



International Quality Review

Al Ain University

Review Report
February 2024

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About this review

This is a report of an International Quality Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Al Ain University. The review took place from 12 to 14 February 2024 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Dave Dowland
- Mr Matthew Kitching
- Ms Sarah Tammadge-Wall (student reviewer)

The QAA Officer for this review was Mr Alan Weale.

International Quality Review (IQR) offers institutions outside the UK the opportunity to have a review by the UK's Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). The review benchmarks the institutions' quality assurance processes against international quality assurance standards set out in Part 1 of the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\)](#).

In International Quality Review, the QAA review team:

- makes conclusions against each of the 10 standards set out in Part 1 of the ESG
- makes conditions (if relevant)
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- comes to an overall conclusion as to whether the institution meets the standards for International Quality Review.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section: [Key findings](#). The section [Explanations of the findings](#) provides the detailed commentary.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission. A dedicated section explains the method for [International Quality Review](#) and has links to other informative documents. For an explanation of terms see the [Glossary](#) at the end of this report.

Key findings

Executive summary

Al Ain University (AAU) is licensed to operate under the auspices of the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE). AAU was established in 2004 and the first student cohort was enrolled in 2005. AAU expanded its facilities by opening a second campus in Abu Dhabi in 2008, offering programmes in Business and Law. Having begun with three colleges (Engineering; Business; Education, Humanities and Social Sciences), AAU has continued to expand its programme offerings which now include 22 undergraduate programmes across six colleges (Engineering; Pharmacy; Law; Education, Humanities and Social Sciences; Business; and Communication and Media), eight master's programmes, and one Professional Diploma in Teaching programme.

AAU's vision is to be among the leading learning institutions in the region, by achieving international quality standards in teaching, research, and community engagement.

AAU's mission is to strive to be a learning institution of excellence that responds to market needs and prepares graduates who possess the scientific and technological competencies that are needed for their careers. AAU plays an active role in the creation of knowledge through quality teaching and research. It values community engagement and nurtures partnerships with institutions and organisations through a commitment to the educational, technological, and economic development of the country and the region.

Student enrolment for the academic year 2023-24 is a total of 1,663 made up of 865 undergraduate students, 85 postgraduate and 713 Higher Diploma students. Emirati students account for 28% of enrolments, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) students 34% and international students 38%.

As of 2023, AAU had 209 full-time and 12 part-time faculty members across the two campuses and distributed amongst the six colleges.

The strategic goals and objectives for the period 2021-25 include: strengthening the University's commitment to deliver quality undergraduate and graduate programmes; continuing to recruit and retain a culturally diverse faculty with teaching informed by research; improving recruitment, retention and graduation rates; fostering research by supporting faculty members to maximise success in research, scholarship and other sustainable activities; securing and strengthening information technology and media services; and contributing to a sustainable society and local community by addressing their educational, cultural, social and economic interests.

In reaching conclusions about the extent to which Al Ain University meets the 10 ESG Standards, the QAA review team followed the evidence-based review procedure as outlined in the handbook for International Quality Review (June 2021). AAU provided the review team with a self-evaluation and supporting evidence. During the review visit, which took place from 12 to 14 February 2024, the review team held a total of seven meetings with the University President, senior management team, academic staff, professional support staff, students, alumni and external stakeholders. The review team also had the opportunity to observe the University's facilities and learning resources at the Al Ain campus.

In summary, the team found three examples of good practice and was able to make five recommendations for improvement/enhancement. The recommendations are of a desirable rather than essential nature and are proposed to enable AAU to build on existing practice which is operating satisfactorily but which could be improved or enhanced. The team did not set any conditions.

Overall, the team concluded that Al Ain University **meets** all standards for International Quality Review.

QAA's conclusions about Al Ain University

The QAA review team reached the following conclusions about the higher education provision at Al Ain University.

European Standards and Guidelines

Al Ain University **meets** all 10 of the ESG Standards and Guidelines.

Conditions

The team did not set any conditions.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at Al Ain University:

- the mobilisation of the entire University community in its Sustainable Development Initiative, through academic programmes, research and extracurricular initiatives (ESG Standard 1.1)
- the range, quality and fit-for-purpose nature of the University's physical resources make a significant contribution to enabling students to meet programme learning outcomes (ESG Standard 1.6)
- the bespoke digital portal system for institutional document management is an accessible, easy-to-use and integrated means for the sound administration of quality assurance (ESG Standard 1.7).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to Al Ain University:

- strengthen the approach taken to minuting committee business so that the main points of discussion and decisions are captured effectively (ESG Standard 1.1)
- revise the disciplinary and appeals procedures to ensure that they make explicit a series of checks and balances to embed procedural assurance of fair and reasonable hearings (ESG Standard 1.1)
- strengthen arrangements for post-assessment moderation (ESG Standard 1.3)
- ensure students can request extenuating circumstances and submit grade grievances for all credit-bearing assessment (ESG Standard 1.3)
- implement a programme of regular peer review designed to enhance teaching and learning (ESG Standard 1.5).

Explanation of the findings about Al Ain University

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a [brief glossary](#) at the end of this report. A fuller [glossary of terms](#) is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the [review method](#), also on the QAA website.

Standard 1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.

Findings

1.1 AAU is subject to extensive external regulation. The Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) is prominent as a source of oversight and guidance for the University. AAU is licensed by the Ministry of Education and subject to oversight by the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK). AAU is also subject to significant external scrutiny through international accreditation. Subject areas already accredited include: Engineering by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology; Pharmacy by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education; Law by the French High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education; Education by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation; Business by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business; and Communication by the Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programs.

1.2 There is an explicit institutional framework for quality assurance. The Quality Assurance and Institutional Research Centre (QAIRC) is the administrative focus for quality assurance and management information. QAIRC reports through the Vice-President for Accreditation and Quality Assurance to the President. There is a structure of university, college and programme quality assurance committees, including AAU Quality Assurance (QA) Administrative Affairs and QA Academic Affairs Committees, with the University Council having oversight under the Board of Trustees.

1.3 The Quality Assurance Manual is a central reference point for quality assurance procedures and the operation of the internal quality assurance system, accompanied by a quality assurance calendar. There is a set of policies and procedures aligned to CAA requirements. They include the Quality Assurance/Institutional Effectiveness Policy and the Benchmarking Policy. The Quality Manual and the main policies are publicly and readily available. AAU uses a digital system to support the management of the policies, with a requirement for annual review.

1.4 There is an institutional effectiveness cycle. QAIRC coordinates the quality assessment process involving academic and administrative units, based on a cycle of planning and review of activities through reports from administrative and academic units. The academic assessment reports confirm the completion of the Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) assessment process, including an annual assessment report from each college to QAIRC. The review team saw examples of reports with tracking of the implementation of actions from the previous year and actions for the next year.

1.5 Alongside the academic and administrative reporting process, there are yearly operational planning and longer term strategic and operational planning processes over a five-year period, together with a system of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). An annual report is produced to bring together information drawn from the range of reporting mechanisms. Following scrutiny through various committees and by the President, the University Council considers the reports and approves follow-up actions. The quality assurance cycle feeds into the budgetary and strategic planning process. The Board of Trustees has ultimate oversight of the Strategic and Operational Plans. The most recent CAA report on the re-licensure of the University confirmed that there was an overall effective approach to strategic and operational planning with a rolling programme of action planning

informed by University goals and objectives, reflection on progress in the previous cycle, and an outcomes assessment which informs the annual budget cycle as well as tracking through the annual reports.

1.6 There is a Risk Management Policy overseen by a Risk Management Committee. The recent CAA re-licensure report concluded that the risk management structure was clear, with a spectrum of risks considered, including those relating to matters of quality assurance and supported by a sound risk register, with scope for some enhancement to the process to clarify controls to mitigate risk.

1.7 AAU is subject to government requirements for the reporting of institutional performance data through the Centre for Higher Education Data and Statistics (CHEDS), regulated by the MoE and by ADEK. This provides a valuable source of independent assurance of the integrity of data.

1.8 AAU draws on many sources of feedback from stakeholders in the quality and effectiveness monitoring cycle. There is a benchmarking policy to support external comparisons of the quality of academic programmes. There are college Industrial Advisory Boards that provide an embedded source of feedback from external experts. The use of international rankings is influential as a benchmarking tool. AAU also draws on extensive feedback from international accreditations.

1.9 Surveys of students, graduating students, administrative satisfaction surveys and a survey of Graduate Destinations are undertaken with the data collection coordinated by QAIRC or national agencies. The surveys are used to inform strategic and operational planning and for the monitoring of KPIs. There is a schedule for the implementation of the surveys under the oversight of the University Council.

1.10 Student representatives are included as members of the University Council and college committees. The review team heard from students and faculty of multiple examples of action taken in response to student feedback although it appeared that students had become aware that action had been taken rather than being systematically informed by the University and there tended to be reliance on student representatives to keep other students informed. For example, students requested more courses on emerging Artificial Intelligence to which AAU has responded positively; the development of an Academic Advising Manual in response to student feedback; and the installation of cameras in the car park because of student concerns about safety.

1.11 The review team saw indications of significant institutional reflection on standards, quality and enhancement, as indicated in the previous paragraphs in this section. Such reflection was not, however, always readily apparent in the minutes of committees, which tended to refer briefly to conclusions rather than capturing more fully a summary of the substance of deliberations and the reasons for the decisions and conclusions of committees. For example, the review team saw evidence that the Pharmacy programme effectiveness report had been presented both to the Programme and the College Councils, but there was a truncated record of discussion in those committees. There is similar brevity to the minutes of the University Council. The review team read the sample minutes of the Disciplinary Committee, finding them brief and lacking in a record of the reasons why particular disciplinary outcomes had been decided rather than others; specifically, there was no explanation whether any alleviating circumstances had been considered nor whether any alternative penalties had been considered in the interests of proportionality of outcome. The retention of a more substantive record of the main points of deliberation and the reasons for conclusions and decisions would provide an audit trail of the thinking process across AAU and a means of demonstrating the University's systematic approach to the management of standards and quality enhancement. That would also add to the value of the evidence base

for future external accreditation exercises. The review team therefore **recommends** AAU to strengthen the approach taken to minuting committee business so that the main points of discussion and decisions are captured effectively.

1.12 Deans, Heads of Departments and Programme Directors are charged to inform all students regularly and systematically about academic integrity issues. Students confirmed to the review team that they had been made aware of requirements for academic referencing and conduct in examinations, including orientations, briefings before assessments and information accompanying the syllabus. Students have use of the Turnitin system to check their work for plagiarism before submission for assessment. There are disciplinary procedures and procedures for appeals against disciplinary decisions. There are also procedures for student academic appeals and grade grievances.

1.13 The review team heard that some arrangements are made to support students facing disciplinary hearings, for example, giving several days' notice of an impending hearing to enable a student to prepare, and flexibility over the scheduling of hearings. There is, however, no provision for a student to be accompanied to a disciplinary or appeals hearing by anyone offering personal support. The procedures do not mention any requirement for a student to receive reasonable notice of hearings. The procedures do not include information to preclude a member of staff from reviewing a disciplinary decision in which they were previously involved. No specific criteria are mentioned for an appeal against a disciplinary decision. The review team noted, from a sample copy of the minutes of a Disciplinary Committee meeting, that there was not a full explanation of the reasons why particular decisions had been reached. More specifically, it is not clear whether any alleviating circumstances were considered, for example whether the cases involved first offences, or if there was any discussion whether a lesser penalty might or might not be appropriate in the interests of proportionality. The review team did not see evidence of actual unfairness to students but in the interests of transparency the review team **recommends** AAU to revise the disciplinary and appeals procedures to ensure that it makes explicit a series of checks and balances to embed procedural assurance of fair and reasonable hearings.

1.14 AAU has a 'Non-Discrimination Policy.' The review team heard of the guidance provided by Human Resources to those involved in the recruitment and promotion of staff to observe the policy on non-discrimination.

1.15 AAU is committed to pursuing a Sustainability Development Initiative, addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Faculty and students told the review team of many examples of the practical impact of that initiative including the hosting of an international conference; the 10th International Conference on Social Networks Analysis, Management, and Security (SNAMS 2023); a workshop organised by the Deanship of Student Affairs entitled 'Sustainability is a Way of Life'; and the focusing of the most recent graduation ceremony on the theme of sustainability. The review team concluded that the mobilisation of the entire University community in its Sustainable Development Initiative, through academic programmes, research and extracurricular initiatives is **good practice**.

1.16 Overall, the review team concluded that AAU's quality assurance systems are comprehensive and robust, supportive of continuous improvement, and reinforced by external sources of validation and the use of wide-ranging data to assure academic quality and standards. Standard 1.1: Policy for quality assurance is therefore **met**.

Standard 1.2 Design and approval of programmes

Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications' framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

Findings

2.1 The design and approval of new programmes at AAU is governed by the policy 'Development of a New Academic Program'. This policy has been effective since September 2011 and was last reviewed in December 2023. The policy provides a framework for the identification and development of new academic programmes. Initiation and development of a new programme evolves from the quality assurance committees within the respective academic colleges of the institution. There are five stages to the AAU new programme development process: 1) proposal for a new programme plan; 2) approval by AAU Board of Trustees; 3) self-study report; 4) submission to national authorities, ADEK and CAA; and 5) launch of the new programme.

2.2 The team found that AAU's process is detailed and comprehensive. Initial proposal plans are submitted to the College Council for approval, these proposals require staff developing them to identify the title, description, duration and mode of the proposed programme. Staff are also required to conduct a benchmarking analysis as part of the proposal. University Council and the Board of Trustees must also issue approval for the proposal to progress to the next stage. The development of a self-study report then allows the institution to consider, in detail, to what extent the proposed programme meets the institution's own standards, as well as the extent to which it aligns to the requirements of the relevant national authorities. For instance, new programmes must demonstrate they are responding to economic, societal and market needs, and outline the benefit to students both locally and globally.

2.3 Colleges send their self-study report for consideration by QAIRC. After implementing QAIRC recommendations and conditions, the proposal is submitted to relevant national agencies, including ADEK and CAA, to obtain approval and/or accreditation for the new programme. Once approval for the new programme has been granted by ADEK and CAA, QAIRC informs the University Council for final approval and launch of the programme.

2.4 The team found that programmes are designed with objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes. AAU programme learning outcomes are also aligned with the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework, which is part of the national accreditation criteria administered by the CAA. Staff also demonstrated an appropriate understanding of the role of learning outcomes in developing new provision.

2.5 AAU informed the team that academic programmes are underpinned by an instructional philosophy based upon 'learning by doing', sustained by classical teaching and learning methods, and technology integrated into the classroom by instructors. The team found that there are effective arrangements in place to enact this philosophy, including through programme design. For instance, programmes routinely include a well structured placement opportunity in the form of the Internship (called 'Practicum' in the College of Education, and 'Clerkship' in the College of Pharmacy) module in each programme.

Students confirmed to the team that this work-based learning helps them to demonstrate and reinforce disciplinary knowledge and practical skills in a professional setting.

2.6 The institution also stipulates that all undergraduate students, regardless of their major, must study 'General University Education' courses which are set at 33 credit hours. Course topics cover a diverse range of subjects including computer literacy and English. They aim to enable students to demonstrate the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge and to reinforce the spirit of inquiry. AAU stated that these courses aim to equip the graduates with a comprehensive range of essential knowledge, fundamental personal and professional skills and essential attitudes; enabling students to progress smoothly in their University studies and perform highly in their careers. Students recognised that these courses were effectively integrated into their programmes and supported their learning.

2.7 Overall, the team was able to confirm that AAU has clear and explicit policies and procedures for the design and approval of new programmes. These are routinely followed, and programmes are subject to a formal institutional approval process that involves an appropriate range of stakeholders, including employers and students. Therefore, Standard 2: Design and approval of programmes is **met**.

Standard 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

Findings

3.1 AAU has a published Teaching and Learning Strategy (2021-25), which is publicly available on the AAU website. The Strategy outlines the institution's core educational purpose, which is that they are committed to delivering quality undergraduate and graduate programmes that are characterised by rigorous disciplinary depth and breadth, with a high level of direct interaction between academic staff and students. According to its mission, AAU strives to be a learning centre of excellence that responds to market needs and prepares graduates who possess the scientific and technological competencies that are needed for their careers.

3.2 The Strategy also details a series of values, including: 1) collaboration; 2) diversity; 3) excellence; 4) integrity; and 5) sustainability, together with a set of strategic priorities ranging from flexibility in the curriculum and varied teaching methods that support student diversity to continuous improvement and the cultivation of a supportive environment. AAU informed the team that these priorities are enacted through a strategic framework that places significant emphasis on student-centered learning and the integration of technology.

3.3 This strategic approach places an emphasis on a curriculum that enables students to choose from a number of elective courses to support their needs, skills and areas of interest. Effective and embedded use of the website and the Learning Management System (LMS) provides a wide range of online resources including recorded lectures, e-books and digital learning materials. AAU also encourages peer-to-peer learning and collaboration, which allows students to enhance their learning experience and form study groups and work on projects together. In addition, microlearning modules are delivered to students in small digestible units run over a semester (16 weeks). AAU offers flexible scheduling for students to choose when to attend classes, this can include morning, evening or weekend classes to support individual requirements.

3.4 AAU uses a range of pedagogical methods, including formal lectures, problem-based, experiential and lab-based learning. Some disciplines also include stand-alone laboratory courses and others supporting lab sessions. The LMS is used by faculty members to provide course materials, lecture notes, readings, multimedia content and to post assignments. The system allows students to access the materials at their convenience, based on their learning preferences and schedules. The LMS also has communication tools, including discussion forums and messaging features, to enable interaction with both instructors and fellow students. The platform enables students to seek clarification, discuss course concepts or ask questions. Students were positive about the wide range of teaching and learning methods employed on their programmes, including the opportunity to take classes online with students from the Abu Dhabi campus.

3.5 PLOs are explicitly mapped to course learning outcomes in each syllabus as part of the PLO Assessment Plan, which outlines the outcomes to be assessed during the year. The team found that AAU makes use of a wide variety of assessment methods, including quizzes, assignments, projects, essays, presentations and midterm and final exams. Many of the assessment tasks require students to reflect on practical and work-based situations, which provides students with opportunities to make assessments relevant to their own situations and interests. An exit exam is also conducted at the end of each semester that is mapped to student outcomes. Informally, an exit survey is conducted in conjunction with the

exit exam to identify students' personal perceptions about the extent to which they believe they have achieved the outcomes of the programme. This is used in annual monitoring to enhance the University's assessment practice.

3.6 AAU informed the team that it provides timely feedback, thereby enabling students to improve prior to undertaking further assessment. This was supported by students who confirmed that they were satisfied with the range of assessment and the accessibility and clarity of grading criteria, which are made available through the LMS. Students also referred to the use of plagiarism-detection software, rubrics and a general education course on academic writing, which they considered were effective in helping to prevent instances of academic misconduct.

3.7 Overall, the team found that assessment allows students to demonstrate that relevant learning outcomes have been achieved. However, the team found that while robust assessment processes are largely in place there is an absence of post-assessment moderation arrangements that support consistency. Currently, there is no routine second or blind marking and no sampling of assessment and feedback. Consequently, there is an overreliance on the role of individual lecturers in securing assessment. The team therefore **recommends** that AAU strengthen arrangements for post-assessment moderation.

3.8 AAU has an established system to allow students to submit a grade grievance where they are dissatisfied with the outcome of an assessment. Operation of the policy is overseen by the Admission and Registration Unit. Students confirmed to the team that they are aware of their right to raise a grade grievance through this process. The policy contains clear responsibilities and timescales for addressing any such grievance. The Dean of the College considers any cases, and the University President makes the final decision. The team viewed a sample of appeals, which indicated that the policy is implemented consistently.

3.9 AAU also has an Incomplete Grades Policy, which is detailed in the student handbook. Students who are unable to attend the final examination of a course due to extenuating circumstances during the final examination period may seek an incomplete grade 'I' for that course. The process and timescales surrounding the policy are clear and students must possess 36% in the coursework or midterm assessment to be eligible. However, the team found there was no clear rationale as to why the Incomplete Grades Policy did not permit extenuating circumstances for assessment other than the final exam. AAU also informed the team that students are not permitted to appeal any grade they receive for assessment conducted through the Incomplete Grades process. The team considered that issues could still present themselves in relation to the accuracy and reliability of marking during late assessment and students ought to therefore retain a right of appeal. The team therefore **recommends** that AAU ensure students can request extenuating circumstances and submit grade grievances for all credit-bearing assessment.

3.10 Notwithstanding the recommendations made in this Standard, the team found that the institution has a clear strategic approach to student-centred learning, teaching and assessment, employs an extensive range of teaching and learning methods, a suitably wide range of assessment methods and provides timely and helpful feedback for students. AAU ensures effective integration of technology as a central part of its teaching and learning approach. The team therefore considered that Standard 3: Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment is **met**.

Standard 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student 'life cycle', for example student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

Findings

4.1 The Undergraduate Admissions and Masters Admission policies give a transparent overview of how students are admitted to AAU and provide a basis for a parity of admission across the University. The AAU Admission and Registration Unit oversee these arrangements. Students reported a wide range of reasons for studying at AAU including the course portfolio, proximity of the institution and its reputation in the region. There has been a steady increase in students enrolling at Al Ain University since 2018 rising from 5,410 in 2017-18 to 7,125 in 2022-23. The student demographic demonstrates a diversity of nationalities with 26% of the students enrolled over the last five years being categorised as international.

4.2 The admissions process for students is outlined on the University website and for Emirati students has a simple 'apply now' button. Students are accepted according to academic standards which are set out by the MoE in the United Arab Emirates. This is reflected in AAU's Undergraduate and Masters Admission policies. These policies and supporting information are easily accessible on the website. Information is categorised under relevant colleges with clear and transparent admission requirements for each course offered at AAU. This includes information about documents required for application, for example it outlines the need for secondary school certificates and transcript, health certificates and other administrative requirements. Students who successfully apply to AAU are required to hold a valid English Language Proficiency certificate.

4.3 There is a clear and comprehensive policy for the recognition of prior learning. This covers students who are transferring from another institute as well as applicants who can demonstrate suitable prior experiential learning, for example from working in industry.

4.4 Enrolled students benefit from a very comprehensive student handbook, which also outlines admissions as well as the University's calendar, their rights and responsibilities as students and many other aspects of student life from academic support to wellbeing. All this information is also available to prospective students or interested external stakeholders on the website.

4.5 As well as the handbook, the Deanship of Student Affairs organises for new students to meet with the President of Al Ain University when they begin their studies. This orientation session outlines the support networks available for students throughout their studies such as Academic Advisors and College Deans but also how to get involved with participating in extracurricular activities. Each college also offers an orientation day for students which goes over college-specific details such as the structure of their course and credits.

4.6 Students at AAU are encouraged to work hard and are recognised for this through discounted fees if they reach over a certain Semester Grade Point Average (SGPA). As well as academic recognition AAU also encourages extracurricular participation by awarding scholarships to higher achievers. The approach to this is outlined in the student handbook.

4.7 An academic advisor is assigned to each student upon registration, at a ratio of 20 to 30 students per advisor. Advisors help to support students with their academic goals. Students who met with the review team were aware of who their academic advisors were

and understood the role in their academic journey. The academic advisors are supplied with clear guidance on how to conduct the role and AAU evaluates academic advising biannually as well as obtaining feedback through the student surveys that are conducted.

4.8 Progression of students is monitored by the AAU Registration Unit and the college deanship. AAU has various policies in place to monitor students such as the Academic Advising or Student Counselling Policy. There are various interventions in place to support students throughout their academic life at AAU. These are clearly outlined in the Academic Progress policy. Students who fall below a certain Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) are sent an 'academic warning' which is followed up if improvement is not forthcoming. An academic advisor supports students to improve their CGPA.

4.9 A comprehensive counselling service is available to support students in the many different facets of the student life-cycle. Help is available not only for academic and careers matters, but also for pastoral issues and in respect of crisis intervention. The service is available throughout the University day and into evening hours to provide flexibility for students with diverse needs.

4.10 Undergraduate and master's requirements of completion are clearly detailed in their policy. Oversight of this policy sits with the college Deans. Students who have completed their course will have passed all the required courses and achieved a CGPA of at least 2.0 (undergraduate level) or 3.0 (postgraduate level). Students who fail to re-register are followed up with the intention of exploring options that may help students to continue their studies.

4.11 Students who graduate receive a certificate as well as a transcript of the modules they completed and the grades they achieved in both points and grades. As well as this they also get an information page which outlines the grading and explains CGPA to the student.

4.12 The team concluded that AAU has published regulations covering all phases of the student journey and that these are transparently and consistently applied from admission to graduation. Therefore, Standard 1.4: Student admission, progression, recognition and certification is **met**.

Standard 1.5 Teaching staff

Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

Findings

5.1 AAU aspires to attract and hire faculty members from reputable and prestigious international universities. To assist the institution in meeting the objective, vacancies are advertised widely, including through the AAU website, electronic and print media, social media and other forums. The selection process for faculty members is underpinned by the requirement to possess an excellent academic record, research potential and effective teaching experience. Vacant posts are filled through a hiring process implemented by a Faculty Recruitment and Hiring Committee, which is headed by the college Dean, with representation from each programme in the college. The team found that AAU follows clear, transparent and fair processes for staff recruitment and has suitable conditions of employment in place.

5.2 AAU issues an annual Faculty Handbook which is produced for academic staff and includes details about the organisational structure of the University, duties and responsibilities of faculty members together with faculty appointment and recruitment arrangements. The handbook is a comprehensive guide for faculty members working at AAU and complies with the structure indicated by the CAA standards. Professional support staff recruitment is described within the AAU Staff Handbook which outlines the staff recruitment process and procedures. The team considered that information pertaining to critical policies and procedures that staff are required to follow were clearly and comprehensively contained in relevant handbooks.

5.3 AAU has adopted an equal opportunity and non-discriminatory recruitment policy, which aims to select qualified candidates regardless of the applicant's gender, race, religion or physical disability. As of 2023, AAU had 209 full-time faculty members across two campuses and distributed among its six colleges. A significant proportion of faculty (more than 75%) were from, Jordan, Egypt, Canada and Pakistan. Male colleagues constituted 65% of teaching staff and the remaining 35% were women. The distribution of faculty rank was as follows: Professor (19%), Associate Professor (34%), Assistant Professor (39%) and Instructor (8%).

5.4 AAU employs 12 part-time faculty members, of which nine are trained to PhD level and three to master's level. AAU defines a part-time faculty member as one whose employment is not with AAU and whose teaching load is six hours or less per semester. Part-time members are entitled to the same professional privileges and compensation arrangements and are subject to the same University regulations as full-time faculty members. The University specifies that the ratio of part-time faculty members in each academic programme should not exceed 25% of the total faculty members. Staff CVs viewed by the team show that AAU has a suitably experienced and qualified staff complement.

5.5 AAU faculty members are promoted in accordance with the rules outlined in the Faculty Handbook. Criteria for promotion are based upon performance in teaching, research and University and community engagement. The professional staff promotion policies are outlined in the staff handbook.

5.6 Contract renewal is based upon a comprehensive evaluation process. Each faculty member is evaluated by students, the Head of Department and College Dean. Students assess the teaching performance of faculty members, while the Head of Department and

College Dean assess teaching performance, contribution to committees, research activity, community service and contribution to the University. Again, the team found the process is clearly outlined in the faculty and staff handbook and consistently applied.

5.7 AAU considers that professional development is key to ensuring that AAU staff are equipped to undertake their roles and meet the business needs of the University. The institution has introduced a Professional Development Centre (PDC) that serves as a central organisational unit for the coordination and delivery of professional development programmes. The Centre serves both academic faculty and administrative staff and supports delivery of specialised programmes for the development, learning and upskilling of staff. The Centre offers a range of learning modes and resources that includes face-to-face courses, online learning, customised events and experiential learning to enhance participants' professional learning and career development. In addition, the PDC oversees induction and courses for new recruits to the University. Staff reported that they have access to a wide range of funded continuing professional development and AAU demonstrated this to the team with a range of examples.

5.8 Staff are required to complete an annual plan of performance in three areas of academic activity: teaching, research and community service. The plan is submitted to the Head of Department or Dean, and towards the end of the academic year staff are required to submit a record of actual performance against agreed indicators as the basis for assessing performance. The team found that staff clearly understood this process, that it was rigorously implemented and that comprehensive records were maintained using the University's online systems.

5.9 Currently, AAU does not operate a regular system of peer review. The institution reported that this had been the subject of a recent accreditation report produced by the CAA and that the institution was considering how to strengthen the role of peer review across the institution. The team determined that this had the potential to enhance teaching and learning, providing an opportunity to share good practice. Consequently, the team **recommends** that AAU implement a programme of regular peer review designed to enhance teaching and learning.

5.10 The team found that owing to the clear recruitment procedures, detailed and appropriate performance management systems, online record-keeping and varied programme of continuing professional development that Standard 1.5: Teaching staff was **met**.

Standard 1.6 Learning resources and student support

Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

Findings

6.1 AAU has two campuses. The main campus is in Al Ain and the other in Abu Dhabi. All the provisions at Al Ain are also available at Abu Dhabi which ensures that students at both campuses have access to the same experience. State-of-the-art online video calling hardware is used to make calls across campuses, which contributes to creating a seamless experience for students and faculty. The review team heard from Al Ain students that they have lectures with Abu Dhabi students and rarely if ever experienced difficulties with this approach.

6.2 The physical teaching spaces on campus are entirely appropriate to the teaching modes in operation. Classrooms are equipped with up-to-date interactive teaching equipment and lecture theatres are available where large group teaching is appropriate. Well equipped computer laboratories are available for both specialist and general computing activities. As well as the usual rooms used for teaching, AAU has invested in specialist equipment for certain courses such as cyber security which have computer rooms with servers which are set up to teach students the specifics of the subject. In the media department there are Apple Mac computers for more specialised work. During the visit, the review team was able to see various laboratories that were equipped with modern up-to-date equipment for chemistry, pharmacy and other sciences.

6.3 AAU has two libraries, one on the Al Ain campus and one on the Abu Dhabi campus. Students have access to both Arabic and English books and journals in the physical library, as well as a range of subscriptions to e-journals and resources. Overall, the library on campus boasts 94,000 books, periodicals, multimedia and other relevant resources. The libraries are split into male and female areas. The library has different spaces for students to work reflecting different styles of learning, including large tables for group work, computer areas and small bookable rooms for small group work or private study. The library is open 08:00 to 19:00 Sunday - Wednesday, on Thursdays the library is open until 16:30. It is closed on Fridays, Saturdays and public holidays. Opening into the evening allows flexibility for students to study before and after classes. Undergraduate students can borrow seven books for seven days and master's students can borrow 12 books for 14 days. They have the option of inter-library loans within and outside of the United Arab Emirates.

6.4 The delivery of library services is overseen by the AAU Library Committee (AAULC) who look at the responsibilities of the library and its resources ensuring that the library is meeting the needs of the students and faculty.

6.5 There is also an English language centre on campus supporting students learning the language. They offer extracurricular learning opportunities and competitions which students engage with to further their learning.

6.6 Pastoral and extracurricular provisions are also made available to students. On campus there is a gymnasium, rooms for student groups and a mosque. There is also a medical centre available on campus.

6.7 When considering the moderate size of the student population, the review team concluded that the range, quality and fit-for-purpose nature of the University's physical

resources make a significant contribution to enabling students to meet programme learning outcomes and are a feature of **good practice**.

6.8 Academic support from faculty is described on the website or in the student handbook. As mentioned in Standard 1.4 there is a comprehensive academic advising policy for students to support them in their academic goals.

6.9 AAU offers conferences for students to support them with future careers prospects. As well as conferences, guidance and resources relating to career development are delivered within the Student Counselling service. Students can make an appointment with a counsellor by contacting the office or through an online system. The AAU alumni website also includes a graduate portal which lists vacancies which may be suitable.

6.10 The review team concluded that the learning resources and student support available were of a good standard and designed to help students achieve learning outcomes. The resources and services are readily accessible and are provided equitably across both AAU campuses. Standard 1.6: Learning resources and student support is therefore **met**.

Standard 1.7 Information management

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.

Findings

7.1 AAU uses a wide range of data sets for quality assurance and enhancement to monitor all aspects of institutional provision and to meet national regulatory requirements. Data is used to inform the management of academic provision, student admission, enrolment, retention, progression and achievement, employee workloads and institutional finance and resources, research publications and KPIs as well as external benchmarking and accreditation outcomes. The Quality Assurance and Institutional Research Centre (QAIRC) has a central role in the coordination and analysis of data reports for quality assurance.

7.2 AAU is subject to government requirements for the reporting and validation of institutional performance data through the Centre for Higher Education Data and Statistics (CHEDS), regulated by the MoE and by ADEK. This creates an independent check on the validation of data.

7.3 Each academic programme and administrative department prepares an annual assessment plan addressing AAU's mission. QAIRC coordinates the assessment of the outcomes through annual academic and administrative reports. The academic reports draw on analysis of programme effectiveness at college level. The reports confirm the completion of the annual review of programme learning outcomes, and the results of consideration of course assessment data, summary programme outcome data, exit examination results, student retention, progression, and achievement and other data sets.

7.4 A parallel process of administrative reports includes the use of data to substantiate progress with annually set targets and benchmarks for support departments. Administrative managers told the review team of their extensive use of data reports to monitor standards of service and the training available to enable effective data report management.

7.5 The annual assessment and administrative reports feed through to college and institutional KPIs. QAIRC coordinates the preparation of KPIs to inform strategic and operational planning, with each academic and administrative department producing a set of KPIs. The plans are approved and implemented under the oversight of the University Council and the Board of Trustees.

7.6 There are surveys of students, graduating students, faculty satisfaction and administrative satisfaction surveys. There is a survey of Graduate Destinations, with the data collection being coordinated by QAIRC or national agencies. The surveys are used to inform strategic and operational planning and for the monitoring of KPIs. There is a schedule for the implementation of the surveys under the oversight of the University Council. QAIRC coordinates action plans in response to surveys and the University Council has ultimate oversight through the annual assessment reporting process.

7.7 QAIRC maintains a Fact Book with a compilation of institutional data to support management decisions and for external use including accreditations. The main objective of the Fact Book is to provide a convenient and concise source of information to AAU decision-makers and external agencies. There is also an annual report drawing on standard institutional data.

7.8 QAIRC maintains the e-course file system according to CAA guidelines, with prescribed data sets to support quality assurance monitoring. QAIRC conducts random audits of course files to check that the files are maintained consistently and accurately, and the team saw evidence that these checks are carried out consistently.

7.9 AAU introduced the Banner Enterprise Resource System in 2022-23 for all aspects of institutional management including administration and academic functions. Staff were trained to use the new system. Students can register for their courses, submit statements and appeals, check the official transcript and study plan, in addition to other services via the e-services Banner. There are explicit arrangements to uphold the accuracy of student records and information security.

7.10 There is an in-house digital portal, owned by QAIRC, to house significant institutional documentation for quality assurance and administration, as approved by the University Council. The review team examined the portal system in detail. The portal is a basis for the electronic management of policies, programme and course management, the curriculum review process, the administration of surveys, faculty member evaluation forms, the tracking of accreditation and other aspects of the quality assurance processes. Work is underway to house the course file system within the portal. Faculty confirmed that they were well aware of the digital resources, benefited from training to use them effectively, and they gave many examples of regular use of these resources in course and programme management. The review team concluded that the bespoke digital portal system for institutional document management is an accessible, easy-to-use, and integrated means for the sound administration of quality assurance and as such is **good practice**.

7.11 AAU ensures the robust collection and analysis of data and information to enable the effective management of programmes and other activities, and therefore the team concludes that Standard 1.7: Information management is **met**.

Standard 1.8 Public information

Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.

Findings

8.1 AAU makes a wide range of information relating to its activities available publicly. The primary point of access for public information is the AAU website. The information made publicly available targets the full range of stakeholders including potential applicants, students, faculty and members of staff as well as external stakeholders and alumni. It includes links to handbooks, pages on admission regulations, as well as other detailed information about the constituent colleges and the programmes of study available to students. The information is clear, accessible, and CAA-compliant for all stakeholders.

8.2 The website has information for potential students such as their required documents for admissions as well as virtual tours of both the Al Ain and Abu Dhabi campuses. Potential students can also view financial information for both campuses which shows the breakdown of the various fees.

8.3 There is a link on the main AAU website to the alumni website which provides comprehensive information about the alumni office and its goals as well as contact details for graduate services and testimonies from other graduates. The review team met with some alumni of AAU and they spoke about how they often refer to the website as graduates and find it very easy to navigate.

8.4 The Public Relations Office provides the oversight of public information. The website is kept up-to-date and accurate by the AAU Publications Committee whose responsibility it is to keep the website 'current, consistent, and aligned'.

8.5 Students have access to a variety of handbooks which are readily accessible from the homepage of the website. This includes a university handbook and student handbook. Handbooks for staff and faculty are also available publicly through the website. This facilitates transparency as students can read about the various roles and responsibilities of staff. Students informed the review team that they found the student handbook to be very useful and was the principal source of information about their rights and responsibilities as students.

8.6 AAU uses a variety of social media to promote their students' achievements and to report on events which have taken place on campus. Access to the various social media channels is promoted on the AAU website homepage. A calendar of key dates and student activities is also published on the website.

8.7 The team concluded that the information on the website and in handbooks is clear, accurate, up-to-date, and easily accessible, and that therefore Standard 1.8: Public information is **met**.

Standard 1.9 Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes

Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

Findings

9.1 Each programme in AAU is accredited by the ADEK and CAA. All AAU educational programmes undergo an accreditation process by the CAA every two to three years. AAU provides a self-study report adhering to the CAA guidelines. That includes a feasibility study to confirm socio-economic and market requirements for the programme.

9.2 There is a standard procedure for the review of each programme at the beginning of each semester unless otherwise subject to re-accreditation. The Programme Director reviews the syllabus, then the deputy Deans and Deans of the respective colleges carry out their review. The review is supported through a digital portal.

9.3 There is an [Academic Periodic Programme Review](#) (APPR) process designed to test the continued good standing and development of each programme and any strategic issues. All academic programmes are reviewed between the two cycles of CAA national accreditation, except an exemption for programmes which have international accreditation (that is, every three to four years). Nevertheless, AAU explained to the review team that the process had not actually been implemented for any programme since AAU had instead opted to pursue international accreditations for all academic programmes; aligning with guidance from CAA to achieve international accreditations for all programmes.

9.4 The various forms of review make significant use of surveys managed by QAIRC and under the ultimate oversight of Academic Council. They include Instructor and Course Evaluation Surveys, Student Satisfaction surveys and Graduate Exit surveys. The results of the instructor and course evaluation surveys form a component of the faculty performance evaluation. The Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) is conducted by the Ministry of Education, which gathers data from the AAU graduates on major dimensions: Demographics, Employment, AAU academic experience, skills development and further education.

9.5 There is provision for courses which do not run for a particular length of time to be removed as part of the review process, enabling programmes to remain in line with market demand. There is a Teach Out policy to enable the orderly closure of programmes so safeguarding the interests of students.

9.6 AAU explained to the review team, however, that no course had been removed from the study plan over the previous five years. Similarly, no academic programme has been discontinued under the Teach Out Policy since the closure of the Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in 2021. A Substantive Change Report was submitted to CAA and dealt with accordingly.

9.7 AAU is also committed to the pursuit of international accreditation with several subject areas already accredited (see paragraph 1.1). Accreditation is a significant component of periodic review across AAU.

9.8 Programmes are subject to an annual academic assessment report process managed by QAIRC. This includes coverage of how far the programme addresses the University's strategic goals. The process includes a programme assessment to consider how far students have met learning outcomes, a report on actions from the previous year and recommendations for action for the next year. The reports draw on course assessment data, summary programme outcome data, exit exam results, student reflections on the effectiveness of learning and teaching, graduating seniors and exit survey reports produced by QAIRC, as well as surveys of other stakeholder groups. Annual reports are presented to the QA Administrative Affairs Committee and then, in summary, to the University Council. The President is involved in final approval of action plans, including the allocation of budget and resources.

9.9 A parallel process of administrative reports includes the use of data to substantiate progress with annually set targets and benchmarks for support departments. The review team saw evidence of detailed action planning and implementation underlying the reporting system.

9.10 AAU has robust and comprehensive arrangements for monitoring and periodically reviewing programmes. The implementation of the arrangements ensures that programmes remain current, and that continuous improvement takes place. The review team concluded that Standard 1.9: Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes is **met**.

Standard 1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance

Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

Findings

10.1 AAU participates in an extensive cycle of quality assurance. AAU is licensed by the MoE and is subject to oversight by the CAA and the ADEK renewal and programme evaluation process every four to five years. The process is conducted by the CAA External Review Team. The process involves the drafting of a self-study report and the review leads to a report to inform institutional improvement and enhancement and to provide assurance to the authorities. Substantial programme changes are subject to CAA and ADEK approval. The review team saw examples of recent CAA reports and noted the overall positive outcomes.

10.2 AAU is pursuing institutional international accreditation through the UK Quality Assurance Agency. CAA has set international accreditation identified as a key performance indicator for the institution. There are presently several international accreditations at programme and college level (see paragraph 1.1).

10.3 QAIRC works with colleges to prepare the self-study report for a programme-level accreditation in accordance with CAA standards, drawing on support from departments across the University. Following final evaluation, QAIRC sends the self-study report to the accreditation agency. QAIRC is responsible for liaising with the agency, coordinating accreditation exercises and responding to issues and actions identified through initial and final reports. International accreditation reports are effectively considered through institutional committees, which monitor issues for attention and action taken in response as part of an institutional drive for improvement and enhancement.

10.4 AAU engages in national benchmarking through data requested by the Centre for Higher Education Data and Statistics (CHEDS). The CHEDS data is used to support the UAE Universities Classification project enabling benchmarking against local universities with the classification pillars including Research and Innovation, Teaching and Student Life, Employment and Relevance, and Internationalisation. CHEDS is one of the significant external sources of assurance of the accuracy and completeness of the data on which the institutional quality effectiveness cycle depends.

10.5 The College Advisory Boards are mechanisms for industrial feedback to inform the monitoring and development of academic programmes and the strategic development of the college. The review team viewed evidence of College Advisory Boards giving detailed feedback on curriculum development as part of their involvement in external accreditation. The team met representatives of employers and industry and heard of their significant commitment to industrial liaison with AAU, which has had a positive impact on programme development and addressing current and future employer needs.

10.6 The review team noted the institutional drive to benefit from the opportunities for external quality assurance and the sharing of good practice, which are available through external accreditation and close links with industry and employers, as well as the regulatory requirements of the national authorities. The review team concluded that Standard 1.10: Cyclical external quality assurance is therefore **met**.

Glossary

Action plan

A plan developed by the institution after the QAA review report has been published, which is signed off by the head of the institution. It responds to the recommendations in the report and gives any plans to capitalise on the identified good practice.

Annual monitoring

Checking a process or activity every year to see whether it meets expectations for standards and quality. Annual reports normally include information about student achievements and may comment on the evaluation of courses and modules.

Collaborative arrangement

A formal arrangement between a degree-awarding body and another higher education provider. These may be degree-awarding bodies with which the institution collaborates to deliver higher education qualifications on behalf of the degree-awarding bodies. Alternatively, they may be other delivery organisations who deliver part or all of a proportion of the institution's higher education programmes.

Condition

Conditions set out action that is required. Conditions are only used with unsatisfactory judgements where the quality cannot be approved. Conditions may be used where quality or standards are at risk/continuing risk if action is not taken or if a required standard is not met and action is needed for it to be met.

Degree-awarding body

Institutions that have authority, for example from a national agency, to issue their own awards. Institutions applying to IQR may be degree-awarding bodies themselves, or may collaborate to deliver higher education qualifications on behalf of degree-awarding bodies.

Desk-based analysis

An analysis by the review team of evidence, submitted by the institution, that enables the review team to identify its initial findings and subsequently supports the review team as it develops its review findings.

Enhancement

See **quality enhancement**.

European Standards and Guidelines

For details, including the full text on each standard, see www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg.

Examples of practice

A list of policies and practices that a review team may use when considering the extent to which an institution meets the standards for review. The examples should be considered as a guide only, in acknowledgment that not all of them will be appropriate for all institutions.

Externality

The use of experts from outside a higher education provider, such as external examiners or external advisers, to assist in quality assurance procedures.

Facilitator

The member of staff identified by the institution to act as the principal point of contact for the QAA officer and who will be available during the review visit, to assist with any questions or requests for additional documentation.

Good practice

A feature of good practice is a process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to the institution's higher education provision.

Lead student representative

An optional voluntary role that is designed to allow students at the institution applying for IQR to play a central part in the organisation of the review.

Oversight

Objective scrutiny, monitoring and quality assurance of educational provision.

Peer reviewers

Members of the review team who make the decisions in relation to the review of the institution. Peer reviewers have experience of managing quality and academic standards in higher education or have recent experience of being a student in higher education.

Periodic review

An internal review of one or more programmes of study, undertaken by institutions periodically (typically once every five years), using nationally agreed reference points, to confirm that the programmes are of an appropriate academic standard and quality. The process typically involves experts from other higher education providers. It covers areas such as the continuing relevance of the programme, the currency of the curriculum and reference materials, the employability of graduates and the overall performance of students. Periodic review is one of the main processes whereby institutions can continue to assure themselves about the academic quality and standards of their awards.

Programme of study

An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification. UK higher education programmes must be approved and validated by UK degree-awarding bodies.

Quality enhancement

The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported.

QAA officer

The person appointed by QAA to manage the review programme and to act as the liaison between the review team and the institution.

Quality assurance

The systematic monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching, and the processes that support them, to make sure that the standards of academic awards meet the necessary standards, and that the quality of the student learning experience is being safeguarded and improved.

Recognition of prior learning

Assessing previous learning that has occurred in any of a range of contexts including school, college and university, and/or through life and work experiences.

Recommendation

Review teams make recommendations where they agree that an institution should consider developing or changing a process or a procedure in order to improve the institution's higher education provision.

Reference points

Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured.

Self-evaluation document

A self-evaluation report by an institution. The submission should include information about the institution as well as an assessment of the effectiveness of its quality systems.

Student submission

A document representing student views that describes what it is like to be a student at the institution, and how students' views are considered in the institution's decision-making and quality assurance processes.

Validation

The process by which an institution ensures that its academic programmes meet expected academic standards and that students will be provided with appropriate learning opportunities. It may also be applied to circumstances where a degree-awarding institution gives approval for its awards to be offered by a partner institution or organisation.

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