Policy Group	Academic Programs	Policy Number	ACA-PRO-05	
Responsible Office	Office of the Provost	**Distribution**	External	
Date Approved	15 July 2019	**Effective Date**	1 August 2019	
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PROCEDURES
Assessment of Academic Programs

1. **Introduction**

   Zayed University is institutionally accredited by the UAE Commission of Academic Accreditation (CAA), and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). Zayed University academic programs are respectively accredited by ABET, AACSB, NASAD, CAEP, IAA and ACEJMC. The assessment of academic programs is a fundamental component of the quality assurance process in Zayed University. The process is designed to assure the university and the larger community of the quality of the university's academic programs. This document explains the assessment procedures of undergraduate and graduate academic programs in Zayed University. This document also serves as a guide and a reference source for anyone involved in academic programs assessments. The assessment of academic programs is managed and coordinated by the Office of the Provost, through three key processes, annual learning outcomes assessment, regular academic program reviews, and institutional and program-level accreditation. Academic program review is a requirement by all accrediting bodies.

2. **Learning Outcomes Assessment**

   2.1 Assessment means the purposeful and systematic processes of gathering, analyzing and reflecting on evidence produced by students to enable the university informed and consistent judgements about students learning. Learning Outcomes Assessment is a fundamental process that can demonstrate that students have achieved the knowledge, skills, and competencies appropriate for their degree, lead to an improvement in student learning, and is an emphasis of the major higher education accreditation bodies. Because of this, Zayed University implements a systematic and sustainable learning outcomes assessment process, which incorporates international "best practices" and meets the requirements of institutional accreditors. Such a program follows this common process:

   a) Establish a set of clear, uncompounded, aligned and measurable learning outcomes at the course and program level, in alignment with the QFE framework criteria;

   b) Establish a minimum threshold of what constitutes successful accomplishment of those learning outcomes;

   c) Assess student achievement of learning outcomes using appropriate methods;

   d) Evaluate the results of the learning outcomes assessment to implement solutions for improving student learning; establishing a relationship between curriculum

changes and learning outcomes assessment recommendations.

2.2 Detailed steps in the process are maintained in the University Quality Assurance Manual.

2.3 The process and results of assessments are annually communicated to stakeholders, and the assessment process itself is reviewed to monitor its effectiveness.

2.4 All program-learning outcomes are assessed annually, including the general education program. At least one third of the program-learning outcomes (PLOs) will be assessed using a combination of direct and indirect assessment methods. The goal is that during every three years, each program will assess all of its PLOs. When the next program review takes place, each program should have sufficient information about whether its students are achieving its PLOs. In parallel, when the next university re-accreditation process takes place, the university as a whole has completed a full review of all PLOs.

2.5 The goal of writing PLOs is to spell out faculty expectations clearly and explicitly. In some cases, additional assessment effort focused on an area of special interest could be requested.

2.6 Learning objectives exist on many different levels, and they identify what we want students to know or be able to do by the time they complete a learning experience. Mapping between course-learning outcomes, program-learning outcomes, and university-learning outcomes is required in the assessment plan, and it is used to collect assessment results at those three levels. The university will provide advice and guidance on learning assessment strategies (rubrics, information about best practices, workshops and training opportunities, templates, and so on).

2.7 In general, all faculty should be engaged in judging whether the students have obtained the specific knowledge and skills outlined for a course. Assessments can be quantitative and/or qualitative, most importantly measurable or observable in order to allow different students' work to be compared using common criteria and for the findings to be reported in a systematic way.

2.8 Programs that are already engaged in assessment efforts to maintain external accreditation are encouraged to use those efforts to fulfill their annual assessment obligations as well, to the degree possible. The main purpose of program-level assessment is to ensure student learning at the program level, and to enable program improvement as necessary.

2.9 Assessments can be formative or summative. A formative assessment is designed to identify, for both the student and assessor, the student's strengths, and any potential gaps in the knowledge, expected for successful completion of a course; and to assist students to learn more effectively. Summative assessment is designed to indicate the extent of a student's success in achieving specified learning outcomes for a course or coursework program; and it contributes to the student's final grade in a course or the final grade for the coursework program as a whole.

2.10 The annual outcomes assessment plan is divided into, an annual assessment plan and an annual assessment report. The plan is intended to describe what outcomes will be assessed, how they will be assessed, standards of assessment, time frame of the

assessment, and participants. The assessment report describes the results of the assessment, and whether or not there was any variance from the plan. It also includes evidence of the assessment, and the recommendation for actions. The annual outcomes assessment plan should have one or more curriculum map. A curriculum map is a grid that shows all of a program's courses, and the PLOs each course serve, indicating the level as well (e.g. beginner, intermediate, mastery).

2.11 Assessment plans and reports are managed in the university's formal Accountability Management Systems (ACM). The annual outcomes assessment calendar follows the steps below:

Month	Action	By/Notes
September	Formation of the ULOAC QAs of each college	Issued by VP Decree
September	Meeting to discuss annual outcomes assessment plans for the year with QAs	Office of the Provost
October	QAs to discuss assessment plans with the college, and submit all plans in ACM	QA – Chair – College
November - April	Data and information is collected, analyzed using university criteria	QA – Chair – College
May	Assessment Reports submitted	QA - Chair –Dean – OP Review
May	Presentation to University senior administration	Arranged by Office of the Provost

3. Academic Program Review

3.1 In addition to the learning outcomes assessment process in Zayed University, existing active academic programs are subject to a program review process every three years. Academic program reviews are an integral part of Zayed University academic quality assurance. The review affords the university an opportunity to reflect on the academic program holistically, measure the accomplishments and progress since the last program review, assess program's strengths and weaknesses, efficiency, effectiveness, and to engage in long-term planning. Program reviews facilitate strategic planning.

3.2 The academic program review process is comprehensive. It takes in consideration the different views of the stakeholders, and encompasses key elements in cost-benefit, inputs-outputs, and organizational effectiveness, such as:
a) Relevance (Statement of Purpose, Core Requirements, Employment Potential);
b) Resources (Course Offering, Prerequisites/Co-requisites, Scholar activities, faculty roster, faculty qualifications);
c) Students (Enrollments, Retention, Alumni, Advising, Academic Support);
d) Rigor (Learning Outcomes, General Education, Assessments);
e) SWOT Analysis and Performance Indicators;
f) External review sign-off.

3.3 The academic program review process helps the institution answer important questions such as:
   a) How well does this program fit within the overall strategy of the university?
   b) Does the program align the vision of the UAE, or is it relevant and timely?
   c) Is the program appropriate to job market needs for the graduates of the program?
   d) What is the competitive niche for this program?
   e) Are students achieving the learning outcomes?
   f) Does the program have the required resources?
   g) What improvements are needed?

3.4 The program review follows the same order as the learning outcomes assessment calendar.

Month	Action	By/Notes
September	Identify programs eligible for program review in the academic year	Announced by Office of the Provost
September	Assign program review team headed by chair – Solicit external committee members	Dean of College
October	All activities involved in the program review are scheduled and an official data request for program review is submitted	Dean - Office of the Provost
November - April	Program data and information is collected, analyzed using university criteria	QA – Chair – College
May	Program Review submitted	Chair – Dean – OP Review
May	Presentation to University senior administration	Arranged by Office of the Provost

3.5 New Programs
   Proposals for new programs undergo a thorough review process before the proposals are sent to either ADEK or CAA, including an external review by a panel of subject matter experts. The process is fully described in ACA-PRO-04. New programs are subject to more criteria than current-active academic programs. Those criteria may include alignments with the UAE vision and strategic plan, external requirements from Ministry of Education, and others. All new programs are approved by an executive steering committee to ensure alignment with university direction before the college is engaged in a full-study and analysis.

4. Accreditation Process
4.1 While the annual outcomes assessment process is mainly internal, and the academic program review process include internal and external elements, the accreditation review process offers a vigorous external validation to the quality of the university

academic program. Institutional accreditation process is covered under policy ACA-ADM-02 and accreditation of academic programs is covered under ACA-PRO-02. Institutional and program-level accreditations have different standards. All programs accreditation standards are uploaded in the university's formal Accountability Management Systems (ACM). A template is created for each program to allow colleges easy access and timely submission.

4.2 The institutional accreditation process is managed and coordinated between the Office of the Provost and the Strategy and Future Department. Academic program level accreditation processes follow a similar model to that of the academic program reviews, where an assigned team from the college works with the Office of the Provost to collect needed data, liaise with external accreditation entities, and ensure compliance with all requirements.

4.3 The accreditation process calendar follows the steps below:

Month	Action	By/Notes
Based on schedule	Formation of Accreditation team by college	College
Based on schedule	Data and information are collected, analyzed using university criteria	College - Office of the Provost
Based on schedule	Completing self-study in ACM	College - Office of the Provost
Based on schedule	Submission of self-study	College
Based on schedule	ERT Visit Coordination	Office of the Provost - College
Based on schedule	ERT Report Findings and Review	College - Office of the Provost

4.4 Below is the current accreditation status and cycle in Zayed University:

* PROGRAM TITLE	DATE OF CAA-INITIAL ACCREDITATION (Month & Year)	*** IS THE PROGRAM ELIGIBLE FOR INT'L ACCR? (YES/ NO)	HAS THE PROGRAM RECEIVED INT'L ACCR? (YES/ NO)	IF THE PROGRAM HAS OBTAINED INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION		
				DATE OF CURRENT INT'L ACCR (Month & Year)	NAME OF INT'L ACCREDITING AGENCY	INT'L ACCR VALID UNTIL (Month & Year)
Bachelor of Fine Arts in Animation Design	Sep-17	YES	YES	Nov-17	NASAD	Apr-20
Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design	Sep-17	YES	YES	Nov-17	NASAD	Apr-20
Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Design	Sep-17	YES	YES	Nov-17	NASAD	Apr-20
Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Arts	Sep-17	YES	YES	Nov-17	NASAD	Apr-20
Bachelor of Fine Arts in Multimedia Design	Sep-17	YES	YES	Apr-15	NASAD	Apr-20
Bachelor of Science in Accounting	Dec-17	YES	YES	Jun-13	AACSB	Jun-18
Bachelor of Science in Finance	Dec-17	YES	YES	Jun-13	AACSB	Jun-18

Bachelor of Science in Human Resource Management	Dec-17	YES	YES	Jun-13	AACSB	Jun-18
Bachelor of Science in Marketing and Entrepreneurship	Dec-17	YES	YES	Jun-13	AACSB	Jun-18
Executive Master of Business Administration	Dec-17	YES	YES	Jun-13	AACSB	Jun-18
Master of Management in International Business	Dec-17	YES	YES	Jun-13	AACSB	Jun-18
Master of Management in International Business	Dec-17	YES	YES	Jun-13	AACSB	Jun-18
Master of Science in Finance	Dec-17	YES	YES	Jun-13	AACSB	Jun-18
Bachelor of Science in Communication and Media Sciences	Sep-17	YES	YES	May-15	ACEJMC	May-20
				Jul-16	IAA	Jun-21
Master of Arts in Communications	Sep-17	YES	YES	May-15	ACEJMC	May-20
Bachelor of Science in Education	Sep-17	YES	YES	Nov-13	CAEP /NCATE	May-20
Master of Education in Educational Leadership and Administration	Apr-19	YES	YES	Nov-13	CAEP /NCATE	May-20
Master of Education in Special Education	Apr-19	YES	YES	Nov-13	CAEP /NCATE	May-20
Master of Science in Teaching and Learning	Apr-19	YES	YES	Nov-13	CAEP /NCATE	May-20
Bachelor of Arts in International Studies	Sep-17	NO	NO			
Master of Arts in Diplomacy and International Affairs	Apr-19	NO	NO			
Bachelor of Arts in Emirati Studies	_	NO	NO			
Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science and Sustainability	Dec-17	NO	NO			
Bachelor of Science in Public Health and Nutrition	Dec-17	NO	NO			
Bachelor of Science in Psychology	Dec-17	NO	NO			
Bachelor of Science in Information Technology	Apr-19	YES	YES	Sep-18	ABET	Sep-24
Bachelor of Science in Information Systems and Technology Management	Apr-19	YES	YES	Sep-18	ABET	Sep-20
Master of Science in Information Technology	Apr-19	NO	NO			

5. Revision History

Date	Revision
9 June 2020	Non-substantive change: added External Distribution.
9 October 2019	Non-substantive change: updated the policy numbers.

15 July 2019	Approved by the Vice-President (VP Decision #106 of 2019) Revisions: • Remove reference to Taskstream from the procedures; • Update the table in Article 4.4 to include the graduate programs; • A complete rewrite of the procedures to reflect the current situation internally and with regard to accreditation.