

Ministry of Education and Higher Education
Department of Higher Education Institution's Affairs



Manual of Procedures for Licensing and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in the State of Qatar

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Manual of Procedures for Licensing and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Programs in the State of Qatar

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Introduction

The economic and social development that has been witnessed in recent years by the State of Qatar has reflected positively in a noticeable prosperity of higher education and on the establishment of private universities, colleges, and educational and training centers.

The responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Department of Higher Education Institution's Affairs lies in overseeing, following-up, and evaluating these institutions and setting clear conditions and procedures for the process of licensing and accreditation of their educational programs.

This document aims to clarify the conditions and procedures for licensing and accreditation of higher educational institutions in Qatar. Higher educational institutions include post-secondary educational Institutions such as colleges, universities, and higher institutes that grant academic degrees such as Diplomas (Associate Degrees), Bachelor's, Master's, or higher degrees.

This document, in addition to the Licensing and Accreditation Standards document represents the reference framework for establishing and accrediting colleges and universities in the State of Qatar.

General policy for Accreditation and Licensing

The general policy for accreditation and licensing which approved by the Executive Committee of the former Supreme Education Council (Currently the Ministry of Education and Higher Education) at its second meeting for the academic year 2012/2013 held on 10 December 2012 , is based on two main standards :

1. The quality and excellence of the institution to be licensed.
2. The ability of the educational institution to be licensed and educational programs offered to adapt and address developmental plans, labor market needs, and aspirations of students in Qatar.



The first standard will be achieved by fulfilling and abiding with all elements of quality assurance in higher education or in partnership with an institution that is internationally renowned in the concerned discipline of study, while the verification of the second standard will be achieved by providing a feasibility study or a detailed proposal for the establishment of the institution.

General Terms and Conditions

1. It is required to be available in the university or institution to be licensed all of the elements of quality assurance in higher education, particularly institutional and academic accreditation.
2. The Institution to be licensed must be an independent university under the supervision of a good university, or must be affiliated with or a branch of a reputable renowned university abroad, and it must apply the methods of review and self-evaluation to its resources and educational programs. The Institution must also be subject to the same procedures and academic accreditation systems as its parent university.
3. The parent university must not withdraw from the partnership with their Qatar branch during the licensing period.
4. The owners or shareholders of the Institution must provide record clearance from the relevant Qatari authorities and must not have been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor affecting honors and morals.
5. New partners must not join the Institution, and none of the partners is allowed to sell, relinquish, or waive his or her share, without written approval from the Supreme Education Council.
6. For a higher education institution to be licensed, its statutes must accord in all aspects with the document and its executive procedures. An application for a license must meet all the criteria and all specified requirements, since only completed



applications will be accepted.

7. The Institution must comply with all legal requirements in the State of Qatar.
8. The Institution must name a chairperson to represent it in front of different entities in the Government.
9. The chairperson of the Institution must present a personal commitment and endorsement to deliver everything included in the plan as submitted, once the university has obtained final approval from the Supreme Education Council.
10. After obtaining initial approval, the Institution should sign an endorsement committing itself to complete all buildings, fit out all premises, and install all equipment on the agreed-upon time, in accordance with conditions and specifications, including obtaining required approvals from the relevant specialized entities.
11. The Institution should not cease its activities in Qatar until it has obtained approval from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and has found alternative educational places of equal academic value for all students.
12. The Institution is not allowed to make substantive changes in the academic programs or change the degrees or diplomas offered unless and until written approval has been obtained from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

Licensing and Accreditation Procedures

There are five basic stages in the process of Licensing Higher Education Institutions in the State of Qatar.

1. Approval of the initial application form.
2. Submission of feasibility study.
3. Obtaining preliminary approval from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.



4. Receiving final approval after the site visit, meeting the conditions, and providing any required documents before the actual start of study at the applicant Institution.

A. Steps of Application

The founders or those acting on their behalf must submit the licensing application to the Department of Higher Education Institution's Affairs, accompanied by the appropriate form (see Appendix A), fully completed. They will then be provided with a copy of the Standards of Licensing and Accreditation for Higher Education Institutions in the State of Qatar and a copy of the Accreditation and Licensing Procedures Manual, which together provide detailed instructions and advice on how to apply.

The following information and documents must be submitted with the application:

1. A letter addressed to the Director of the Higher Education Institution's Affairs Department, including the name of the Institution, its location and the motivating factors for its establishment.
2. Names of the founders and their Curricula Vitae.
3. For each natural person, a copy of his or her ID, passport and criminal record must be provided.
4. For legal personalities, a copy of the company's contract and the partners' or major shareholders' criminal records must be provided.
5. A certified copy of the company's commercial register entry record.
6. The mission and objectives of the educational Institution and the



programs it provides.

7. A statement of the company's funding and financial support.
8. A commitment letter from the founders, undertaking not to withdraw from the Institution project before study starts at the Institution.
9. All the information and documents related to the nature of the academic partnership with the main university, if available at this stage.
10. Licensing fees of 5000 QR and a bank guarantee for the benefit of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.
11. A chart showing the Institution's proposed governance and organizational structures.

The application will be studied by the Department of Higher Education Institution's Affairs, if accepted the Institution will be asked to provide a feasibility study.

B. Requirements of the Feasibility Study

The Institution seeking a license must provide a feasibility study issued by a recognized expert or an international consulting organization with experience of working with private higher education institutions. The Institution must commit to providing a feasibility study as soon as practicable after the Department of Higher Education Institution's Affairs has accepted the application.



The feasibility study includes the following:

First: Academic and Institutional Requirements:

1. The mission, vision, and objectives of the Institution and the strategic and academic plans to achieve its goals.
2. Administrative and academic regulations for both the foundational and academic programs.
3. Information and documents related to faculty and teaching staff, including terms of their contracts, requirements of application, and CVs of the professors if available.
4. Conditions and policies of admission and projections of student enrollments for each of the first five years of operation.
5. The Institution's capital statement and the share of each founder in the capital.
6. Tuition fees for all academic programs.
7. Information regarding learning resources, buildings and facilities.
8. Analysis of the Institution's risk register.
9. Illustrative chart for the Institution and its suggested location.

Second: Studying and Analyzing Development Requirements and the Labor Market:

1. Evidence of examining and addressing human development needs and the requirements of Qatar's Vision 2030.
2. Studying the status of Higher Education in Qatar, the challenges that are facing it and the contribution the proposed Institution will make to the development of higher education and to scientific research.
3. Analytical description of the needs of labor market for



educational disciplines and programs to be licensed and the opportunities of the capacity of graduates in addition to estimating the demand for university places in the first five years of the Institution's operations.

4. Analyzing the competition and studying the status of similar educational disciplines and programs in the state of Qatar and their impact on the need for establishing the new programs or on the rate of students' admission.
5. Providing a vision regarding cooperation mechanisms with professional institutions and companies operating in the State in the areas of training and rehabilitating students.

Third: Studying and Analyzing Investments and Financial Cost:

1. Identifying sources of financing.
2. Estimating the total cost of the project and identifying and describing all the details including land, buildings, equipment, human resources, financial and technological resources and operational expenses.
3. Risk management.
4. Total of financial investments in the applicant Institution.
5. Details of expected income and expenditure.
6. Analytical study of forecast cash flows and returns on investment.
7. Identifying the planned timeline for implementing the project.
8. Estimated budget for the Institution's first five years of operation.



C. Obtaining Approval from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education

The Department of Higher Education Institution's Affairs at the Ministry evaluates and reviews the feasibility study and the documents provided by the Institution and conducts any interviews and consultations around it and then takes one of the following decisions:

1. Approves the application and the feasibility study and submits recommendation to the Minister of Education and Higher Education to grant the Institution a conditional license.
2. Issues a written rejection of the application, giving the reasons for rejection.
3. Defers a decision on the application and requests the Institution to provide additional quality assurance to ensure that the standards appropriate to licensing and accreditation are met.

The Institution can appeal the rejection decision to the Minister of Education and Higher Education within one month of the date the application is rejected.

D. Conditions and Requirements of Final Approval and start of Studying

The Department of Higher Education Institution's Affairs performs an onsite visit to the Institution to observe and inspect the Institution and its facilities. The Department of Higher Education Institution's Affairs requires applicants to submit all documents and certificates in order to obtain final approval of the licensing and for study to commence.

These documents include the following:

First: Official Documents and Papers



1. Commercial Registration issued by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in the State of Qatar.
2. Membership Certificate to the Qatar Chamber in the State of Qatar.
3. Detailed executive plan for all facilities and buildings planned to be in place within three years from the commencement of instruction.
4. Attestation certificate from a bank in the State of Qatar of founder's share deposit from the paid capital for the benefit of the Institution.
5. Documents related to ensuring public safety conditions and exits in case of emergency in accordance with the conditions laid down by the Civil Defense in the State of Qatar.

Second: Documents regarding Academic Partnership or Affiliation with the Partner University:

1. Official document that proves the academic partnership or affiliation with the main or partner university.
2. All documents related to academic accreditation and quality assurance.
3. Copy of certificate granted credit from the main or partner University.

Third: Documents related to Programs and the Academic Curricula:

The documents include the following:

1. Details of academic programs and courses.
2. Number of teaching and theoretical hours for each course.



3. General objectives of the programs and courses.
4. Description of the units of study.
5. Teaching pedagogies to be employed.
6. Methods used for evaluation.
7. Scientific sources and references.

Fourth: Internal Policies, Procedures, and Regulations :

They include the following:

1. Organizational Regulations.
2. The Administrative and Academic Policies and Procedures.
3. Faculty Bylaws.
4. Admission and Registration Bylaws.
5. Students Affairs Bylaws.
6. Human Resources Bylaws.
7. An organizational structure chart.
8. Details of scientific research conducted or to be conducted.
9. Bylaws of community service planed for the Institution.

Fifth: Documents and other records.

Any documents and other detailed records required by the Department of Higher Education Institutes Affairs .

Internal Procedures of Licensing

1. The Department of Higher Education Institution's Affairs undertakes the responsibility of evaluating and reviewing the application for a license and submits a recommendation thereon



- to the Assistant Undersecretary for Higher Education Affairs.
2. The Director of the Higher Education Institution's Affairs Department convenes a Licensing Committee to examine and evaluate the feasibility study and submit a recommendation thereon to the Assistant Undersecretary for Higher Education Affairs. *(for more detail see section entitled Internal Procedures of the Licensing and Accreditation Committee).*
 3. The Licensing Committee can make use of external academic and professional expertise to assess the feasibility study provided by the Institution.
 4. The Committee shall submit technical recommendations for granting a license to the Assistant Undersecretary for Higher Education Affairs, for clearance by the Minister of Education and Higher Education.
 5. The Licensing Committee undertakes a study and examination of documents and data provided by the Institution after obtaining the approval of the licensing application.
 6. The Licensing Committee organizes an observation and inspection visit to the Institution's site and its various facilities, ensuring that licensing and accreditation standards are being implemented, before recommending final approval of the licensing and confirming that study may commence.
 7. The licensed Institution is awarded a certificate of practice carrying the Institution's name, address, date and registration number. The Institution does not have the right to operate until it is registered in the commercial register and has submitted a bank guarantee of one hundred thousand riyals for the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, valid throughout the duration of the license.
 8. The Licensing Committee can make comments and ask for amendments in the work/assignments, in the equipment of the



Institution and in its academic logistic plan so that the standards are applied in a satisfactory manner.

9. In all cases the decisions of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education regarding the award or rejection of the license at each stage of the licensing process are in the public domain and all its procedures are made with objectivity and transparency.

Procedures for Renewal of Licensing and Accreditation

Renewal of licensing and accreditation is intended to obtain continuity of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education recognition of the Institution, to ensure the quality of the offered educational programs and to check their compliance with the Licensing and Accreditation Standards of Higher Education Institutions in the State of Qatar.

The procedures for renewal of licensing and accreditation consist of the following steps:

1. The process of licensing and accreditation renewal happens, on the first occasion, after three years from the beginning of the first academic year of the institution, thereafter licensing is renewed every five years.
2. The Institution applies for licensing renewal and fills out a special form (see Appendix 2) before three months from the end of the first period of the license.
3. The Department of Higher Education Institution's Affairs asks the Institution seeking renewal to submit a Self-Assessment Report, which should provide sufficient information and evidence on the extent to which the Institution meets the licensing and accreditation standards that govern institutions and programs of Higher Education in the State of Qatar.
4. The Department of Higher Education Institution's Affairs examines the documents submitted by the Institution and performs a site visit to the location, and then makes one of the



following decisions:

- Grants renewal of licensing.
- Postpones or delays of the license renewal until the submission of required additional information or the solution of minor problems.
- Postpones the licensing renewal for a specified period during which the Institution is placed under monitoring and testing probation. This procedure is taken in case of deficiency or defective aspects in meeting the licensing standards set forth.
- Non-renewal of the licensing and giving the Institution a specified time to make the necessary arrangements to close the Institution.

Internal procedures of the Licensing and Accreditation

1. The Minister of Education and Higher Education formulates a Licensing and Accreditation Committee (LAC), which may include representatives from the Higher Education Institute, Qatar University, the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development and one representative from the Institution being evaluated.
2. The LAC shall examine documents submitted by the Institution.
3. The LAC organizes a site visit to the Institution's location, which includes the inspection of various facilities and administrative operations, interviews with management, staff, faculty, and students.
4. The LAC submits a technical recommendation for awarding the accreditation to the Minister of Education and Higher Education for clearance.
5. The LAC has the right to make observations and to request or



require modifications in the methods of implementing the academic programs offered by the Institution and in the various inputs, until the standards are applied in a satisfactory manner.

6. The LAC has the authority not to renew a license and to close down the Institution, a sanction applied only with the consent of the Minister of Education and Higher Education .
7. In all cases, decisions of the Committee regarding accreditation of the institution / non-accreditation / accreditation renewal / withdrawal or suspension of accreditation / cancellation of accreditation/ are public resolutions published in the available media for the body and all procedures are made with objectivity and transparency. The results of the evaluation and accreditation for each stage should not be overruled unless it is proved that they were not applied in accordance with the principles of accredited evaluation and standards.

Procedures for Accreditation of New Academic Programs

The licensed Institution does not have the right to add new academic programs unless it has been approved and accredited by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education . New academic programs are accredited according to the following steps:

1. The Institution submits a letter addressed to the Director of Higher Education Institution's Affairs Department , identifying the new academic program that it intends to add and the thinking and motives behind the proposal.
2. The Institution submits a detailed feasibility study for the new program covering all of its academic, economic, and operational aspects.
3. The Institution submits all documents and records related to the new academic program in addition to the new partnership



documents, academic accreditation and quality assurance.

4. The Department of Higher Education Institution's Affairs examines the application and the documents submitted by the Institution and administers a site visit to any or all of the Institution's facilities as it shall deem fit, and then one of the following decisions is taken:
 - Approval of the accreditation application and submitting the recommendation to award accreditation to the Minister of Education and Higher Education for clearance.
 - Rejection, in writing, of the application to add the new program, clearly stating the reasons that led to the rejection.
 - Postponement of an action on the application and asking the institution to provide further quality assurance to ensure that licensing and accreditation standards are met.
 - The Institution can submit an appeal, in writing, against the rejection decision to the Minister of Education and Higher Education within a period not exceeding one month from the date of application rejection.

Violations and legal procedures

1. A preliminary approval and final authorization and appropriation and final approval are issued by the Minister of Education and Higher Education .
2. The Institution must submit an annual report to the Department of Higher Education Institution's Affairs, addressing, among other things, its academic, financial, and administrative status.
3. There should be a specialized committee, composed of the Department of Higher Education Institution's Affairs to verify the accreditation standards. If any institution does not comply with



the standards of accreditation, the committee must report the non-compliance to the Director of the Higher Education Institution's Affairs.

4. When an institution violates the terms of the document or the procedures, a written warning is issued to the Institution to remove the violation within a specified time period.
5. If the violation continues after the period specified in the warning, one of these actions is taken:
 - To stop the registration of new students for one academic year or more.
 - The closure of the institution, and withdrawal of the license and the taking of any necessary actions.
6. The Chairperson of the Institution is responsible academically, administratively, and financially for the Institution's affairs, and represents it in front of other bodies.



Appendixes

Appendix (1)

Application Form

Name of operator:

ID Number:

Name of college or university:

Fax no:

Phone no:

E-mail:

Administrative Principal:

Phone: Fax:

E-mail :

Academic Principal:

Phone:

Fax:

E-mail:

Signature of applicant:



Appendix (2)

License Renewal Application Form

Registration no:		
Institution name and year of foundation :		
Institution address:		
Name of operator:		
Commercial register no:		
Phone no:		
Administrative Principal:		
Phone :	Fax	E-mail:
Academic Principal:		
Phone:	Fax:	E-mail:
Signature of applicant:		



Appendix (3)

Adding a Program Application Form

Registration no:

Institution name and address:

New program name:

Name of operator:

Phone no:

ID no:

E-mail

Administrative Principal:

Fax:

E-mail:

Phone:

Academic Principal:

Phone:

Fax:

E-mail:

Signature of applicant:

Appendix (4)

Data and Documents of Application

The application is submitted together with the following data and documents:

1. A letter addressed to the Director of the Higher Education Institution's Affairs, contains the name, physical location, and the vision of the institution and the place of its establishment and the motives of its creation.
2. Names of the operators, founders, and CVs of the staff.
3. For natural persons, a copy of the ID, passport, and CID are enclosed.
4. For legal persons, a copy of the company contract and the CID of the partners are enclosed.
5. Certificates of the commercial register of the companies.
6. The mission and objectives of the educational institution and the offered programs.
7. Statement of the company capital and the financial support of the Institution.
8. A pledge document of the founders, not to withdraw from the project of establishing the Institution before commencing the study in the Institution.
9. All the information data and documents relating to the nature of academic partnership with the main Institution if available in this stage.
10. License fee of five thousand Qatari riyals and a bank guarantee is provided to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.