledge to meet the needs of the community and the requirements of comprehensive development.
- Develop the scientific research to contribute to the advancement and expansion of knowledge and enhance the creativity and innovation in order to serve the requirements of society
- Raise the qualifications of human resources in the various fields of labour market and prepare qualified human resources professionals, specialists and researchers.
- Develop technology and improve it at serving the community.
- Draw attention to Arab, Islamic and world culture, as well as protecting and developing the national heritage.
- Document the cultural, scientific and educational links with universities, higher education institutions and Arab, Islamic and international authorities and scientific institutions.
- Provide consultancy and scientific and technical services to government agencies and private institutions

- Promote religious and national education and strengthen citizens' personality and pride in their religion, national unity, Arab identity and homeland
- Develop skills of success in life and flexibility to keep pace with shifts of knowledge and the world of work
- Develop students' ability to exercise scientific analytical critic holistic thinking and innovative solution to solve problems

HEC was instructed by the Cabinet of the Kingdom of Bahrain in 2013 to introduce a mandatory system of accreditation for the higher education sector that meets international standards.

### **1.1.1 Academic Accreditation Committee (AAC)**

By Higher Education law, this committee is formed of members recommended by HEC and approved by the Prime Minister. The Academic Accreditation Committee reviews all inspection reports. All recommendations of this committee are presented to the HEC for approval.

## **1.2 The purpose of HEC accreditation**

In implementing an accreditation framework, HEC has six main purposes.

- To demonstrate the commitment of HEC Bahrain to providing high quality higher education which is rigorously inspected and continuously monitored so as to establish and maintain public confidence in Bahrain, locally, regionally and internationally
- To provide an ongoing monitoring system which supports the licensing process – accreditation will be mandatory for a license to remain in operation
- To provide assurance of the good standing of an institution to all stakeholders especially students, parents and employers assessed against international norms
- To enable an institution to state publicly that it has satisfied HEC that all relevant aspects of its operation are maintained at a satisfactory level
- To support and advise institutions of higher education in the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of their provision
- To provide independent guidance to students seeking to undertake higher education in an institution operating within the Kingdom

## **1.3 The benefits of HEC accreditation**

### **Mark of quality**

By achieving HEC accreditation, the institution will be able to demonstrate that it has submitted to a rigorous inspection process underpinned by internationally recognized standards. It shows a commitment to providing a quality learning experience which places the student at the heart of higher education in the Kingdom.

### **Listing in the HEC institutional directory**

Accreditation by HEC means that the institution will be listed on the HEC website, providing an additional source of information for external agencies and prospective students about the institution and the courses it offers. Reports on the institution will be available on the HEC website so stakeholders can see the institution's strengths.

### **International recruitment**

HEC accreditation will assist institutions in their international recruitment operations. Being accredited by HEC will expose the institution to a wider international market as the system is based on standards which are accepted and applied globally.

### **Professional and institutional development**

HEC accreditation provides an ongoing monitoring opportunity for institutions. Preparing for inspections and completing annual returns assist with action planning and strategic development of policies and systems which enhance the student experience.

### **Raising standards**

HEC inspections are conducted by highly experienced inspectors with extensive knowledge of higher education and they can provide invaluable advice on quality assurance processes through the inspection process and share best international practice.

### **Providing assurance**

Students and their families are provided with assurance that all areas of the institution's provision meet the standards set out in this handbook and, if there is cause for complaint, that there is a rigorous and comprehensive policy in place to deal with it. The complainant also has recourse to the HEC's own complaints procedures.

## **1.4 General requirements for accreditation**

HEC accreditation is mandatory for all higher education institutions operating in the Kingdom licensed by HEC. The award of accreditation is subject to the institution meeting standards established and periodically reviewed by HEC. The accreditation process involves a rigorous on-site inspection focusing on the quality assurance processes of the institution in a number of distinct areas such as governance, academic management, research, student welfare and support, teaching and learning, and facilities. Details of the standards for each of the inspection areas are included in this document and can also be found on the HEC website.

Not only must an accredited institution meet the specific standards listed for each of the inspection areas at the time of the inspection but it must also demonstrate to the inspection team that it has effective policies and systems in place to ensure that the standards continue to be met throughout the accreditation period.

Once accredited, the institution must submit to a regular monitoring process involving annual data returns, financial analysis, and interim, supplementary and spot check inspections. The institution must also pay all applicable fees and maintain a transparent and constructive relationship with HEC, responding to any requests for information and cooperating with HEC's procedures for investigating student complaints (see section 10 of this handbook). In case

there are any changes in the institution, it will be announced to the Academic Accreditation Commission to make appropriate recommendations.

An essential requirement of HEC accreditation is that all institutions continue to meet their statutory obligations to comply with all relevant laws and regulations including licensing requirements.

### **1.5 The accreditation cycle**

Successful applicants for institutional accreditation are usually awarded accreditation for four years. Once accredited, accredited institutions must apply for re-accreditation before the expiry of the stated accreditation period. All institutions applying for re-accreditation must undergo a full inspection. In considering a report on an accredited institution, the Academic Accreditation Committee may either recommend awarding re-accreditation for four years or a shorter period if appropriate, deferring a recommendation pending the resolution of identified issues, or withdrawing accreditation from the institution should it have failed to maintain the standards required.

Any institution which has been unsuccessful in either gaining or retaining accreditation may appeal against the decision of HEC (see section 9 of this handbook).

## **2. THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Accreditation is based on an inspection of the full range of the institution's provision, and evidence is required that the institution's management maintains acceptable standards and complies with its legal obligations and HEC licensing regulations during the period of accreditation.

Prospective applicants for accreditation must hold a full license to operate awarded by HEC. The application undergoes a first level of scrutiny by HEC staff through the application review stage. Once this is completed, the institution will receive a rigorous inspection which assesses the institution's provision against the standards set out in this handbook. A report of this inspection is then considered by the Academic Accreditation Committee, which can recommend the award, deferral or refusal of accreditation based on the evidence of whether all standards have been met. The recommendations of the Academic Accreditation Committee are considered and a decision on accreditation made by HEC.

### **2.2 Steps involved in the accreditation process**

- 1.** Research and preparation by the institution
- 2.** The institution completes and submits its application for accreditation
- 3.** HEC reviews the application form and supporting documentation
- 4.** HEC arranges an inspection in consultation with the institution
- 5.** The institution submits its self-evaluation report using the defined criteria
- 6.** The inspection is conducted by a specialist inspection team
- 7.** The inspection report is submitted to HEC
- 8.** The report is reviewed and edited by the HEC accreditation team and sent to the institution for a factual accuracy check
- 9.** The inspection report is considered by the Academic Accreditation Committee which makes recommendations on the award of accreditation
- 10.** The decision on accreditation is made by the full Council
- 11.** HEC notifies the institution of the final decision

It can be seen from the above that HEC accreditation is a rigorous process, involving several stages before successful completion and therefore it is likely to be several months between the date of application and the award of accreditation. The time it takes to reach the inspection stage is dependent largely on the quality of the institution's initial application and the response time to queries and requests for further information. If the application form is completed in full and all supporting documentation submitted at the time of application, it may exceptionally be possible to complete the review of the institution's application within four weeks, schedule an accreditation inspection within three months and for accreditation to be awarded, if the institution demonstrates that it meets all the accreditation standards, within six months. However, timescales are influenced by many factors and subject to constraints, some of which are outside HEC's control. HEC will endeavour to provide the

applying institution with provisional dates throughout the accreditation application and inspection processes.

### **2.3 Fees associated with accreditation**

Institutional accreditation fees are subject to the regulation approved by HEC, and can be downloaded from the HEC website.

## 3. APPLICATION

### 3.1 Applying for accreditation

All institutions licensed by HEC are required to complete and submit a formal application for accreditation to HEC within twelve months of the framework coming into operation. Along with a completed application form, all applicant institutions will be required to submit supporting documentation to evidence existing systems and processes linked to the accreditation standards and criteria. In addition, an assessment can be made of the institution's compliance with relevant statutory and regulatory requirements, including HEC directives. HEC reviewers will consider the application in full and raise queries where material appears incomplete or inadequate. Only when the application is satisfactory will it be signed off and the process of arranging a full inspection will begin. From the submission of the application, a timeframe will apply both with regard to the time taken by HEC staff to review the material and raise queries with the institution and the time allowed for the institution to submit any further satisfactory material. Applications will only be live for six months after submission. If the application is not considered complete by this time, the applicant will be required to re-submit the entire application and pay an additional fee.

Having read, understood and accepted the terms set out in the accreditation handbook and associated documentation, the institution should begin its preparations for making an application. The institution will need to gather a significant amount of documentation for making an application.

The application for accreditation comprises:

- completed application form for unaccredited institutions
- data collection form
- required supporting documentation
- payment of required fees

The institution should follow closely the instructions on the application form, making use of the associated guidance notes where needed, in order to complete the form and its appendices with all necessary information, as well as gathering the required supporting documentation. The institution will need to complete all sections of the application form carefully. The institution should contact the HEC accreditation team if there are any queries about the completion of the application form.

Two hard copies of the completed application form, one in English and one in Arabic, should be submitted to the HEC office. The supporting documentation must be submitted in English only. Official documents, such as leases and contracts which have been written in Arabic, can be submitted in Arabic only. In addition, institutions must submit an electronic copy of both the Arabic and English versions of the application form. All pages of the application and supporting documentation should be stamped and signed.

HEC will not begin scrutiny of the institution's application until all the required documentation has been received along with the full payment of the institutional accreditation fees.



### 3.2 Application review

The institution will receive confirmation that its application has been received within five working days of submission, but the review of the institution's application will take up to four weeks to allow for proper scrutiny. This formal evaluation process is undertaken by accreditation team and will begin with a review of the application form and accompanying documentation, in order to ensure that the form has been completed in full and supporting documentation has been provided. This will be followed by further investigation of public records, the taking up of bank references, credit checks where deemed appropriate, and a scrutiny of the institution's website and other promotional material.

Each application will have a dedicated case manager who will be the first point of contact for the institution. This member of HEC staff will contact the institution to seek clarification or request additional documentation if the submission is incomplete, if there are discrepancies in the information or if elements of the institution's provision do not meet HEC's requirements. There will be no further progress until these matters have been satisfactorily resolved.

Once all the outstanding issues have been resolved, the complete application will be considered by the HEC accreditation team who will confirm whether or not the institution has provided the required information and evidence for the application to pass to the inspection stage.

### 3.3 Re-accreditation applications

Accredited institutions wishing to remain in accreditation must submit an application for re-accreditation and undergo a full re-accreditation inspection every four years. HEC expects accredited institutions to develop and improve their quality assurance processes over the period of accreditation. HEC will also hold information about the institution from the institution's annual returns and other data such as reports issued by the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (NAQQAET) which will inform the re-accreditation inspection.

HEC will contact the institution six months before the institution's accreditation is due to expire, setting out the application procedure for re-accreditation and the application deadline. The deadline will normally be three months before the expiry date of the institution's current accreditation. To remain in accreditation, HEC must receive the institution's application for re-accreditation by this deadline, comprising the following:

- re-accreditation application form
- data collection form
- required supporting documentation
- payment of required fees.

The re-accreditation application form and guidance notes can be downloaded from the HEC website. The institution will need to complete all sections of the application form carefully and submit two hard copies, one in English and one in Arabic. The supporting documentation must be submitted in English only except for official documents written in Arabic which may be submitted in Arabic only. Electronic copies of the application form in both languages must

also be submitted. All pages of the application and supporting documentation should be stamped and signed.

A re-accreditation inspection will be organized only if HEC has received a completed application for re-accreditation along with full payment of the required fees by the deadline given. Should the institution fail to undergo a re-accreditation inspection before the institution's current accreditation expiry date and without having been granted an extension by the Academic Accreditation Committee, the institution's accreditation will be withdrawn.

### **3.4 Self-evaluation report**

Institutions are required to complete and submit a self-evaluation report assessing their quality assurance mechanisms against HEC's standards prior to the inspection being conducted. The self-evaluation report must be submitted in English. It is essential that the self-evaluation report is received by the inspection team four weeks before the inspection begins.

Institutions are advised to complete the form in as much detail as possible and to be completely transparent in their evaluation of their strengths, weaknesses and compliance with HEC standards. Self-evaluation is a very important tool in the quality assurance process and should be a built-in component of the institution's regular reviewing system. This particular exercise will help the institution to prepare fully for the inspection and to ensure that evidence is available upon which the inspection team can base their judgements.

It is likely that in completing this exercise the institution will identify further evidence which is needed and should make an action plan for ensuring that by the time of the inspection, this evidence is available. The self-evaluation report template provides tables for the recording of the evidence and actions required. The self-evaluation report must be completed and sent to HEC at least five weeks before the start of the inspection.

### **3.5 Re-applications from institutions refused accreditation**

While institutions which are refused accreditation or which have their accreditation withdrawn can re-apply, HEC reserves the right to set a minimum time period which must elapse before a re-application will be accepted.

## 4. INSPECTION

### 4.1 The inspection process

The primary method for assessing whether an institution meets the standards required for accreditation is an on-site inspection carried out by a team of independent inspectors who are appointed and trained by HEC. No institution will be awarded accreditation or re-accreditation without a full inspection of its provision in all the inspection areas of the accreditation standards.

While HEC's inspections are key to assessing whether or not the institution should be accredited or reaccredited, they are also intended to provide advice and support within the institution's own framework of quality management. The inspectors used are all educational experts with extensive knowledge of the sector who are happy to share examples of good practice and to suggest ways in which the institution can continue to improve its provision beyond HEC's standards.

Once an inspection has been authorized and the appropriate size and composition of the inspection team determined, the institution will be asked to suggest suitable inspection dates. Accreditation or re-accreditation inspections will be scheduled for days on which the institution is operating normally i.e. only in term time. HEC is required to give its inspectors at least two months' notice of an inspection. As most members of the team will be international experts, the inspection logistics can be complex. The final decision on whether and on what dates an inspection will go ahead rests with HEC.

### 4.2 Selecting the inspection team

HEC has a large pool of international experts who it can call on to conduct institutional inspections. Inspection teams are selected on the basis of qualities which include sector experience (especially in quality assurance at a senior level in higher education provision) and subject specialism to ensure a level of knowledge appropriate to each particular institution. HEC's inspectors are required to sign a declaration identifying any conflicts of interest. They are also required to observe confidentiality as to both the process and the outcome of an inspection.

The inspection team will be carefully selected by the HEC accreditation team, taking into account the experience, specialisms, location and availability of inspectors and the nature of the institution and its provision. The institution will be informed of the names of the inspectors before the inspection and can make representation to HEC if it is felt that there could be potential for a conflict of interest to arise.

The inspection team will usually comprise:

- A lead inspector responsible for arranging the inspection timetable, managing the inspection team, compiling the report and ensuring that the inspection is carried out according to published guidelines and covers all the standards. The HEC coordinator will be responsible for liaison with the institution and arranging the inspection timetable.

- A number of expert inspectors selected by the HEC accreditation team, based upon the student numbers, faculties or colleges and programs, and the overall size of the operation. Local and international experts will be in the team.
- An administrator provided by HEC to facilitate the arrangements for the inspection at the institution (including dealing with any travel or accommodation needs during the inspection), ensure meetings take place as scheduled, notes of meetings are taken to be used by the lead inspector to inform the institutional report and refreshments are provided to the inspection team.

The size of the inspection team and the duration of the inspection are decided by HEC.

The inspection timetable will be devised prior to the inspection by the lead inspector and the HEC accreditation team, in consultation with the institution. The institution will be required to facilitate this with the provision of staff availability information and program timetables and to suggest times at which key personnel will be available to meet the inspectors. The lead inspector will take these into account when allocating the inspection team's time. The lead inspector is responsible for producing the inspection timetable to ensure it accords with other commitments and meets the needs of the inspection team.

The inspection will involve, in addition to a comprehensive documentation review,

- an introductory meeting with staff (at least members of the management team)
- a tour of the institution
- a meeting with the owner/s and Board of Trustees members for private institutions
- a meeting with Board of Trustees members for government institutions
- a meeting with the President/Vice-President
- a meeting with senior management team (Chief Executive, Operations Director, Financial Director, Head of Student Services)
- a meeting with the academic management team (Deans, Vice Deans, Program Leaders)
- a meeting with student support staff
- a study of a representative sample of marked student work
- a detailed survey of the library and other academic resources
- a meeting with a representative group of students
- a meeting with a representative group of teachers, tutors or lecturers
- a meeting with external stakeholders such as employers, community leaders
- observation of a representative sample of classes
- a final meeting with the President/Vice-Chancellor and senior managers

### **4.3 Preparing for the inspection**

Once an inspection has been organized, the institution will receive written confirmation of the dates, the names of the inspection team and details of the inspection including a list of premises to be visited. The institution should inform the institution's staff that an inspection will be taking place and, if possible, arrange an initial meeting with all staff so that inspectors can introduce themselves and describe what will be taking place. It is the inspectors' intention to avoid disruption of the institution's normal activities as far as possible during the inspection. The self-evaluation report must be completed and submitted to HEC at least five weeks before the inspection. All documentation which the inspectors will require will need to be gathered and collated before the inspection.

### **4.4 Facilities to be provided during the inspection**

The inspection team will be accompanied by an HEC administrator who will be the liaison person between the institution and team for all administrative matters. The administrator will facilitate the inspection timetable and coordinate the meetings which the team will hold with all stakeholders.

A dedicated room must be made available throughout the inspection for the team to use. This should be located centrally in the institution within close reach of the administration and management offices of the institution. It should offer privacy for internal discussions between the team members and they should be able to leave personal belongings in complete safety during the inspection. The team may need the room to hold meetings with staff members. Internet access must be available in the inspectors' room.

All documentation which needs to be reviewed by the inspection team must be placed in this room. This will include all the documentation sent in with the application form, all supplementary documentation providing evidence of the institution's ability to meet the standards and samples of student work from programs across the curriculum.

### **4.5 Making changes to an inspection date or inspectors**

HEC reserves the right to change the date of inspection or inspectors prior to the commencement of the inspection. HEC would only make such changes once all other options had been exhausted and where it would be impossible or detrimental to go ahead with the inspection as planned.

### **4.6 Compliance with statutory regulations**

All new applicants and those applying for re-accreditation are required to sign a declaration stating that the institution complies with all relevant statutory requirements in connection with health and safety, safeguarding, employment law, copyright, disability provision, equal opportunities, planning consent, data protection and public liability. It is the institution's responsibility and the personal responsibility of the head of the institution to ensure that all requirements are met. HEC inspectors will not inspect the above areas but will note any observed breach of regulations. Any breach will be conveyed to the Academic Accreditation Committee as a 'no confidence' judgement in the ability of the institution to self-assess in these matters and will call into question the integrity of the senior management who will have endorsed the declaration. Breaches in compliance with statutory regulations and resolutions relevant to higher education will have an adverse effect on accreditation decisions and status.

## 5. REPORTING ON THE INSPECTION

Towards the end of the final day of the inspection the team will meet to discuss findings and agree on judgements and action points. The lead inspector will be responsible for producing the final institutional report. A draft version will be sent to the inspection team members for comment prior to being sent to HEC. Completed reports will be sent to HEC staff for review no later than four weeks after the last day of the inspection.

### 5.1 The report format

The institutional report will include three sections.

Part A Introduction, including

- Details on the background to the institution
- A description of the current provision
- A description of the inspection process

Part B Meeting the Standards, including

- Commentary on how the institution performs against each of the accreditation standards and key indicators
- Details of the evidence base for judgements of partial compliance and non-compliance with a standard and key indicators
- An overall judgement on the institution's compliance with each standard reported as 'fully met', 'substantially met', 'partially met' or 'not met'
- An overall judgement on the institution's compliance with the requirements for each of the inspection areas reported as 'fully met', 'substantially met', 'partially met' or 'not met'

Part C Summary of the institution's achievement in each of the inspection areas and Action Points

This section will present the strengths of the institution and any action points arising from the failure to meet the standards fully. It is proposed that this list of action points form the basis of the institution's action plan.

### 5.2 Action points

The concluding section of an inspection report normally contains a number of action points. These are categorized as being of high, medium or low priority.

- High priority - those which the inspectors consider necessary to action as a matter of urgency and which will normally prevent the immediate award of accreditation
- Medium priority - those which the inspectors have concerns about but which can be actioned in a longer time-frame. These action points could result in a recommendation to defer the decision on the award of accreditation
- Low priority – those which the inspectors consider would benefit the institution and would enhance the quality of the provision and foster best practice. These action points will not, on their own, normally affect the decision of the award of accreditation

These action points will be taken into account by the Academic Accreditation Committee when making the recommendations regarding the award of accreditation or continued accreditation.

### 5.3 Summary of compliance in the inspection areas

The report will contain a summary of the judgements made by the inspection team as to the overall achievement of an institution in the eight separate inspection areas. It is these judgements which will form the basis of the inspection team's recommendation to the Academic Accreditation Committee.

The categories will be allocated according to the judgements made for each standard in a particular area which are, in turn, based on the evidence available at the inspection as to how the institution performs against the key indicators.

The inspection team will decide on one of the following four judgements when considering the level of compliance with HEC accreditation requirements.

- Fully met
- Substantially met
- Partially met
- Not met

A 'not met' judgement in any inspection area may result in the refusal of accreditation.

Institutions must achieve a judgement of 'fully met' or 'substantially met' in the following inspection areas for the award of accreditation to be considered:

- Governance, Strategy and Financial Management
- Academic Management and Administration
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment

### 5.4 Reviewing the reports

The reports once submitted by the lead inspector will be reviewed and edited, if necessary, by a member of the HEC accreditation team. Reviewers will consider a number of elements of the report including the following:

- The report has been completed according to established guidelines
- All sections have been completed fully and judgements made on all standards
- Action points are included for all standards which are judged to be 'partially met' or 'not met'
- The consistency of reporting
- Appropriateness of the language used
- The presentation of a clear evidence base for the report judgements.

Following the review, which may involve the reviewer contacting the lead inspector for further information or clarification, the report is sent to the institution for a check of factual accuracy. Further amendments may need to be made and further consultation with the lead inspector required as a result of the feedback received from the institution. It should be noted

that the institution will only be able to comment on the factual accuracy of the report and not on the judgements made.

Once the factual accuracy checking with the institution (and lead inspector, where necessary) is complete, the report is ready to be submitted to the Academic Accreditation Committee for consideration. The HEC administrative team will be responsible for making the arrangements for the Academic Accreditation Committee meetings, including making the reports and further paperwork available in a timely manner and taking minutes.

Upon completion of the Academic Accreditation Committee process, the Committee's recommendations will be provided to the Higher Education Council for their final decision.



## **6. THE AWARD OF ACCREDITATION**

### **6.1 Decisions on the award of accreditation**

Following inspections, the inspection report will be considered by the Academic Accreditation Committee, which will make one of the recommendations set out below.

The Academic Accreditation Committee can recommend the award, refusal or deferral of a decision on accreditation or re-accreditation, or, in exceptional circumstances, suspension or withdrawal of an institution's accreditation.

The institution will be informed of the Higher Education Council decision within one calendar month of the decision being made. HEC will send the institution a copy of the inspection report, along with an accreditation certificate if accreditation or re-accreditation has been awarded.

### **6.2 Award of accreditation**

- Accreditation can be awarded following the full accreditation inspection of an unaccredited institution
- Re-accreditation can be awarded following the full re-accreditation inspection of an accredited institution.

Accreditation or re-accreditation is awarded if the Academic Accreditation Committee is satisfied that the institution meets or exceeds HEC's standards in all areas of its provision. Accreditation or re-accreditation is normally awarded for a period of four years. However, the Academic Accreditation Committee can recommend to vary the period of accreditation if it decides that a shorter period is more appropriate.

### **6.3 Deferral of a decision on accreditation**

- The Academic Accreditation Committee may recommend a deferral to the HEC on accreditation or re-accreditation if the inspection report indicates that the institution has not met all the standards required but that the outstanding issues are such that they can be resolved easily within a short period of time.
- A decision can be deferred for up to six months, during which time the institution must address the action points identified in the inspection report and specifically raised by the Academic Accreditation Committee.
- The Academic Accreditation Committee will require that, before the end of the deferral period, the institution either undergoes a supplementary inspection at its own expense or submits documentary evidence that the outstanding requirements have been met or issues have been resolved.
- The supplementary inspection report or documentary submission will be considered by the Academic Accreditation Committee before the end of the deferral period, and a recommendation on accreditation or re-accreditation will then be made.
- If the supplementary inspection report indicates significant concerns other than those which led to the deferral, the Academic Accreditation Committee may require an additional full inspection at the institution's expense before making a recommendation on accreditation or re-accreditation. If necessary, the deferral period may be extended to allow for this to take place.

- If the institution fails either to submit satisfactory documentary evidence or to undergo a supplementary inspection before the end of the deferral period, the Academic Accreditation Committee may recommend refusal or withdrawal of accreditation. A new application will then be required should the institution wish to pursue accreditation further.

#### **6.4 Refusal, suspension or withdrawal of accreditation**

The Academic Accreditation Committee may recommend the refusal, suspension or withdrawal of accreditation if the inspection report indicates that the institution has failed to meet or maintain the standards required for accreditation. If accreditation is refused or withdrawn, the reasons will be clearly explained in the inspection report and the accompanying letter. The institution has the right to appeal against HEC's decision (see section 9 of this handbook).

## **7. AFTER ACCREDITATION HAS BEEN AWARDED**

It is a condition of accreditation that certain basic information on accredited institutions be published in the website directory, details of which can be confirmed with the HEC office. The information to be published will be reviewed periodically and is subject to change, but will include the institution's name, head of institution, address, contact details and a list of subjects and programs offered.

Newly accredited institutions are added to the directory once the decision letter, inspection report and accreditation certificate have been dispatched. Institutions whose accreditation has been withdrawn will remain in the directory until the time allowed for lodging an appeal has expired and any subsequent appeal process has been exhausted.

### **7.1 Conditions of accreditation**

In order to protect the quality and reputation of HEC accreditation the following conditions apply:

- Institutional accreditation covers all eligible provision which has been declared to HEC.
- Institutional accreditation applies to the institution as a whole and must not be construed as accreditation or validation of individual programs or awards.
- Accreditation applies only to the specific institution whose application HEC received and not to any partner, branch or otherwise connected institution.
- Any inaccurate or misleading statements concerning the institution's accreditation must be avoided and if uncertain, HEC should be contacted to seek clarification on what is acceptable. Any breach of this condition may lead to the suspension or withdrawal of the institution's accreditation.
- If accreditation is withdrawn, all statements or claims of accreditation by HEC must be removed from promotional and other material as soon as is reasonably practicable and institutions must immediately refrain from representing themselves as HEC accredited.
- Unaccredited institutions which have applied for accreditation must not make public reference to their application. Any breach of this condition may be taken into account in any subsequent decision on accreditation.

### **7.2 Maintaining accreditation**

Gaining accreditation, although a major achievement for any institution, is not the end of the process. As an accredited institution, institutions have continuing responsibilities both to maintain the standards required for HEC accreditation and to cooperate fully with HEC in its monitoring of these standards. Specific duties arising from these responsibilities are listed below:

- Continue to comply with all relevant laws and regulations including those concerned with licensing
- Continue to maintain all the standards required for HEC accreditation
- Work to meet the requirements set out in previous HEC reports and consider the additional recommendations
- Submit to HEC's regular monitoring procedures, including:

- Notifications to HEC of any significant changes
- Interim inspections
- Spot check inspections
- Annual returns
- Respond promptly to any requests from HEC for information
- Address to HEC's satisfaction any concerns raised by awarding organizations or partner institutions with which HEC shares information
- Cooperate fully and promptly with HEC's complaints procedure
- Pay promptly the required fees
- Submit an application for re-accreditation and undergo a full re-accreditation inspection before the expiry date of the institution's current accreditation.

The failure of the institution to meet any of the above requirements may lead to the suspension or withdrawal of the institution's accreditation.

### 7.3 Interim inspections

All accredited institutions are required to undergo an interim inspection part of the way through each period of accreditation as part of HEC's quality monitoring process. The interim inspection will typically be conducted by one inspector over one day. The interim inspection report will be considered by the Academic Accreditation Committee which will recommend either that accreditation should continue or that there are areas of concern which require further action. The report will be sent to the institution with details of the recommendation and any further action required.

Where an interim inspection report identifies significant problems or evidence that the institution is not meeting HEC's standards, the Academic Accreditation Committee may require further action, such as:

- a further full or supplementary inspection at the institution's expense
- an unannounced spot check at the institution's expense
- the submission of an action plan for addressing the issues identified
- the setting of a deadline for the submission of documentary evidence demonstrating that the issues identified have been resolved.

### 7.4 Spot check inspections

A spot check is a partial inspection of the normal accreditation process and which is not normally arranged with the institution in advance. HEC may or may not give the institution prior notification of an impending spot check inspection.

The spot check inspection report will be considered by the Academic Accreditation Committee, which will recommend either that accreditation should continue or that there are areas of concern which require further action. The institution will be sent details of any recommendations and any further action required.

Where a spot check inspection report identifies significant problems or evidence that the institution is not maintaining HEC's accreditation standards or not complying with licensing requirements, the Academic Accreditation Committee may require further action, including:

- a further unannounced spot check inspection at the institution's expense
- a further full or supplementary inspection at the institution's expense
- the submission of an action plan for addressing the issues identified
- the setting of a deadline for the submission of documentary evidence demonstrating that the issues identified have been resolved.

Where a spot check inspection identifies evidence of a serious breach of the law or HEC directives, a significant risk to the welfare of students or an attempt to deceive HEC or its inspectors, the Academic Accreditation Committee may recommend withdrawing the institution's accreditation with immediate effect.

Full cooperation with any action required by the Academic Accreditation Committee following an interim or a spot check inspection is a condition of continuing accreditation. In some cases, the Academic Accreditation Committee may recommend suspending the institution's accreditation while such action is carried out. Any subsequent failure of the institution to cooperate fully may lead to the immediate withdrawal of accreditation.

## 7.5 Annual Return

Institutions are required to submit an annual return each year and, in doing so, alert HEC to any changes which may affect the standard of provision offered by the institution. The HEC accreditation team must be informed if there is a likelihood that the institution will not be able to submit the return by the due date.

Where significant changes have occurred or the information contained in the return raises concerns, a representative of HEC may inspect the institution and prepare a report for the Academic Accreditation Committee.

The annual return will include the following information and documentation:

- a declaration of financial viability by the Head of the Institution
- a copy of the institution's most recent statutory accounts
- details of any significant changes in ownership, management, location or academic program
- details of courses and programs offered in the previous year, including numbers enrolled on each course, cohort progression, numbers completing and pass rates in any examinations
- a list of courses offered in the current academic year, including the level of the course in relation to the National Qualifications Framework and the name of the awarding or partner organization
- destination information on the last cohort of graduates
- details of research activity to include details of expenditure
- details of professional development activities provided by the institution for staff to include details of expenditure

- community outreach activity
- details of any complaints received
- an outline of any planned developments.

### **7.5.1 Annual Return declarations**

The following will need to be provided:

- details of any litigation in which the institution is or has been involved
- a declaration that the institution meets all relevant statutory requirements. If, at a future stage, the Academic Accreditation Committee considers there to be convincing evidence that this was not the case, HEC may withdraw accreditation immediately
- a declaration that the institution is meeting all requirements with regard to its license.

N.B. The above lists are not exhaustive and are reviewed for possible amendment each year.

### **7.6 The re-accreditation process**

Accreditation is usually awarded for four years. However, the Academic Accreditation Committee can recommend awarding accreditation for a shorter period if it believes there are grounds to do so. If the institution wishes to remain in accreditation, the institution must submit an application for re-accreditation and undergo a full re-accreditation inspection before the institution's accreditation expires. Institutions will be notified by HEC six months in advance of the need to apply for re-accreditation. Should the institution fail to undergo a re-accreditation inspection before the institution's current accreditation expiry date, the institution's accreditation will be withdrawn. The procedure for application for re-accreditation is set out in section 3.3 of this handbook.

Accreditation may be extended for a period, normally of no more than one year, if the Academic Accreditation Committee considers there to be exceptional circumstances which make it necessary to delay the re-accreditation inspection. These would normally involve significant changes which are planned or which have recently taken place. Requests for an extension of full accreditation must be submitted to the HEC at least six months before the expiry date of the current accreditation and using the appropriate form. This form is available from the HEC office or can be downloaded from the HEC website.

### **7.7 Withdrawal and suspension of accreditation**

Occasionally HEC is required to suspend or withdraw accreditation from an institution because it has failed to meet the conditions for maintaining accreditation or because its provision no longer meets HEC's standards. Suspension is a private arrangement between the institution and HEC, and is usually accompanied by a set of requirements to be met by a stated deadline. The length of time given to meet requirements will be stipulated by the Academic Accreditation Committee. Withdrawal of accreditation means that the organization is removed from the directory of accredited institutions and this will have an adverse effect on the institution's operating license.

There are a number of reasons why accreditation can be suspended or withdrawn.

- **Following an inspection**

The Academic Accreditation Committee may recommend withdrawing accreditation if the inspection report shows that the institution is failing to meet the standards required for accreditation. Accreditation will be withdrawn immediately after the ratification of the decision by the Higher Education Council.

- **Following a complaint**

The Academic Accreditation Committee may recommend suspending or withdrawing accreditation following a complaint under the procedures set out in section 10 of this handbook. Withdrawal will be recommended when the institution fails to cooperate with the requirements set out by the Academic Accreditation Committee.

- **Failure to meet the requirements for continuing accreditation**

The Academic Accreditation Committee may recommend suspending or withdrawing accreditation if the institution fails to meet the requirements for continuing accreditation as set out in this handbook. Accreditation will be withdrawn immediately after the ratification of the decision by the Higher Education Council.

- **Additional grounds for immediate suspension or withdrawal**

In addition to the above scenarios, the Academic Accreditation Committee may recommend suspending or withdrawing the accreditation of the institution with immediate effect for any serious breach of the regulations in this handbook, and on the following grounds:

- Conviction of the owner(s), a company director or the head of the institution on either civil or criminal grounds relevant to the good management of the institution
- Financial irregularity, where the institution is owned by individuals, or insolvency, where the institution is owned by a company
- Failure to comply with all relevant laws and regulations of HEC
- Enrolling or offering to enrol students onto unauthorized degree programs in breach of HEC directives or onto programs which lead to degrees awarded by an overseas body which is not itself accredited by a recognized accrediting agency
- Failure to respond within reasonable time to a request from HEC in respect of a complaint from a student or external body
- Non-payment of required fees
- Failure to apply for re-accreditation by the deadline given
- Failure to undergo a re-accreditation inspection by the accreditation expiry date
- Failure to submit to a spot check, supplementary or early re-accreditation inspection required by HEC
- Failure to submit a complete annual return by the deadline given
- The making of any false or intentionally misleading statements on the forms or in associated documents of the application, annual return or any other submission to HEC

- The making of any false or intentionally misleading statements or claims in respect of the nature or scope of the institution's accreditation by HEC
- Failure to notify HEC of a significant change within three months
- Changes within the institution which render it no longer eligible for HEC accreditation.

The above lists are not exhaustive. Although a breach of HEC's regulations such as those listed above will usually lead to the Academic Accreditation Committee recommending suspension of accreditation while HEC carries out a thorough investigation, any failure by the institution to cooperate with the investigation promptly and to HEC's full satisfaction will lead to the immediate withdrawal of the institution's accreditation.

The institution will continue to appear on the HEC directory of accredited institutions during any period of suspension, but will be removed if accreditation is subsequently withdrawn.

### **7.7.1 Appealing against the withdrawal of accreditation**

If accreditation is withdrawn, the institution may appeal against the decision under the procedures set out in section 9 of this handbook.

## **7.8 Statement of accreditation**

Following the award of accreditation, the institution is permitted to use the statement of accreditation, as well as being listed in the HEC directory of accredited institutions on the HEC website. The use of the statement in promotional materials is subject to certain conditions.

Acceptable forms of the statement are:

- "accredited by the Higher Education Council, Kingdom of Bahrain"
- "HEC accredited".

## **7.9 Website directory for accredited institutions**

An institution directory is published on the HEC website and represents the definitive, current list of HEC-accredited institutions. The institution should familiarize itself with the institution's directory entry, check it on a regular basis and notify HEC if any obsolete or incorrect information is included.

In order to promote transparency and public accountability, engender trust in the accreditation system, and provide stakeholders with valuable information, all inspection reports will be published on the HEC website.



## **8. PROGRAMS AND AWARDS**

### **8.1 Programs and awards**

As part of its commitment to improving the quality of higher education provision in the Kingdom, HEC is designing a program accreditation framework. Once this framework is in place, all licensed institutions will be required to have all their programs accredited by HEC. Until this can be achieved, institutions will need to provide evidence that the qualifications they offer meet one of the following program approval requirements in that the award

- has been listed on the National Qualifications Framework and the level verified or that the institution is in the process of obtaining this listing
- is accredited by an internationally recognized professional body (e.g. Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, Chartered Institute of Bankers)

It is also a requirement that institutions are on the Institutional Listing or are in the process of achieving this.

Once the program accreditation framework has been implemented, institutions will be given a 'grace period' of two years to obtain HEC program accreditation.

## **9. APPEALS**

If a decision is made by HEC to refuse or withdraw accreditation, the institution may appeal against the decision under the following procedure. The decision to refuse or withdraw accreditation will have been confirmed in a letter to the institution, accompanied by sufficient details of the reasons why this decision was made.

The right of appeal is granted solely to provide an institution with the means of challenging either the assessment of the inspectors in the course of an inspection or the judgement of the Academic Accreditation Committee in coming to its recommendation.

An institution has no right within this appeals procedure to challenge either the criteria assessed and standards required for accreditation or the general regulations that accredited institutions must follow (as set out in this handbook and any addenda). The right of an institution within this procedure is rather to challenge the application of these criteria, standards and regulations in its individual case.

### **9.1 Lodging an appeal**

If the institution wishes to appeal a decision, the institution must send to HEC written notice of its intention. This written notice must be received by HEC within fifteen working days of the date of the letter which confirms the refusal or withdrawal of accreditation. For this purpose, each working day is held to end at 14.00. Any letter confirming the refusal or withdrawal of accreditation will be delivered to the institution's designated primary contact by recorded post. The institution must ensure that any correspondence addressed to the institution's primary contact is opened and dealt with in their absence.

The notice of appeal must be accompanied by full payment of the appeal fee. This fee will be refunded if the Appeal Committee overturns the decision of HEC.

HEC should make a decision within 60 days of the date appeal submission

### **9.2 Grounds for an appeal**

The appeal submission must clearly state the grounds for the appeal, selecting one of the following arguments:

- a) the Academic Accreditation Committee did not have all the relevant information available to it at the time, and/or
- b) the decision was not made in accordance with the procedures or criteria set out in the Accreditation Handbook.

If the grounds for the appeal do not fall under either of these headings, an explanation must be provided.

### **9.3 Appeal submission**

The institution must submit a statement setting out the grounds for the appeal, selecting one of the arguments described above, together with any relevant supporting documentation.

## 9.4 The appeals process

An appeal will be heard by an Appeal Committee, which is an unbiased body made up of one independent Chair, one layperson and one member of the Secretariat-General of the HEC who did not vote in the original recommendation of the Academic Accreditation Committee. The institution will have the right to request that the hearing be held in public.

## 9.5 Additional procedures for appeals

No appeal will be heard while the institution owes HEC any fees. If the institution fails to settle all outstanding debts within ten working days of its notice of appeal, its right to appeal will expire.

In the period between the notice of appeal and the outcome of the appeal, an accredited institution remains accredited and an unaccredited institution remains unaccredited.

When HEC receives the notice of appeal, it will send the institution a list of the individuals who may be asked to serve on the Appeal Committee. If the institution objects to any of these individuals serving, its objections and rationale should be submitted to the Chair of Council via the Secretary General within five working days of the list being sent. The decision of the Chair in this matter will be final.

Only material which was in existence at the time of the inspection or of the report's consideration by the Academic Accreditation Committee can be considered at an appeal. Any submission of material which was in existence at that time but was not supplied to HEC must be accompanied by an explanation of why it was not provided.

If the appeal is dismissed, the HEC decision will then be confirmed. A full new application will need to be submitted if the institution wishes to re-apply for HEC accreditation, but this will not be considered until HEC is first satisfied that all the requirements set out in the refusal/withdrawal letter have been or shortly will be met.

## 9.6 Appeal hearing

The appeal hearing will consider documentation comprising the following, where relevant:

- the most recent application form and supporting documentation submitted by the institution
- the relevant inspection report(s)
- written submissions from the inspectors who carried out the relevant inspection(s)
- the appeal submission described above
- any other material agreed by both HEC and the appellant to be relevant.

All parties to the appeal will receive the same documentary evidence.

A representative of the institution and a representative (normally the Chair or Deputy Chair) of the Academic Accreditation Committee will have the right to appear at the hearing to give evidence to the Appeal Committee.

## 9.7 Recommendations on appeals

At the end of the hearing, the Appeal Committee may make one of three recommendations:

- To dismiss the appeal
- To recommend a new inspection at HEC's expense
- To recommend that HEC award or reinstate accreditation or re-accreditation.

## 9.8 After the appeal hearing

- The Chair of the Appeal Committee will make a written report to the Council, setting out the recommendation, its grounds and, if appropriate, recommending changes in the inspection or accreditation process, at which point the procedure will be deemed to be exhausted.
- HEC will inform the institution of its decision within five working days.
- The outcome of the appeal will be reported to the next meeting of the Academic Accreditation Committee for its information.
- On completion, the appellant will have no further recourse to the appeals process.

## 10. COMPLAINTS

All accredited institutions must have in place an explicit and fair complaints procedure to which students, their parents/guardians or other representatives have access, and this procedure should be exhausted before a complaint is referred to HEC for mediation.

### 10.1 Complaints by students against an HEC-accredited institution

If a student or their representative has completed the institution's own complaints procedure but has still not achieved a satisfactory resolution, the following should be submitted to HEC:

- a detailed letter of complaint, including a full description of the cause for complaint and the circumstances in which it arose
- copies of all supporting documentation relating to the complaint. HEC staff will seek to resolve all complaints received against accredited institutions to the mutual satisfaction of the complainant and the institution, with the exception of complaints which appear to relate to offences more appropriately referred to a statutory authority.

#### What HEC will do

When HEC receives a complaint from a student or their representative against an accredited institution, HEC requests evidence to support the complaint and to show that the complainant has exhausted the institution's complaints procedure.

Only if this evidence is received, will the procedure below be followed:

- the details of the complaint will be recorded by HEC staff
- HEC collates the relevant documentation
- the institution concerned will be informed of the nature of the complaint and asked to investigate its cause
- the institution will be required to submit a written response within ten working days, detailing the outcome of its investigation and, where appropriate, proposing a course of action to resolve the matter
- HEC will inform the complainant of the outcome of the institution's investigation and any proposed course of action
- HEC will, with the agreement of both the complainant and the institution, make reasonable attempts to mediate between the two parties in order to resolve the matter
- as a result of its mediating role, HEC may make recommendations for resolving the matter but these will not be binding on either party.

If after HEC's attempts at mediation the matter remains unresolved, a report on the complaint will be made to the Academic Accreditation Committee. A report will also be made to the Academic Accreditation Committee if more than three complaints against any one institution are received within one year.

#### The role of the Academic Accreditation Committee

If the Academic Accreditation Committee receives a report on a complaint against an accredited institution, it will assess whether or not there is evidence that the standards required for accreditation are not being met, and it may make one of the following recommendations:

- To dismiss the complaint
- To require further investigation by HEC of the complaint, which may include an unannounced spot check at the institution's expense
- To require the institution to undertake remedial or compensatory action where it is considered to have failed to meet its responsibilities or uphold the standards of accreditation; if the institution refuses to undertake such action, its accreditation may be suspended or withdrawn
- To require an immediate spot check, supplementary inspection or re-accreditation inspection at the institution's expense where there is evidence that the standards required for accreditation are not being met; if the institution refuses to submit to the inspection, its accreditation may be suspended or withdrawn
- Recommend suspending or withdrawing accreditation; this recommendation is normally made only where the report of the complaint indicates that the institution has refused to cooperate with HEC's investigation, that it has refused to take any required remedial or compensatory action, or that there is convincing evidence of illegal behavior by its senior management or any other serious breach of HEC's regulations.

The Secretariat General of the Higher Education will notify the complainant and the institution in writing of the HEC decision.

#### **What HEC will not do**

HEC will not consider complaints under the following circumstances where:

- the complainant has failed, without good reason, to make use of the institution's own complaints procedure
- the complainant fails to provide evidence to support the complaint
- the substance of the complaint is not relevant to HEC's regulations or accreditation standards
- the complaint is made anonymously or solely by telephone or email; complaints must be made in writing and accompanied by the complainant's name, address and signature
- the complaint relates to a refund claim but is not accompanied by legible proof of payment in the form of a receipt; copies of bank statements are not sufficient
- the complaint is already subject to a legal process
- the complaint relates to a contractual dispute between the institution and an employee or employees.

#### **10.2 Other complaints against accredited institutions**

HEC will carry out an investigation where staff members of the institution or a statutory body shares evidence or intelligence that a HEC-accredited institution is breaching legal requirements. Under these circumstances, the statutory body will be informed of the outcome of HEC's investigation of the complaint.

No formal complaints procedure is available to any other complainant, but HEC may choose to carry out its own investigations of accredited institutions if it receives any evidence or intelligence of a failure to meet the standards required for accreditation or a breach of other HEC regulations.



**PART TWO**  
**THE INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION STANDARDS**





## INTRODUCTION

Higher Education is vital to transforming Bahrain's Economic Vision (2030) into a reality. Through the HEC's recommendations and actions to reform the higher education sector, it is expected that the sector's quality, performance and outcomes will improve.

The role of academic accreditation is to keep pace with the comprehensive reform process in the higher education sector both nationally and internationally, in order to improve the quality of educational outcomes for graduates. In addition, the sector should provide educational opportunities for all citizens according to their needs, aspirations and abilities, which will ultimately help achieve the needs of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the prosperity of its economy.

Accreditation, as known in the international academic community, is a key policy instrument in upgrading the level of higher education institutions within Bahrain and ensuring the process of continuous development and improvement of the higher education sector. It ensures that a minimum level of standards has been met. This meeting of standards gives confidence to students, parents, employers and other countries that a robust system of accreditation is meeting the needs of all stakeholders.

Accreditation has two main components, namely institutional and program accreditation. Institutional accreditation is awarded to higher education institutions as one integrated entity, while program accreditation applies only to programs offered by higher education institutions.

This document sets out the inspection eight areas, which aim to ensure quality and continuous improvement of higher education at HEI to meet the needs of learners. The eight areas contain thirty three (33) standards, which include a total of two hundred and eighteen (218) indicators, as shown in the table below:

Areas	Standards	KIs
1. Governance, Strategy and Financial Management	3	18
2. Academic Management and Administration	4	43
3. Teaching, Learning and Assessment	4	27
4. Research, Scholarship and Innovation	2	12
5. Economy and Society Impact	3	14
6. Student Recruitment, Support, Guidance and Progression	8	43
7. Premises, Facilities and Learning Resources	6	37
8. Quality Management, Assurance and Enhancement	3	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>218</b>

# THE INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

## AREA 1: Governance, Strategy and Financial Management (3 Standards)

### 1. The institution must be effectively and responsibly governed (8 KIs)

- 1.1. The organizational structure, including the role and extent of authority of any owners, directors or Board of Trustees, must be clearly defined, documented and understood by stakeholders including students.
- 1.2. The President, Vice-President, directors, board members and other relevant persons must be suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and be effective in carrying them out.
- 1.3. Policies, procedures and systems linking governance and management must be well documented and effectively disseminated across the institution.
- 1.4. The institution must engage in appropriate risk management planning, which is administered and monitored by named individuals and conduct regular risk assessment exercises.
- 1.5. Any partnership or cross-border collaboration must contain a risk-management strategy to protect students should there be any dispute.
- 1.6. There must be a clear separation of ownership and responsibility for financial matters from academic decision-making.
- 1.7. All relationships with other educational institutions and organizations must be defined formally and be fully transparent, with institutions compliant with partner or parent institutions' requirements, where applicable.
- 1.8. The institution must have a clear vision, mission and values which must underpin the institution's strategy and be in line with national and global educational objectives.

### 2. The institution must have a clear and achievable strategy (5 KIs)

- 2.1. The institution must have a clear strategy for the development of its higher education provision which must be supported by appropriate financial management and be in line with the HEC National Strategy for Higher Education in the Kingdom and the 2030 vision of a knowledge economy.
- 2.2. There must be provision for stakeholder, including students and employers, input to inform the strategic direction of the institution.
- 2.3. The strategy must be well communicated to all stakeholders including students, within and outside the institution.
- 2.4. Accurate data must be collected and collated systematically in order to provide a reliable measure of success against key performance indicators.
- 2.5. The governing body and senior management must conduct regular and systematic reviews of their own and the institution's overall performance and measure this performance against strategic targets.

### **3. Financial management must be open, honest and effective (5 KIs)**

- 3.1. The institution must conduct its financial matters transparently and with appropriate probity.
- 3.2. The institution's finances must be subject to regular independent external audit.
- 3.3. The institution must have robust and comprehensive budgetary procedures which ensure that its resources are sufficient and which demonstrate it is capable of utilizing its financial resources efficiently and responsibly.
- 3.4. The institution must have a clear line of responsibility and authority for budgeting and resource allocation that takes into account the specific needs of each department.
- 3.5. Academic program managers must be given sufficient autonomy to allocate resources appropriately to achieve the program objectives and to maintain high standards.

## AREA 2: Academic Management and Administration (4 Standards)

### 4. The institution must be effectively managed (13 KIs)

- 4.1. The management structure must be clearly defined, documented and understood by all stakeholders including governors, management, staff and students.
- 4.2. All senior managers must be suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and be effective in carrying them out.
- 4.3. There must be clear channels of communication between management, the Board of Trustees, staff, students and other stakeholders.
- 4.4. There must be clearly delineated responsibilities and reporting arrangements at institutional, faculty, departmental, program and course levels. These must include provision for academic leadership at program and individual course level.
- 4.5. There must be an effective committee structure with appropriate reporting lines which informs management decision-making and provides feedback to stakeholders including students.
- 4.6. Committees and other meetings must have clear and appropriate terms of reference, must be scheduled to meet regularly and minuted accurately.
- 4.7. There must be a set of comprehensive policies, regulations and procedures for staff and student conduct and systems in place to ensure their implementation.
- 4.8. There must be a published policy on complaints which includes a system for recording and monitoring complaints and the associated responses.
- 4.9. A policy must exist and be administered effectively regarding collection of and refund of student fees.
- 4.10. Management must compile a report at least annually presenting the results of the institution's reviews and incorporating action plans. Reports must include analysis of year-on-year student satisfaction, retention and achievement, staff performance (including research and other forms of scholarship) and a review of resourcing issues.
- 4.11. Action plans must be implemented and reviewed regularly, with outcomes reported to management and subsequently to the governing body.
- 4.12. Management must monitor and review academic and administrative staff performance through a clearly documented and transparent appraisal system.
- 4.13. There must be transparent and fair policies and procedures in place to recognize and reward staff through promotion or financial considerations.

### 5. Academic management must be effective (14 KIs)

- 5.1. Programs must be fully mapped to the National Qualifications Framework and have achieved or be in the process of achieving a 'full confidence' outcome from NAQQAET following a program review or have accreditation by recognized professional bodies or be subject to a formal articulation agreement with an internationally recognized HEI.

- 5.2. There must be appropriate procedures for the proposal, design and validation of programs of study which take cognizance of the mission of the institution, national imperatives, local, Gulf and international market demand and resource issues and reflect international norms.
- 5.3. The institution must have in place mechanisms to ensure and demonstrate that the content, design, approach and teaching methods of the curriculum are consistent and supportive of the intended learning outcomes.
- 5.4. Management must ensure that the stated curricula are delivered as stated in the prospectus and other related documentation and that HEC requirements and those from professional or other relevant bodies are met.
- 5.5. The institution must have clear policies, criteria and processes for academic appointments and promotions and be able to demonstrate that these are implemented.
- 5.6. The institution must be able to demonstrate that the responsibility areas of the academic staff, as in teaching, research, scholarly activity, consultancy, community outreach and academic administration, are clearly identified and show a balance in line with academic conventions.
- 5.7. The institution must ensure that there is a balance between the number of senior and junior academic staff.
- 5.8. The institution must ensure that there is a balance between the number of local and international academic staff.
- 5.9. There must be regular scheduled and minuted meetings of academic staff to review academic programs.
- 5.10. Mechanisms must be in place to ensure a program of enhancement of teaching and learning is continuously developed, supported and evaluated and to support teachers in their continuing professional development.
- 5.11. Appraisal of teaching staff must include regular classroom observation, feedback and be followed up where necessary.
- 5.12. Academic managers must employ a system of mentoring and peer review to support faculty staff.
- 5.13. Newly appointed academic staff must have a thorough induction program and be offered ongoing support and guidance through a mentoring system.
- 5.14. Teachers' development must be supported by regular training and the provision of technology and tools to facilitate self-learning, access to information and communication.

## **6. The institution must be effectively administered (7 KIs)**

- 6.1. Administrators must be suitably qualified and experienced and understand their specific responsibilities and duties.
- 6.2. The size of the administrative team must be sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the institution.

- 6.3. The administrative support available to the management must be clearly defined, documented and understood and appropriately focused to support its activities.
- 6.4. Policies, procedures and systems must be well documented and disseminated effectively across the institution.
- 6.5. Data collection and collation systems must be effective and accurate.
- 6.6. Classes must be timetabled and rooms allocated appropriately for the courses offered.
- 6.7. Comprehensive administrative records must be organized and stored efficiently, easily accessed and used effectively.

**7. The institution must employ appropriately qualified and experienced managerial, administrative and technical staff (9 KIs)**

- 7.1. There must be appropriate policies and effective procedures for the recruitment and continuing employment of suitably qualified and experienced staff and evidence that they are implemented.
- 7.2. Technical staff, including those working in laboratories, must be qualified, experienced and trained in their area of expertise.
- 7.3. The Human Resources team must be suitably qualified, experienced and have the necessary skills.
- 7.4. There must be effective procedures for the induction of all new staff.
- 7.5. There must be a transparent and well-documented appraisal system for all staff.
- 7.6. There must be clear and appropriate job specifications for all staff.
- 7.7. All staff must be treated fairly and according to a published equality and diversity policy.
- 7.8. The institution must have a clear policy regarding the handling of legal issues relating to the employment of staff.
- 7.9. Staff must have access to a published complaints and appeals procedure.

### **AREA 3: Teaching, Learning and Assessment (4 Standards)**

#### **8. Teaching must be relevant to and effective in delivering the intended learning outcomes (7 KIs)**

- 8.1. Teachers must be appropriately qualified in terms of subject knowledge, pedagogic and communicative skills, and experienced for the courses to which they are allocated.
- 8.2. Teachers must ensure that their delivery encourages the interactive participation of all students in classroom activities.
- 8.3. Teachers must use a mixture of large and small group and individual activities to encourage and support students' learning.
- 8.4. Teachers must direct students towards and encourage the use of supplemental learning materials and resources.
- 8.5. Teachers must produce schemes of work consistent with the syllabus, including detailed teaching session plans, and deposit these with the administration.
- 8.6. Teachers must draw upon their own research and that of others in their teaching.
- 8.7. Teachers must use appropriate learning resources effectively.

#### **9. Learning opportunities provided must be varied and motivating and encourage students to develop as independent learners (6 KIs)**

- 9.1. Intended learning outcomes must be appropriate for the level and nature of the program and course, paying particular attention to the requisite knowledge and skills required of graduates in the subject.
- 9.2. Intended learning outcomes for all programs must be articulated clearly and be publicly available.
- 9.3. The learning opportunities provided must be designed to facilitate students' achievement of the intended learning outcomes.
- 9.4. Students must be encouraged and supported to develop independent learning skills and take responsibility for their own learning.
- 9.5. Students must have access to teaching staff outside classroom-based teaching and learning sessions.
- 9.6. The institution must provide students with access to appropriate resources and materials for independent and group study and encourage and support their use of these.

#### **10. Assessments must be planned, well-organized and be closely linked to the intended learning outcomes (8 KIs)**

- 10.1. Students must be provided with an assessment schedule in which required coursework and revision periods are detailed in advance with clear submission dates.
- 10.2. The overall diet of assessments must include formative and summative elements and ensure that all program intended learning outcomes are addressed.

- 10.3. Individual assessments must focus on measuring student achievement of relevant intended learning outcomes.
- 10.4. The link between assessment and intended learning outcomes must be reviewed periodically to ensure relevance and effectiveness.
- 10.5. Assessment tasks must be clearly written, indicating by reference to the intended learning outcomes what the student needs to do to achieve stipulated levels of achievement.
- 10.6. Assessment procedures must be transparent so that students understand the link between marking criteria and grade attainment.
- 10.7. Students must receive prompt, detailed and supportive oral and written feedback on their assessments and overall performance and progress.
- 10.8. If final year projects are part of the program assessment, there must be a clear policy and effective systems for their assessment which are fair, transparent and relevant.

**11. Assessments must be effectively administered and quality assured (6 KIs)**

- 11.1. There must be secure and efficient procedures for the administration of examinations and other means of assessment, including the safe-keeping of assessment documents and records, and the provision of appropriate accommodation for conducting examinations.
- 11.2. The institution must take appropriate steps to identify and discourage cheating, including plagiarism and other misdemeanours, and to penalise offenders.
- 11.3. There must be clear policies and procedures for students to claim mitigating circumstances and to appeal against marks awarded within an appropriate, clearly stipulated timeframe.
- 11.4. There must be effective procedures for internal moderation at pre- and post-assessment stages.
- 11.5. There must be effective procedures for external moderation at pre- and post-assessment stages.
- 11.6. The institution must make student records and transcripts available to its students in a timely manner.



#### AREA 4: Research, Scholarship and Innovation (2 Standards)

##### **12. The institution must demonstrate a commitment to research and provide adequate and appropriate facilities to promote research (4 KIs)**

- 12.1. The promotion and facilitation of research must be a central feature of the institution's overall strategic aims.
- 12.2. The interaction between research, scholarly activity and education must be reflected in the curriculum, inform current teaching, and encourage and prepare students for engagement in research, scholarship and innovative development.
- 12.3. There must be policies which identify the priorities, facilities and development in research and commercialization.
- 12.4. Incentives must be provided for the academic staff and the departments to conduct research.

##### **13. The institution must encourage and support its staff to undertake research and scholarly activities and to engage in other professional activities (8 KIs)**

- 13.1. The institution must have well-defined policies and procedures for the undertaking of academic research and these are communicated effectively to all relevant stakeholders.
- 13.2. The research strategy of the institution must be in line with national priorities.
- 13.3. Teachers must be encouraged and supported to undertake research in relevant fields and to publish their findings.
- 13.4. The institution must maintain a catalogue of up-to-date staff publications which are published on the website.
- 13.5. Academic staff contracts must require academic staff to engage in research and scholarly activities relevant to their teaching and other duties.
- 13.6. Appointment and promotion criteria and faculty performance evaluations must reflect the institution's expectations for faculty research and scholarly activity.
- 13.7. There must be a fair and transparent procedure for staff to seek financial support for their research and other professional development activities.
- 13.8. The institution must provide time for staff to meet regularly to share and discuss current research activities and, if appropriate, invite external speakers.

## **AREA 5: Economy and Society Impact (3 Standards)**

### **14. The institution's strategy must recognize the importance of promoting entrepreneurship and provide appropriate academic, physical and financial resources to support this (4 KIs)**

- 14.1. The institution's strategic plan must demonstrate a commitment to promoting entrepreneurship and enterprise across the institution.
- 14.2. The institution must have or be developing policies and mechanisms which will facilitate funding for graduate and staff enterprise and provide appropriate facilities such as incubator support.
- 14.3. The strategy must demonstrate an awareness of and commitment to the Kingdom's employability agenda in that it encourages links with industry, encourages entrepreneurship and focuses on the knowledge economy.
- 14.4. The institution must ensure coverage in its curricula of the skills and competencies required by employers so as to prepare students for entry into the world of work. Views of employers must inform the review process.

### **15. The institution must proactively engage with the local and regional business community (5 KIs)**

- 15.1. Employers must be encouraged to forge links with the institution so as to provide opportunities for internships and on-the-job training.
- 15.2. Students must be made aware of the current job market and provided with opportunities to engage with prospective employers.
- 15.3. The institution must engage with the wider community, such as employers and its alumni, in a formal and systematic manner in order to obtain feedback on the relevance of its curriculum and to identify areas for development and improvement.
- 15.4. The institution must collect data on the destination of its graduates to inform and improve its relationships with the world of work and its engagement with the Kingdom's employability agenda.
- 15.5. Where appropriate, students must be given the opportunity to attain relevant workplace experience.

### **16. The institution must demonstrate its commitment to community service and engagement (5 KIs)**

- 16.1. Institutional strategy must take into account the Kingdom's national indicators and demonstrate a commitment to community and social outreach and lifelong learning.
- 16.2. The institution must demonstrate that it engages in community outreach and the provision of mutually beneficial services.
- 16.3. The institution must encourage its staff and students to engage with the local community around it through cultural, social and community service activities.

- 16.4. There must be a dedicated team which has responsibility for the institution's work in community service.
- 16.5. The institution must produce an annual report detailing the community services it has been engaged in.

## AREA 6: Student Recruitment, Support, Guidance and Progression (8 Standards)

### **17. Publicity material, both printed and electronic, including the website, must provide a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the institution and its curriculum (7 KIs)**

- 17.1. Text and images in printed material and on the institution's website must provide an accurate description of the institution's location, premises, facilities and the range and nature of resources and services offered.
- 17.2. Information on the programs available must be comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date and provide details of the status of the qualifications offered, including the awarding body and level of award.
- 17.3. The institution's website must provide content which is current and which provides support for existing and prospective students.
- 17.4. Information on staff qualifications and work experience must be made available to students.
- 17.5. Students must be given some indication of the type of careers graduates may follow and any professional body exemptions that may be available.
- 17.6. Students must be informed of the full cost of all programs, including costs of examinations and any required materials.
- 17.7. Students must be informed as to the necessary English requirements for entry on to programs.

### **18. The institution must take reasonable care to recruit and enroll suitable students for its courses (11 KIs)**

- 18.1. Entry requirements for each program must be set at an appropriate level and clearly stated in the program descriptions seen by prospective students.
- 18.2. A formal application process must ensure that students meet the entry requirements and any claimed qualifications must be verified.
- 18.3. Prospective students must be properly briefed on the nature and requirements of the program(s) in which they are interested and provided with advice on choosing their program.
- 18.4. All application enquiries must be responded to promptly and appropriately.
- 18.5. Any recruitment agents must be properly selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated.
- 18.6. Students must receive a proper initial assessment, which includes language ability if appropriate, to confirm their capability to complete the programs on which they are enrolling.
- 18.7. Students with special needs must be identified in order that appropriate support mechanisms can be provided.
- 18.8. Admission criteria and process must be in line with HEC regulations and resolution.
- 18.9. The admissions policy must be reviewed regularly with relevant external stakeholders including employers.

- 18.10. The institution's application and recruitment process must be fair and transparent with evidence to show that equal opportunities, anti-discriminatory and inclusion issues are demonstrably addressed.
- 18.11. Data on student performance must be used to inform the improvement of the student selection process.
- 19. Students must receive pastoral support appropriate to their age, background and circumstances (6 KIs)**
- 19.1. There must be a dedicated student support service which is provided by an adequate number of suitably qualified and trained staff, and which is accessible to all students and available to provide advice and counseling.
- 19.2. The support services must be evaluated regularly to ensure effectiveness and safety.
- 19.3. Students must receive an appropriate induction and information on the pastoral support available to them.
- 19.4. Students must be issued with a contact number for out-of-hours and emergency support.
- 19.5. The institution must have policies to avoid discrimination and a published procedure for dealing with any abusive behavior.
- 19.6. There must be effective systems to communicate with students out of class hours.
- 20. Students must receive appropriate guidance (4 KIs)**
- 20.1. Students must be given an induction to the institution, their program of study and guidance on the use of facilities such as the library and IT.
- 20.2. Additional support or advice on alternative programs must be provided to students who are judged not to be making sufficient progress to succeed.
- 20.3. Students must have access to a fair complaints procedure of which they are informed in writing at the start of the course and offered guidance in submitting a complaint.
- 20.4. Students must have access to careers information, advice and guidance, including progression to further study, from a designated and suitably qualified and experienced member of staff.
- 21. Student progress must be measured and recorded regularly on the basis of adequate and explicit data and effective remedial action taken where necessary (5 KIs)**
- 21.1. Assessment outcomes must be monitored to enable the identification of students who are not making satisfactory progress and there must be prompt intervention where appropriate.
- 21.2. There must be a clear and published policy on required student attendance and punctuality, effective procedures and systems to monitor and enforce it.
- 21.3. Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session must be kept for all students, collated centrally and reviewed at least weekly.
- 21.4. Student absences must be followed up promptly and appropriate action taken.

21.5. Students must be allocated an academic counsellor with whom meetings are held at least once per semester to review and discuss progress.

**22. International students must be provided with specific advice and assistance (3 KIs)**

22.1. International students must receive appropriate advice before their arrival on travelling to and living in the Kingdom.

22.2. International students must receive an appropriate induction upon arrival covering issues specific to the local area and further information provided throughout the course of study.

22.3. Provision of support must take into account cultural and religious considerations. Where possible, students should have access to speakers of their first language.

**23. Where residential accommodation is offered, it must be fit-for-purpose, well maintained and appropriately supervised (3 KIs)**

23.1. Any residential accommodation must be clean, safe and of a standard which is adequate to the needs of students.

23.2. Any residential accommodation must be open to inspection by the appropriate authorities.

23.3. A level of supervision must be provided appropriate to the needs of students.

**24. The institution must provide an appropriate social program for students and information on activities in the Kingdom (4 KIs)**

24.1. Students must be provided with appropriate information on opportunities for participation at events and other leisure activities which may be of interest.

24.2. The social program must be responsive to the needs and wishes of students and be affordable by the majority of students.

24.3. Any activities organized by the institution must be supervised by a responsible representative with suitable qualifications and experience.

24.4. Students must be encouraged to develop and participate in extra-mural activities.

## AREA 7: Premises, Facilities and Learning Resources (6 Standards)

### 25. The institution must have secure possession of and access to its premises (2 KIs)

- 25.1. The institution must have secure tenure on its premises which provides a legal right to use the premises for delivery of higher education.
- 25.2. Where required, the institution must have access to suitable external premises for academic or non-academic purposes of a temporary or occasional nature.

### 26. The premises must provide a safe, secure and clean environment for students and staff (10 KIs)

- 26.1. Access to the premises must be appropriately restricted and secured.
- 26.2. The premises must be maintained in an adequate state of repair, decoration and cleanliness.
- 26.3. The institution must demonstrate an ongoing commitment to compliance with quantitative directives issued by HEC and included in the licensing requirements.
- 26.4. Current and projected student intake numbers must be directly related to the physical resources, capacity and capability of the institution to deliver its programs effectively.
- 26.5. There must be specific safety rules in areas of particular hazard (e.g. science laboratories) made readily available to students, staff and visitors.
- 26.6. General guidance on health and safety must be made available to students, staff and visitors.
- 26.7. There must be adequate signage inside and outside of the premises and notice boards for the display of general information.
- 26.8. There must be adequate circulation space for the number of students and staff accommodated, and a suitable area in which to receive visitors.
- 26.9. There must be toilet facilities of an appropriate number and level of cleanliness.
- 26.10. There must be adequate air conditioning, heating and ventilation in all rooms.

### 27. Classrooms and other learning areas must be appropriate for the programs offered (2 KIs)

- 27.1. Teaching areas must be of an appropriate size and provide a suitable level of equipment for lectures, seminars and tutorials.
- 27.2. Classrooms and any specialized learning areas (e.g. laboratories, clinics, workshops, and studios) must be equipped to a level, which allows for the effective delivery of each program.

### 28. There must be appropriate non-teaching facilities for students and staff (7 KIs)

- 28.1. Students must have access to sufficient space and suitable facilities for private individual study and group work.
- 28.2. Teaching staff must have access to sufficient personal space for preparation, marking work and consultations with students.

- 28.3. Students and staff must have access to space and facilities suitable for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink where appropriate.
  - 28.4. There must be individual offices or rooms in which academic staff and senior management can hold private meetings and a room of sufficient size to hold staff meetings.
  - 28.5. Administrative offices must be adequate in size and suitably resourced for the effective administration of the institution.
  - 28.6. Students must have access to medical facilities of a first aid nature and to a source of advice on general health and well-being issues.
  - 28.7. Students must be provided with dedicated facilities which enable them to enjoy leisure activities such as sports and creative pursuits.
- 29. The library must be appropriately stocked and provide a fit-for-purpose learning resource for the student body (7 KIs)**
- 29.1. The library must be adequately staffed with appropriately qualified and experienced staff.
  - 29.2. The library must have sufficient space for independent student study and group working and be open at appropriate times for staff and student access.
  - 29.3. There must be sufficient provision of learning materials including books, journals and periodicals.
  - 29.4. There must be a well-organized and implemented lending policy.
  - 29.5. There must be clear, systematic and effective means of ensuring the adequacy and currency of library stock to reflect staff and student current and future needs.
  - 29.6. Students and staff must have access to e-library and e-learning facilities which are regularly updated.
  - 29.7. Library facilities and resources must be accessible to students and staff with disabilities.
- 30. The Information Technology resources must be well-managed and provide a fit-for-purpose learning resource (9 KIs)**
- 30.1. IT staff must be suitably qualified, experienced and knowledgeable.
  - 30.2. There must be sufficient computers of the necessary specification to meet student and staff needs.
  - 30.3. There must be provision of appropriate, up-to-date software which reflects the needs of the programs and research projects.
  - 30.4. The institution-wide IT systems must be fit-for-purpose and efficiently maintained and upgraded to ensure a reliable network is available to all stakeholders including students.
  - 30.5. There must be an effective means of ensuring the renewal of hardware and software to ensure efficiency and currency which is supported by adequate financial resourcing.



- 30.6. IT facilities must be accessible to students and staff with disabilities.
- 30.7. Learning management systems and virtual learning environments must be available and effectively managed.
- 30.8. The institution must use social media effectively to engage with and improve student development.
- 30.9. The institution must proactively search out new IT resources which will enhance the learning experience and promote their use across the institution.

## AREA 8: Quality Management, Assurance and Enhancement (3 Standards)

### **31. The institution must have effective systems to review its own standards and assess its own performance (11 KIs)**

- 31.1. The institution must have dedicated accreditation and quality assurance teams which comprises staff with relevant qualifications, knowledge and experience.
- 31.2. The accreditation and quality assurance team must continuously monitor its own performance, referring to external quality assurance systems and international benchmarks.
- 31.3. The institution must ensure that it takes into account the views of all its stakeholders, to include employers, students and the wider community, when collecting data for accreditation and quality assurance purposes.
- 31.4. The institution must undertake regular and systematic monitoring of its operations and conduct periodic reviews of all aspects of its performance against clearly specified and appropriate indicators.
- 31.5. The nominated leader for each course must produce an end-of-session (semester or year) report which includes measures of student satisfaction, completion rates and achievement levels.
- 31.6. The nominated program leader, drawing upon reports from its constituent courses, must produce an annual program report which includes analysis of year-on-year results on student satisfaction, achievement levels, completion rates and progression to further study or employment.
- 31.7. Reports which present the results of the institution's reviews, evaluate its performance and incorporate action plans, must be compiled at least annually. These must be considered by senior management and the board of trustees and, where appropriate, shared with all stakeholders including students.
- 31.8. All programs must be subject to annual review and to full revalidation every four years.
- 31.9. Annual review and revalidation of programs must involve external assessors.
- 31.10. All quality management policies and procedures must be clearly documented and brought to the attention of staff and, where appropriate, students and other stakeholders.
- 31.11. Particular attention must be paid to the quality of the student learning experience and to ensuring there is fair treatment of all students.

### **32. The institution must regularly obtain and record and analyze feedback from students and other stakeholders and take appropriate action where necessary (6 KIs)**

- 32.1. Views of all stakeholders, including teachers and students, partner institutions and employers, must be canvassed and recorded regularly through various means including face-to-face meetings, feedback questionnaires and, where appropriate, formal student representation.
- 32.2. There must be well-defined policies for obtaining feedback from students on academic staff performance.

- 32.3. The views of stakeholders including students must be considered objectively, evaluated thoroughly and, where necessary, appropriate action taken.
  - 32.4. There must be effective means of responding to stakeholder opinion and keeping them informed of any actions taken, through formal feedback mechanisms.
  - 32.5. Key performance indicators must include analysis of student outcomes in terms of the current year and year-on-year performance and any significant variations in student achievement between different program components.
  - 32.6. The institution must pro-actively engage with its alumni and encourage interaction with current students to provide support, mentoring and career advice.
- 33. The institution must have a strong commitment to, and procedures that facilitate, continuing enhancement of its provision (7 KIs)**
- 33.1. All stakeholders including students must be invited and encouraged to make suggestions for enhancement.
  - 33.2. In their annual appraisal, all staff must be required to identify where they have facilitated enhancement and to identify further areas requiring enhancement.
  - 33.3. Staff professional development needs must be identified through appraisal and other means and measures taken to support staff to address these.
  - 33.4. End-of-session course and annual program reports must include enhancements made and identify further areas requiring enhancement.
  - 33.5. Action plans must be implemented and reviewed regularly within the institution's committee structure.
  - 33.6. The institution must keep research resources and facilities under review so as to find ways of enhancing its research capabilities.
  - 33.7. The institution must have formal mechanisms in place to monitor the information gathered internally and externally, to make any enhancements deemed necessary and measure their impact.





## APPENDICES



## Appendix 1

### Documents to be submitted at the application stage

1. Documents authenticating the legal status of the institution, including list of directors, partners and/or legal owners.
2. Evidence of the ownership or tenure of the premises.
3. Copies of the last three years' audited annual accounts. (If the institution is still in its early stages, internal accounts, or some other documentation to prove the financial status e.g. bank statements must be provided.)
4. Organogram or outline description of the management structure with names of post-holders.
5. Detailed CVs and job descriptions of all senior management and academic staff.
6. Staff handbook (including complaints, disciplinary and grievance procedures).
7. Student handbook (including complaints, appeals, complaints and grievance procedures).
8. Current prospectus, course brochures, and other marketing materials.
9. Student application form with details of fees and refund policy.
10. Outline curriculum for each academic program, including assessment procedures.
11. Current class timetables.
12. Copies of partnership agreements with international higher education institutions or chartered bodies.
13. Evidence that the awards offered at the institution have been placed or are in the process of being placed on the National Qualifications Framework and the institution has applied to be on the Institutional Listing.

## Appendix 2

### Documentation to be provided at the inspection

(N.B. The following list is not exhaustive and inspectors will ask for further documentation at the inspections.)

#### Area 1: Governance, Strategy and Financial Management

1. Details of mission, vision, values, behaviors
2. List of members of Board of Trustees, all councils and committees
3. Minutes of relevant committee or board meetings
4. Minutes of staff meetings
5. Up-to-date organogram
6. Detailed job descriptions and CVs for all managerial and administrative staff
7. Staff Handbook
8. Up-to-date, signed contracts of employment for senior, academic and non-academic staff
9. Up-to-date prospectus and marketing material
10. Risk assessments for all aspects of provision to include academic partnerships, health and safety, SWOT analysis
11. Current Strategic Plan
12. Strategic Plan for next period
13. Audited accounts for the past three years or less if institution has not operated for that period
14. Policy for management of budget at faculty level
15. Any documents required by the inspection team as evidence of compliance with the standards in this area

#### Area 2: Academic Management and Administration

16. Whole course/academic year plans (schemes of work)
17. Timetables for all courses offered by the institution
18. Detailed CVs for all academic staff, including evidence of academic qualifications
19. Procedures for internal program approval, maintenance and change
20. Course descriptions
21. Staff files
22. Codes of conducts for faculty, administration and students
23. Complaints procedures
24. The annual reports for the last three years
25. The Evaluation System of Faculty and Administrative body
26. Recruitment and employment instructions
27. Any documents required by the inspection team as evidence of compliance with the standards in this area

#### Area 3: Teaching, Learning and Assessment

28. Sample of completed lesson plans
29. Samples of lecture notes
30. Samples of marked student work
31. Sample placement tests (if any)
32. Record of student year-on-year progression

33. Summaries of results/grades awarded for previous three years for each academic program (or from start date, if the course has not been available for that time)
34. In the case of degree programs, copies of formal agreements with degree-awarding bodies
35. Copies of external examiners' reports for the previous three years for each academic program (or from start date, if the course has not been available for that time)
36. Copies of annual reports to the awarding bodies for the previous three years
37. Copies of any academic reviews carried out by or on behalf of the awarding organization
38. Completed classroom observation forms
39. Staff appraisal procedures and completed documentation
40. Evidence of teacher monitoring
41. Any documents required by the inspection team as evidence of compliance with the standards in this area

#### **Area 4: Research, Scholarship and Innovation**

42. Policy on research and details of how this fits into the strategic plan
43. List of recent publications in each faculty (last three years)
44. List of active research projects in each faculty
45. List of organizations with which the institution engages in research
46. Incentives, rewards and financial support system for scientific research
47. Research guide for faculty and students
48. Research budget and actual spend (according to the financial regulations)
49. Any documents required by the inspection team as evidence of compliance with the standards in this area

#### **Area 5: Economy and Society Impact**

50. Policy on entrepreneurship and examples of how this has been promoted and facilitated
51. Report on cooperative relationships with local employers and their contribution to teaching and learning
52. Report on current and past work placements
53. Details of community outreach policy
54. Report on community service and outreach projects conducted in the last three years
55. Any documents required by the inspection team as evidence of compliance with the standards in this area

#### **Area 6: Student Recruitment, Support, Guidance and Progression**

56. Student files with details of registration, enrolment, attendance and qualifications
57. Student induction packs both for home and international students
58. Student Handbook
59. Completed student application forms and any student contracts
60. Policy documents relating to discrimination, bullying and abusive behavior
61. Documents related to residential accommodation (if applicable)
62. Destination data of last cohort of graduates
63. Report on student complaints received in the past three years and their resolution
64. Sample of general correspondence with students
65. Briefing materials for agents if used
66. Evidence of attendance monitoring, including class registers for each course/program
67. Students' social program – current and list of past activities



68. Details of sports and social facilities available to students
69. Any documents required by the inspection team as evidence of compliance with the standards in this area

#### **Area 7: Premises, Facilities and Learning Resources**

70. Current lease agreement or proof of ownership
71. Floor plan of each site being inspected
72. Information for students on learning resources to include library and online resources available
73. CVs of IT staff
74. Report on IT facilities available to students for both academic and personal use
75. Any documents required by the inspection team as evidence of compliance with the standards in this area

#### **Area 8: Quality Management, Assurance and Enhancement**

76. CVs of the Quality Assurance team
77. Internal quality assurance documentation
78. Report on the institution's performance against its own key indicators
79. Copies of any policies developed by the institution as a means of quality enhancement
80. External quality assurance documentation (if any)
81. Documents relating to external moderation (if any)
82. Copies of annual reports to the awarding bodies for the previous three years (if any)
83. Copies of any reviews carried out by or on behalf of the awarding organizations (if any)
84. Staff appraisal procedures and completed documentation
85. Stakeholder feedback forms
86. Completed feedback forms last three years
87. Action plans for dealing with stakeholder feedback
88. Internal annual performance reviews at institution, faculty and department levels
89. Copies of any policies developed by the institution as a means of quality management
90. Copies of institutional and program reports produced by NAQQAET and HEC
91. Any documents required by the inspection team as evidence of compliance with the standards in this area





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