



This review method
is ESG-compliant

International Quality Accreditation

Emirates College for
Advanced Education

Review Report

May 2026

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About this review

This is a report of an International Quality Accreditation conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Emirates College for Advanced Education. The review took place from 12 –14 May 2026 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Professor Vlasios Sarantinos
- Emilia Todorova
- Jack Medlin (student reviewer)

International Quality Accreditation (IQA) 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 Accreditation, the QAA review team:

- makes conclusion 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 Accreditation

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 Accreditation](#) 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

The Emirates College for Advanced Education (ECAE) is located in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). ECAE was established in 2007. Since its establishment, it has served the Ministry of Education and the Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) in providing cohorts of trained teachers available to be employed in schools across the UAE.

The main campus is located in Khalifa City, Abu Dhabi and there are two branch campuses located in Ajman and Al Ain.

Since it was established, ECAE's mandate evolved from offering foundation and undergraduate programmes to becoming a research-based, graduate-only institution, offering postgraduate and PhD programmes. To contribute to the economic and social ambitions of Abu Dhabi and the UAE, ECAE has developed a sustained programme of support and collaboration with schools, colleges, agencies and groups in the wider community. In 2025 ECAE was mandated by the Board of Trustees to expand its portfolio to once again include undergraduate teacher education in response to national needs. At the time of writing, ECAE was seeking authorisation for the new programmes through ADEK and will subsequently request accreditation from the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA). ECAE also used to offer Doctoral programmes in education: these are now being taught out.

ECAE currently offers eight research-informed programmes in total made up of four pre-service, two in-service PGDE and two master's programmes. All programmes are offered in both English and Arabic. There are currently 542 students at the College. 247 students are studying for a postgraduate diploma, and 345 students are studying at master's level. ECAE also offers serving teachers a wide range of in-service professional development programs that are locally and internationally certified by the Abu Dhabi Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ACTVET), the Northern Council for Further Education (NCFE) and the Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education (CACHE).

The College operates within the UAE regulatory framework for its qualifications. All academic programmes and their programme outcomes are mapped against the Qualification Framework Emirates (QF Emirates) and are approved by ADEK and are accredited by CAA. The CAA reviews all programmes every five years.

ECAE's current strategy and institutional plans extend through 2026 with a new strategy taking effect in 2027. Moving forward, further emphasis will be placed on evidence-based and data-informed strategic planning, collaborative stakeholder engagement and co-design, future-focused planning responsive to AI and workforce trends, emphasis on institutional resilience, scalability, sustainable growth, strong alignment with UAE priorities, partnerships and governance processes. ECAE's mandate will continue to be to support Abu Dhabi's higher education strategy and the UAE by providing future generations with high-quality education to drive the economy. ECAE programs are designed to support pillars and priorities within the Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030.

Identified key challenges include:

- Regulatory and accreditation change: adapting to evolving CAA and ADEK requirements, including the outcome-based evaluation framework (OBEF) and QF Emirates updates, while safeguarding ECAE's mission, coherence and operational stability.
- Evidence and data demands: managing increased volume and complexity of outcomes based and risk-informed evidence through stronger coordination, improved data systems and clearer evidence ownership.
- Programme diversification and growth: ensuring coherence across an expanding graduate portfolio (diplomas, master's and micro credentials) and preparing for undergraduate expansion (Bachelor of Education).
- Quality assurance engagement: strengthening consistent operational level engagement with QA processes, action planning and evidence informed decision making.
- Students who are professionally employed: responding to postgraduate students' workload, scheduling, progression and wellbeing needs through flexible delivery and coordinated support.
- Facilities and capacity: operating within the constraints of shared facilities while planning a move to a dedicated Masdar campus to support growth and specialist provision.
- Research and visibility: aligning national ranking expectations with a specialist mission by focusing on subject rankings and international collaborations.
- Transparency and communication: improving consistency, timeliness and accessibility of data, policies, and bilingual communication including enhanced public reporting of student outcomes.

In reaching conclusions about the extent to which ECAE meets the 10 ESG Standards, the QAA review team followed the evidence-based review procedure as outlined in the handbook for International Quality Review October 2023, which was revised and renamed during the review as International Quality Accreditation. The College provided the review team with a self-evaluation and supporting evidence. During the review visit, which took place from 12 to 14 May 2026, the review team held a total of eight meetings with the Vice Chancellor, the senior management team, teaching faculty, academic and learning support services staff, students and alumni. Due to a conflict in the region, travel was not possible and so the review was conducted online. The QAA toured the main ECAE campus in 2021 and participated in a virtual tour of the other two sites in May 2024 as part of the Mid-cycle Review. The review team had the opportunity to observe the College's facilities and learning resources remotely across the three campuses.

In summary, the team found eight examples of good practice and was able to make six recommendations for improvement/enhancement. The recommendations are of a desirable rather than essential nature and are proposed to enable the College 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 the Emirate College for Advanced Education **meets all standards** for International Quality Accreditation.

QAA's conclusions about the Emirates College for Advanced Education

The QAA review team reached the following conclusions about the higher education provision at Emirates College for Advanced Education.

European Standards and Guidelines

Emirates College for Advanced Education **meets** all 10 of the 10 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 Emirate College for Advanced Education.

- ECAE's comprehensive and mature framework for quality assurance, which is embedded throughout the institution and includes a comprehensive policy database with clear lines of responsibility, review dates and version control, ensuring that members of the academic community can readily access current documentation (ESG Standard 1.1).
- ECAE's integrated design framework, in which all programmes are systematically mapped to the National Educators' Competency Framework and to four cross-programme themes, with consolidated impact reporting evaluating progress against the competencies at programme level, which provides a common pedagogical language across the portfolio, anchors international benchmarking activity in a coherent national reference point, and equips programme teams to design consistent, contemporary and nationally relevant learning experiences. (ESG Standard 1.2).
- ECAE's structured, evidence-informed development of new programmes which combines benchmarking against national, regional and international comparators with stakeholder consultation, staged Academic Programme and Curriculum Committee (APCC) taskforce review aligned to external accreditor timelines and Board of Trustees approval (ESG Standard 1.2).
- The embedded culture of proactive feedback and improvement across programmes; specifically in the context of student feedback where students feel heard as partners within their programmes and can confidently provide feedback on matters across ECAE (Standard 1.3).
- ECAE's planned, multi-instrument approach to investing in and monitoring staff wellbeing combining annual Staff and Faculty Wellbeing measurement, regular leadership check-ins, community-based extracurricular programming and triangulation of the resulting data into staffing sustainability and retention decisions (ESG standard 1.5).
- ECAE's protection of staff capacity for research and partnership activity in a manner appropriate to its particular profile as a research-based, graduate-only institution, including capping teaching at 50% of workload, maintaining transparent workload management, and integrating research expectations into the annual appraisal cycle (ESG Standard 1.5).

- ECAE's collection and analysis of a substantial volume of data relating to student progression, attainment, retention, and satisfaction, which is made available to academic and professional staff through regular reporting cycles. The institution's investment in its data infrastructure, and the consistency with which reporting is produced and disseminated, means that decision-makers at programme, faculty and institutional level have access to a rich evidence base on which to draw. (ESG Standard 1.7).
- ECAE's integrated, closed-loop approach to course-level quality assurance, which brings together structured assessment verification and the systematic use of internal and external stakeholder feedback to drive course-level enhancement. (ESG Standard 1.9).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following six **recommendations** to Emirates College for Advanced Education.

- Formalise and embed mechanisms for student participation in programme design, as distinct from feedback on existing courses, so that student voice and committee ownership are transparent across the three campuses and to external stakeholders. (ESG Standard 1.2).
- ECAE to continue to invest in appropriate interventions that support institutional priorities, staff development and the evolving needs of its stakeholders. (ESG Standard 1.5).
- Implement the planned expansion of specialist learning resources across all campuses to ensure equitable student access to the institution's signature pedagogy and associated learning opportunities (ESG Standard 1.6).
- Consider establishing a shared institutional language for its reporting of data, with clearly defined relationships between reports and dashboards, in order to improve coherence and transparency, reduce duplication, and ensure that stakeholders at all levels are working from a common evidence base. (ESG Standard 1.7).
- Introduce a consolidated programme-level periodic review process aligned with the three-year cycle defined in the Curricula Approval and Revision Policy and that the resulting findings, actions and outcomes are communicated to students and other stakeholders at programme level. (ESG Standard 1.9).
- Share the successes, insights and good practice arising from its participation in external quality assurance and accreditation activities more systematically across the academic community, celebrating institutional achievement and supporting collective learning. (ESG Standard 1.10).

Explanation of the findings about Emirates College for Advanced Education

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 Since its previous International Quality Review in 2021, ECAE has continued to develop and strengthen its institutional quality assurance framework. The College's commitment to quality is anchored in a formal Quality Assurance Policy and operationalised through a comprehensive Quality Assurance Manual, both of which sit within an overarching institutional architecture that distributes responsibility for quality across three coordinated units: the Institutional Research and Effectiveness department (IRE), the Internal Audit Office (IAO), and the Strategy and Business Development unit (SBD). The College's approach to quality assurance continues to be two-fold, combining both external and internal perspectives. National accrediting bodies such as CAA, ADEK, and the Ministry of Education provide an external regulatory framework and external quality assurance of ECAE. Internally, the Senior Executive Management Team (SEMT), supported by IRE, IAO and the SBD, and the Trustee Board oversee operational and strategic activities.

1.2 ECAE's quality assurance framework is structured around its Institutional Self-Evaluation, Improvement and Effectiveness (ISEIE) Model, which incorporates clearly defined data points and key performance indicators that support evidence-informed institutional self-evaluation. The IRE department acts as the institutional guardian of quality assurance, executing the cyclical activities of the ISEIE model and producing termly course and faculty evaluation reports, Programme Learning Outcome (PLO) evaluations, institutional surveys, employer and graduate feedback exercises, pre-exam verification reports and exam board oversight. The IAO provides assurance through scheduled and risk-based audit activity, while the SBD unit monitors progress against the institutional strategic plan and its associated KPIs.

1.3 The College currently engages with four external quality assurance bodies. Two mandatory national bodies (CAA and ADEK) and two voluntary international bodies (the Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency in Hanover (ZEvA) and the QAA), demonstrating a continued and visible institutional commitment to external quality enhancement beyond the minimum regulatory requirement.

1.4 ECAE's quality assurance policies are supported by a wider policy framework which covers all aspects of the student lifecycle. There is clear management and regulation of policies which exists within the Directory of Institutional Documents (DID), providing an accessible database of policies, alongside information regarding ownership, version control and review cycles.

1.5 Strategic direction at ECAE is articulated through the current institutional strategic plan, which ends in 2026. The review team noted that planning for the institution's strategic direction for 2027-2031 has started and includes a wider stakeholder consultation. A new strategy for the period from 2027-2031 is expected to be published early 2027.

1.6 Student engagement with the quality assurance system is supported through a range of feedback mechanisms, including course evaluations, faculty evaluations and institutional surveys, the outputs of which feed into the ISEIE cycle. Furthermore, the Student Council serves as the student representative body and members of the Council are invited to institutional committees. However, the review team observed that their participation is

somewhat limited at this point. The College is encouraged to strengthen the visibility of student representation in its quality committees, ensuring that representatives actively attend committee meetings and are effectively supported to do so (see recommendation in paragraph 2.6).

1.7 ECAE's comprehensive and mature framework for quality assurance, which is embedded throughout the institution and includes a comprehensive policy database with clear lines of responsibility, review dates and version control, ensuring that members of the academic community can readily access current documentation, is considered by the review team to be good practice.

1.8 The review team concludes that ECAE operates a robust and maturing quality assurance framework that meets the statutory requirements of the UAE Ministry of Education and the expectations of the CAA and ADEK. The ISEIE model provides a coherent framework for the College's quality assurance activity, and the institution's voluntary engagement with additional external quality assurance bodies continues to drive quality forward allowing for international benchmarking to take place. Overall, the review team concludes that Standard 1.1 Policy for quality assurance is 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 ECAE sets out a coherent rationale for programme design that links its institutional mission and the wider purposes of higher education to UAE national priorities and external reference points. The College's framework articulates this through the Council of Europe's four purposes of higher education and alignment with the UAE Teacher Standards and the National Educators' Competency Framework (NECF), with all academic programmes mapped to the NECF and to four cross-programme themes – Emirati Values, Inclusion, Sustainability and AI in Education. Programme design is shaped through structured engagement with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK), and through international benchmarking against the Bahrain Teachers College, the National Institute of Education Singapore (problem-based learning and meta-cognition) and Finland (play-based learning). Programme design is increasingly framed by the Commission for Academic Accreditation's (CAA) new Outcome-Based Evaluation Framework (OBEF), with employability as a central reference point.

2.2 The College operates a formal policy framework that sets out programme approval authority, workflow and lifecycle stages. The Curricula Approval and Revision Policy requires Board of Trustees approval for new academic programmes and gives the APCC a consultative and recommending role. The Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood and Primary (B.Ed ECP) case file evidences a complete approval trail, including the proposal presentation, the staged APCC review planning aligned to CAA timelines, the benchmarking report which identified that no combined Early Childhood Primary B.Ed is offered in the region, and the Board of Trustees minutes recording approval of the proposal. Equivalent documentary evidence exists for the Pre-service Secondary PGDE and for course-level approval through a worked example for the Language, Literacy and Arts in Early Childhood (EDUECE3) course. Taskforce committees comprising APCC members and subject experts (with non-disclosure agreements where appropriate) carry out structured course outline reviews; the process is consistently applied across the three divisions, and course outlines are reviewed every academic term against student feedback and approved through the APCC pipeline.

2.3 ECAE operates a single SharePoint-based course-outline workflow supported by the updated APCC Terms of Reference and the Course Outline Platform documentation, which describes the full submission, revision and approval cycle for course outline changes. The SharePoint catalogue is the single source of truth for approved documents, with version control, extended metadata, defined review cycles, and submission, revision and approval routing through committee structures. The workflow names APCC as the controlling committee, whereas the earlier major/minor change classification document still refers to GAPCC, the graduate sub-committee and 'GC'. APCC is the controlling committee for course outlines and for new programme recommendations to the Board; GAPCC and the graduate sub-committee operate as workstreams within this overall pipeline rather than as parallel governance routes. This is consistent with the GAPCC Annual Reports for academic year 2022–23 and 2023–24, which evidence GAPCC's historic graduate-programme remit

prior to the APCC consolidation. The current controlled Committee Membership List for 2025–26 sets out the membership of APCC, the Research Grants Award Committee, the Institutional Review Board, the Academic Promotions Committee and the Student Affairs Committee, providing a controlled membership reference. The relationship between APCC, GAPCC, the graduate sub-committee and any residual 'GC' references should however be articulated in a single, controlled narrative governance note to remove ambiguity for staff joining the College and for external stakeholders; this is addressed in the recommendation at paragraph 2.6 below.

2.4 The review team noted that stakeholder engagement in programme design is well evidenced through external partners and is developing in respect of students. Employers, alumni and school-based mentors confirmed during the visit that ECAE consults them regularly through surveys, school visits, roundtable discussions and reflective feedback when new courses are designed; alumni gave a specific example of being invited to comment on the leadership programme prior to its launch, and one alumna confirmed that timing of lectures had been changed in response to feedback during her programme. Mentors were consulted on the design of, for example, the new Pre-Service PGDE Interns Handbook, and ECAE asks for structured feedback on the preparation of interns for classroom practice. The LINC initiative provides an active mechanism through which school practitioners and policymakers feed into ECAE's design thinking, and visits to schools by the College's leadership inform the curricular offer. Students are asked at the start and end of each course for feedback on assessments, content and delivery, and gave a recent example of distance-learning pedagogy being added to the curriculum after they had raised a need for it during placements. An institutional 'preferred class timing' survey provides a further worked example of student feedback being acted upon at scheduling level, with the subsequent Support Services correspondence on feasibility of adjusting class start times closing the loop on this example.

2.5 ECAE candidly recognises that there is currently no evidence of formal student participation in programme design at the level of co-design (as distinct from feedback on existing provision), and APCC minutes record that the student representative seat is still to be filled. There are currently no programme representatives on the Student Council, and representation on APCC is in development. The Student Council Terms of Reference, the minutes of recent Council meetings and the recent Student Representative Council briefing confirm the operating arrangements for student representation in student-life matters, and the wider institutional Student Council and Committee Engagement record documents how these arrangements operate. Student Affairs Committee minutes evidence an established channel through which student-facing issues are heard and resolved. Neither function as a formal programme co-design mechanism. The College has indicated its intention to consolidate student participation in design for 2026–27, coinciding with the launch of the new B.Ed programme.

2.6 In light of the findings above, the review team recommends that ECAE formalise and embed mechanisms for student participation in programme design as distinct from feedback on existing courses, so that student voice and committee ownership are transparent across the three campuses and to external stakeholders, including the timely appointment of student representatives to the APCC in line with its Terms of Reference and complementary representation arrangements set out in the Student Council Terms of Reference, and a published governance note clarifying the relationship between APCC, GAPCC, the graduate sub-committee and any residual committee references..

2.7 Programme structures and intended learning outcomes are clearly specified, with all postgraduate qualifications mapped to QF Emirates Level 7 (Cabinet Resolution No. 106 of 2024) and the new B.Ed positioned at Level 6 programme structures and intended learning outcomes are clearly specified. Programme specifications and the Graduate Catalogue

define the expected student workload through credit-hour structures aligned with QF Emirates volume requirements, and this is operationalised at faculty level through the Faculty Workload Policy and the Workload and Timetable workbook. A documentary inconsistency between the In-service PGDE programme specification and the Graduate Catalogue regarding the QF Emirates level is acknowledged as a controlled-document refresh issue, to be resolved through re-approval via the APCC pipeline within the current academic cycle which the review team considered to be a low-risk documentary action.

2.8 Programme approval operates within an external authorisation and accreditation framework that the College has effectively coordinated with internal processes. The CAA accreditation letters, ADEK authorisation documentation, the ADEK technical evaluation of the B.Ed and the CAA initial accreditation evidence for the PGDEs and the M.Ed Educational Leadership for School Improvement demonstrate that internal design and approval activity is sequenced to external regulatory timelines. The OBEF introduced by the CAA in 2025, supported by ECAE's submissions to the Higher Education Database and the ADEK uScore platform, is anticipated to reshape the next renewal cycle. The IRE Department is preparing institutional and programme-level data accordingly.

2.9 The review team identifies as a feature of good practice ECAE's integrated design framework, in which all programmes are systematically mapped to the National Educators' Competency Framework and to four cross-programme themes, with consolidated impact reporting evaluating progress against the competencies at programme level, which provides a common pedagogical language across the portfolio, anchors international benchmarking activity in a coherent national reference point, and equips programme teams to design consistent, contemporary and nationally relevant learning experiences.

2.10 The review team also identifies as a feature of good practice the College's structured, evidence-informed development of new programmes which combines benchmarking against national, regional and international comparators with stakeholder consultation, staged APCC taskforce review aligned to external accreditor timelines, and Board of Trustees approval.

2.11 The review team concludes that ECAE has clear, well-governed processes for the design and approval of new and revised programmes, with strong alignment to national priorities and external reference frameworks. ECAE maintains a sound, shared understanding of these processes across senior management, academic staff, academic support staff, students, alumni, employers and mentors, supported by the SharePoint-based course-outline workflow and the APCC structure. In respect of policies and processes, the framework comprising the Curricula Approval and Revision Policy, the SharePoint-based course-outline workflow and the updated APCC Terms of Reference is comprehensive, current and coherent with external regulatory timelines. In respect of operation, the framework is consistently understood and applied across the three Divisions, evidenced by the B.Ed ECP, Pre-service Secondary PGDE and EDUECE3 worked examples. The residual matters identified above – the In-service PGDE level discrepancy and the legacy GAPCC/'GC' references – are documentary refresh items already in train and do not affect the substantive operation of the standard. Based on the evidence, the review team concludes that Standard 1.2 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 ECAE embeds a student-centred educational model which is grounded across signature pedagogies, tailored delivery models, formal frameworks and policies. Students are positioned as active partners in learning and emphasis is placed on learner agency through research and practice informed pedagogies including play-based learning, dialogic teaching, problem-based and inquiry-based learning and metacognitive practices. The team through its meetings with senior leaders, academics and students identified that these frameworks and policies are actualised through teaching, with students clearly identifying how they benefitted their current professional employment and alumni and industry stakeholders clearly identifying how these pedagogies lead to well-rounded and competent graduates.

3.2 Delivery of teaching occurs in the context of the needs of students. Given the proportion of professional employed learners, teaching is delivered through a blended approach, attending to the diversity of students and their needs. There is an approximate 52% face-to-face and 48% online split. Face-to-face sessions prioritise interactive, practice-orientated teaching and collaborative activities whilst synchronous online components support reflection and more theoretical teaching. There is the option for students to complete micro-credentials which are credit-bearing, stackable towards an exit award, and flexible, further demonstrating the potential for flexible study. ECAE also delivers teaching at both its main campus and its satellite campuses in Ajman and Al Ain. To ensure a level of consistency across these sites, video-links are utilised for synchronous teaching to ensure all campuses experience the same sessions, and the host campus for these video-links are rotated across the campuses to ensure an equal split over who views the 'live' teaching.

3.3 Assessment is employed to evaluate learning in ways that are authentic, inclusive, and aligned with learning outcomes. There are a wide range of assessment types utilised, including portfolios, presentations, reflective pieces, case studies, and practical and work-based assessments. These assessments articulate academic and professional standards which are embedded into each programme specification. The team, when speaking to students, heard that they believe that they undertake rigorous and engaging assessments and see their transferable benefits towards their professional development.

3.4 Expectations of assessments are set out within the programme specifications and course outlines. Rubrics are shared with students at the beginning of the term to support understanding of expectations. Students identified to the team that they clearly understand what is expected from them when it comes to their assessments and academics identified that they understood the expectations placed on them to ensure students feel adequately supported with assessment. The team examined these rubrics and concluded that they provide clear expectations. These rubrics are complemented by formal formative and summative feedback on assessments, which provide clear and actionable improvements for students. Students identified that this feedback is provided in a timely manner and that it aids them in completing further assessments and where there are disagreements in feedback, students feel comfortable to engage with academics to discuss and identify areas of improvement.

3.5 Assessments are double-blind marked. Following independent marking, grades and feedback are reviewed and discussed through a formal moderation process to ensure

consistency across rubrics and assessment criteria. The team reviewed examples of moderation and are confident in the approach being utilised.

3.6 There are clear processes in place to address student grievances and appeals in a timely and confidential manner. Students have the right to submit appeals to both academic and non-academic matters, in accordance with established processes. Whilst these formal routes exist, there are also more informal approaches with open dialogue between students and staff where minor disagreements arise. This enables students to feel confident in advocating for themselves, whilst feeling supported by both staff and by processes. Expectations around academic integrity, student behaviour, attendance, and other matters are clearly articulated in formal policies and in the student handbook.

3.7 Across all these domains, staff, students, and external stakeholders feed into improvements in teaching, learning, and assessment. There are clear examples of when student feedback has been listened to and actioned, such as the changing of teaching timetables to improve student engagement. Teaching staff identified how they utilise student evaluations to improve the delivery and content of their teaching and employer stakeholders identified how they feed into content being delivered. The review team identifies as a feature of good practice the embedded culture of proactive feedback and improvement across programmes; specifically in the context of student feedback where students feel heard as partners within their programmes and can confidently provide feedback on matters across ECAE.

3.8 Overall, the review team finds that ECAE has in place formal strategies, policies, and a framework which enable successful and empowering teaching. Students, staff, alumni, and employers identify how pedagogical strategy leads to well-rounded graduates. There are clear and consistent assessment and feedback practices with expectations being clearly laid out and understood by students. There are both formal and informal approaches for handling complaints, appeals, and grievances and students feel confident in engaging with these. The review team concludes that Standard 1.3 Student-centered learning 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", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

Findings

4.1 ECAE operates an admissions framework that is aligned with CAA requirements and is articulated at institutional and programme level through the Graduate Admissions Policy, with admissions guidelines published in the Graduate Catalogue and supported by the College's Admissions Office. Programmes are approved by ADEK and accredited by CAA and MoE. A draft Undergraduate Admissions Policy has been developed to support the planned launch of the new Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood and Primary in academic year 26-27, subject to authorisation by ADEK and accreditation by the CAA.

4.2 Credit transfer is governed by a comprehensive Transfer Credit and Advanced Standing Policy. Decisions on the eligibility of credit transfer are made by the Division Head in conjunction with the Programme Chair on a course-by-course basis.

4.3 The College's Graduate Completion Policy, together with the credit-hour requirements set in accordance with the CAA Standards, establishes clear requirements for credit achievement and graduation across the postgraduate portfolio. For the planned Bachelor of Education, requirements for credit achievement, progression and graduation, as well as relevant exit-points, have been drafted and the undergraduate completion policy itself remains under development.

4.4 Academic progression is governed by the Academic Progress Policy and supported by the Academic Advising Policy, under which students are allocated an Academic Advisor in their first term of study who monitors their academic progress. Programmes benefit from clear progression requirements and students are monitored against their attendance and progression, with meetings taking place when required.

4.5 There is a clear Student Records Policy, supported by appropriate processes and systems where records are stored. Permanent records covering admission, registration, disciplinary actions, academic assessment, progress towards a degree, grade point average, and graduation maintained by the Registrar's Office.

4.6 The review team noted a significant and sustained increase in student enrolment over the past four years, with master's enrolment rising from 67 in academic year 2020-21 to 318 in 25-26, and PGDE enrolment rising from 17 to 274 over the same period.

4.7 The review team noted that there has been a significant strategic shift in the ECAE's portfolio since the previous International Quality Review, including the discontinuation of doctoral programmes (now in teach-out) and the planned launch of the Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood and Primary in academic year 2026-27. The College's development of micro-credentials as a route to flexible learning pathways was noted by the review team as a positive direction of travel.

4.8 Overall, the review team finds that ECAE has in place a developing framework of policies and procedures covering admission, progression, recognition and certification, supported by clear operational practice in a number of areas including credit transfer, completion requirements, academic advising and student records. The review team

concludes that the admissions processes are robust and that 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 ECAE assumes primary responsibility for the competence of its teaching staff through a clear framework of recruitment, qualification, workload, performance review, promotion and professional development that operates effectively in practice. Human resource policies are governed by the Abu Dhabi Human Resources Authority (HRA) and operationalised through the Academic Recruitment and Initial Appointments policy (HCP 2003) and the Faculty Handbook. ECAE's framework operates consistently across the three divisions and is reinforced by a clear cultural commitment to staff wellbeing and retention. Induction and ongoing support for new full-time staff, and arrangements for adjunct and sessional teaching staff to be equipped for their roles, are operationalised through structured induction and mentoring arrangements.

5.2 The teaching staff profile is highly qualified: 97% of faculty hold doctoral qualifications and the workforce is multicultural, comprising staff from 13 nationalities; 47% are at Associate Professor rank or above. All faculty curricula vitae are maintained on file. Recruitment is run through structured advertising on professional platforms and through a Recruitment Committee process, with offer-letter and contract documentation; two anonymised case files submitted to the review team provided evidence of interview documentation, request lists for academic qualifications and the offer process. ECAE does not at present anticipate strategic challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified academic staff, attributing this to its multicultural community, commitment to staff wellbeing and standing as an esteemed employer. This is supported by the Staff and Faculty Wellbeing 2025 data, which records positive marked improvement between 2022 and 2025. The front-end stages of recruitment (longlist/shortlist documentation, structured reference logs, qualification verification checklists) are managed within HR systems; while these were not strongly evidenced through the two case files supplied, the practice is captured in HR records and audited against the Recruitment Policy.

5.3 Workforce planning is documented through the Workforce Planning Policy and operationalised through annual planning cycles linked to enrolment projections and budgeting. Workforce planning operates as follows: programme teams estimate faculty workload needs for the following year on the basis of programme development plans; academic Division Heads collaborate with the Deputy Vice Chancellor – Academic and HR on approved recruitment plans; and the criteria for new posts include a demonstrable research profile and capacity for partnership work. The teaching-research-partnership balance is held at 50/40/10, with teaching not permitted to exceed 50% so that research and partnership time are protected. Academic staff describe workload as reasonable, fairly distributed, and accommodating of language-related learning support for first-generation students; one experienced staff member described the workload as 'extremely well balanced when I compare it to experience of working elsewhere'. Workload data is visible to staff through the GRADHUB SharePoint workspace, which displays timetables, course assignments and campus rotation.

5.4 Performance review, promotion and recognition arrangements are well documented. The Performance Management Policy sets the framework for annual appraisal conducted through the Abu Dhabi Government's ADERP portal, supported by an evidence support form; three sample 2024–25 faculty appraisals across academic ranks illustrate the policy in operation, showing evidence-backed self-assessments, line-manager ratings and

development objectives recorded against the move from one rank to the next. Faculty Promotion Guidelines articulate a structured pathway: line manager and academic dean readiness discussion, intent letter and CV submission, Academic Promotion Committee (APC) review and vote, external review by three referees, and final recommendation to the Vice Chancellor and Board of Trustees. A Faculty Teaching Observation Form is in use, capturing pre-observation notes on intended learning objectives, teaching strategies and links to prior and subsequent learning with parallel observation evidence from the Language, Cognition and Growth Division and the Data Analytics, Policy and Leadership Division demonstrating that observation practice operates consistently across all three Divisions. Promotion criteria are clear, annual appraisals are anchored in the move from one rank to the next, and there is significant support from line managers and faculty colleagues. Performance evaluations are moderated at college level by the Deputy Vice Chancellor – Academic to ensure consistency and parity across Divisions, with the Vice Chancellor acting as moderator for Heads of Division.

5.5 Faculty Conference Attendance and CPD is supported through multiple mechanisms. The Faculty Conference Attendance Guidelines establish a clear, multi-stage approval process and an allocated budget and relevant examples of Faculty Research and Conference Travel Application samples evidencing Vice-Chancellor approval and consistent use of the workflow; the iLearn community of practice hosts faculty-led pedagogical discussions; the Tomouh digital learning platform provides government-wide curated courses; and a CPD HR Tracker containing 262 records since January 2025, captures Tomouh and LinkedIn Learning activity. The Library and Learning Support Hub runs a weekly programme of workshops on study skills, academic writing and critical thinking; a Professional Development Week is delivered at the end of each semester in collaboration between academic chairs, faculty and the Library; and LINC events and the iLearn community provide additional, externally-facing development opportunities.

5.6 ECAE does not at present operate a stand-alone CPD Policy, because the Department of Government Enablement is preparing a common Education-Academic Centric Policy for the seven Abu Dhabi government academic entities. This position is documented in the minutes of the DGE meeting on policy review and next steps and is a deliberate hold pending the cross-government policy rather than an absence of practice. The CPD HR Tracker is currently dominated by general public-sector courses (HR foundations, tolerance and coexistence) rather than discipline- or pedagogy-specific entries, and ECAE has limited ability to interrogate the data analytically for CPD gap-analysis purposes. The review team considers that conference attendance, the iLearn community of practice, the Library and Learning Support Hub's weekly programme, the end-of-semester Professional Development Week, LINC events and partner engagement together constitute an effective de-facto CPD framework, and that the institutional flexibility currently exercised by the College allows interventions to be tailored to discipline-, pedagogy- and stakeholder-specific needs. As the anticipated DGE policy emerges, an institution-level articulation of how these interventions are tracked, evaluated and aligned with the appraisal cycle and the NECF would further strengthen the evidence of competence assurance.

5.7 The review team recommends that ECAE continue to invest in appropriate interventions that support institutional priorities, staff development and the evolving needs of its stakeholders, retaining the flexibility currently afforded to the College to combine discipline and pedagogy-specific opportunities, the iLearn community of practice, the Library and Learning Support Hub's weekly programme, the end-of-semester Professional Development Week, LINC events, conference attendance and engagement with the cross-government Tomouh platform. As the anticipated Department of Government Enablement Education-Academic Centric Policy emerges, the College may wish to consider how institution-level analysis of CPD participation, impact and gaps could be articulated in a way that preserves responsiveness to stakeholder needs.

5.8 Research engagement is integrated into the staff competence framework. Faculty Research KPIs Research engagement is integrated into the staff competence framework. Faculty Research KPIs link research expectations to the performance review framework; the Office of Research maintains a competitive internal grants scheme with modest bonus for projects involving external collaborators; and faculty are eligible to attend at least one international conference per year where they present. Faculty are research-active, supervisors ground research in pedagogical context, and students are supported to present at international conferences (one student described being supported to a top-ten finalist place in an international research project and another being invited to take part in a competition in France).

5.9 The Staff and Faculty Wellbeing 2025 data records consistent year-on-year growth in faculty agreement that ECAE supports wellbeing, with faculty agreement that College events contribute to social wellbeing and cultural awareness. Academic staff describe workload as well-balanced and the working environment as collaborative and supportive. Two further residual matters were noted. First, the organisational chart in evidence is dated December 2017 and an updated chart is anticipated in the current cycle. Second, ECAE's pre-employment qualification verification process is evidenced through practice in recruitment case files but not through a single controlled standard operating procedure; this is a low-risk gap to be closed.

5.10 The review team identifies as a feature of good practice the planned, multi-instrument approach to investing in and monitoring staff wellbeing – combining annual Staff and Faculty Wellbeing measurement, regular leadership check-ins, community-based extracurricular programming, and triangulation of the resulting data into staffing sustainability and retention decisions. The approach is evidenced by the 2025 Staff and Faculty Wellbeing data, corroborated by a multicultural, low-turnover staff community, and described by the Vice Chancellor as central to staffing sustainability.

5.11 Given the research focus of ECAE, the review team also identifies as a feature of good practice the College's protection of staff capacity for research and partnership activity in a manner appropriate to its particular profile as a research-based, graduate-only institution, including by capping teaching at 50% of workload, maintaining transparent workload management, and integrating research expectations into the annual appraisal cycle (ESG Standard 1.5).

5.12 Meetings with senior management, academic staff, academic support staff, students and alumni confirmed a sound, shared understanding of these processes. A continuing area for the College's consideration, as the anticipated Department of Government Enablement Education-Academic Centric Policy emerges, is how its flexible, multi-channel approach to staff development could be articulated at institution level so that participation, impact and alignment with the appraisal cycle are visible.

5.13 Overall, the review team concludes that ECAE has fair, transparent and well-evidenced processes for the recruitment, qualification, workload, performance review and promotion of teaching staff, supported by a strong wellbeing culture and by integrated research expectations. ECAE maintains a sound, shared understanding of these processes across senior management, academic staff, academic support staff, students and alumni. The residual matters identified above – the December 2017 organisational chart pending Board refresh, and the absence of a single controlled standard operating procedure for pre-employment qualification verification – are low-risk items already acknowledged for resolution in the current cycle. Based on the evidence, the review team concludes that Standard 1.5 teaching staff is 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 ECAE has a main campus in Abu Dhabi city and branch campuses in Ajman and Al Ain. These branch campuses serve students across emirates allowing them to access resources without long-distance commutes. This is particularly salient as it meets the needs of flexibility for the current predominantly mature and employed student cohorts. The main campus is owned by the Ministry of Education and contains classrooms, multifunctional rooms, science and computer laboratories, and other social and community-based spaces. The team was able to see various parts of the campus through a campus tour video. Specialist resources, such as a Play Lab, are utilised as part of the pedagogic strategy.

6.2 Learning support services are offered primarily through the Library and Learning Support Hub. This offers both a traditional library service, providing access to learning resources both in-person and digitally but also a range of sessions on a range of academic topics such as writing skills, critical thinking, referencing tools, and advanced search strategies. These are offered by qualified and experienced library professionals, supported by administrative and operational assistants. Specific academic support is also offered through an academic advising system where students are paired with an academic advisor who provides more individualised support across their programme. The team identified in its discussions with students that these services are effective and adequately support their learning. The library was able to provide evidence and detailed procedures of how they have adapted to meet student needs, including putting on bespoke sessions at the requests of students, and increasing the range of resources.

6.3 Pastoral support is available informally through discussions with staff, and academic advisors, as well as more formally through the offer of counselling and other student-facing health and wellbeing services. Students understand the support available to them and feel confident and comfortable with engaging them if necessary. Matters on student affairs are addressed through formal governance structures which include students which identified pastoral needs, as well as social and community-based needs.

6.4 Professional support is available to discuss career changes and career development, tailored to meet the needs of often already employed learners. Students can access support in developing CVs, interview skills, and presentation skills. These benefits are also extended to alumni following graduation, including access to alumni networking events.

6.5 Students benefit from these services and satisfaction with these services is routinely high. The team identified through its triangulation with students and alumni that students were able to confidently access support as and when needed and continued to utilise these services to develop themselves outside of the formal curricula. Further to this, there are formal internal audits and evaluations of the student support offer which include areas of improvement and implementation follow-ups.

6.6 Students identified that specialised facilities, such as the Play Labs, enabled them to develop practical and hands on skills which translated into their professional development. The review team however identified that access to some facilities is not equitable across campuses, with some facilities currently only available at the main campus. Evidence shows there are clear processes for library resources to be made available across campuses and there are plans to develop specialist resources, such as Play Labs, across campuses. By

implementing these plans, ECAE will ensure that all students are able to benefit from their signature pedagogy in a meaningful way. The team recommends that ECAE the planned expansion of specialist learning resources across all campuses to ensure equitable student access to the institution's signature pedagogy and associated learning opportunities..

6.7 Overall, students have access to a range of resources which aid in both teaching and learning, as well as social and community cohesion. Areas of improvement, such as the above recommendation, have been proactively identified and actioned. The review team concludes that Standard 1.6 Learning resources and student support is 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 ECAE has in place a clearly defined information management framework underpinned by the work of the IRE Department, which serves as the institutional custodian of information and which collects, analyses and disseminates data from across the college departments retain delegated responsibility for the information within their own remit, with clearly identified custodianship across Academic Support, Human Resources and Facilities Management, Finance, the Office of Research, Strategy and Business Development, and IRE. The accuracy, confidentiality and credibility of information is safeguarded through review processes coordinated by IRE and the Marketing and Communications Department before publication and is supported by a Student Records Policy that prescribes arrangements for collection, retention, confidentiality and disposal.

7.2 ECAE operates a substantial portfolio of information systems that together support the management of the student lifecycle, the delivery and evaluation of programmes, and the dissemination of policy and reporting

7.3 ECAE gathers information from various sources to inform decision-making processes. Stakeholders have access to a variety of dashboards or reports with relevant information and data, depending on their position. Aggregated data is reported within committees, departments and to senior management and used to inform decision making at all levels. The College also reports data to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

7.4 ECAE gathers feedback from students and staff at various points of the student journey: at module and programme levels, as well as, from its graduates and partners. There is a strong feedback culture, and students who met the review team gave concrete examples of how ECAE has responded to student feedback. The Student Council is responsible for representing students and sitting on institutional committees, however, the review team found that student engagement on committees is inconsistent (see recommendation in paragraph 2.6). ECAE is encouraged to strengthen the consistency of institutional student engagement so that the contribution of the student voice to institutional decision-making is clearly included.

7.5 The review team considered as good practice ECAE's collection and analysis of a substantial volume of data relating to student progression, attainment, retention, and satisfaction, which is made available to academic and professional staff through regular reporting cycles. The institution's sustained investment in its data infrastructure, together with the consistency with which reporting is produced and disseminated, means that decision-makers at programme, departmental, and institutional level have access to a rich evidence base on which to draw.

7.6 The review team noted, however, that the breadth of systems and the volume of reporting create a degree of disparity around the shared language for reporting channels. The review team recommends that ECAE considers establishing a shared institutional language for its reporting of data, with clearly defined relationships between reports and dashboards, in order to improve coherence and transparency, reduce duplication, and ensure that stakeholders at all levels are working from a common evidence base.

7.7 The review team concludes that ECAE has sound and clear arrangements in place for the management of information, supported by clearly defined responsibilities, a mature data infrastructure, and a strong culture of data-informed decision-making. The review 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 Information about programmes is clearly set out within the Graduate Catalogue and is present on the College website. There are a number of comprehensive policies relating to public information and communications which set out and define the role and responsibilities of the Marketing and Communications Department as the department responsible for public information. The review team, when speaking to students and alumni heard that students felt they had access to adequate information to make an informed decision about their study.

8.2 Expected information for applicants and relevant stakeholders, such as current accreditations, programme offers, policies and procedures, and some data reporting, is available on its current website. However, it is often buried within the website and requires searching to discover. ECAE have proactively identified this and have been working to resolve this through a development of a new website. This website aims to be more user-friendly, with easier calls to action and information access including bilingual translations. The review team, through meeting with key staff members involved in this process, alongside reviewing additional evidence provided are confident that this work is on track and are eager to see its implementation which will address the issues proactively identified.

8.3 Approval for the publication of information is clearly identified within its policies and material is approved by the marketing department to ensure it holds relevant messages, articulated in an appropriate manner for the relevant recipient. Students told the review team that they receive appropriate information across a range of channels which is clear and informative for them. The review team saw, as part of a demonstration of ECAE's internal systems, that there is a repository of up-to-date policy versions for ease of access.

8.4 Information is disseminated to current students, alumni, and key stakeholders across platforms beyond the website including through email, messaging platforms, and in more formal settings such as town halls. There are a number of internal portals which provide easy access to relevant updates and information for current students. When speaking to students, alumni and external stakeholders, the review team heard how these parties are well informed about decisions and direction of ECAE and feel well informed, even after ending their formal engagement with the college.

8.5 Overall, the team; through evaluation of the documentation; speaking to students, staff, and stakeholders; and requesting and reviewing additional information, has identified that there are clear processes for the dissemination of information across a number of domains. Where there are areas for refinement, they have been proactively identified and are well progressed. The team concludes that 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 ECAE operates a broad and active system of ongoing monitoring of its academic programmes, anchored in the Quality Assurance Manual and the ISEIE Model. Monitoring draws on a combination of direct measures (course-embedded assessment, pre-exam and exam board reviews, thesis and placement assessment, at-risk and progression reporting) and indirect measures (termly course-and-faculty evaluations programme learning outcome evaluations, the annual student institutional survey, alumni feedback, employer surveys, the MoHESR Graduate Destination Survey and committee review reports. Monitoring is described by academic staff as 'integrated into what we do', with weekly cross-campus course planning meetings, termly course evaluation feeding course revisions, and pre-exam board evaluations underpinning assessment quality.

9.2 Monitoring instruments are operationally embedded. Through Blue Explorance (ECAE's management system that helps streamline feedback collection, analysis, and distribution across the College), IRE administers four differentiated surveys aligned to programme type (practical school placement, CPD, Master's, etc.) and produces reports with role-based dashboard access for faculty, programme chairs, Division Heads and the senior management team. Pre-exam board verification is supported by an Assessing the Quality of Assessments form with a five-point scale across alignment with learning outcomes, assessment design, grading criteria, grade distribution and feedback efficiency, and is reinforced by an LMS checklist covering plagiarism and AI procedures, double-blind moderation and gradebook checks. Three consolidated Pre-exam Board Reports covering Trimesters 1, 2 and 3 of academic year 2024–25 together with the supporting LMS-sample evidence, pre-exam assessment-review workbook and exam board minutes of meeting demonstrate the full cycle from sampling through moderation to exam-board sign-off, and double-marking workings for the MELSI and PGDE programmes evidence the practical operation of the double-blind moderation protocol across multiple programmes.

9.3 Action plans arising from monitoring are documented and captured against issues, planned actions and follow-up status, with divisional course action plans for the Language, Cognition and Growth Division and the Pedagogy, Technology and Teacher Education Division showing how cross-programme changes are tracked, and the 'Improvement from Weekly Student Feedback' presentation together with the EDUECE3 end-of-class feedback workbook illustrating the closed-loop process at course level. Course-level feedback is collected at the start and end of every course; students are required to complete surveys and lecturers respond visibly. In the meeting with students, the review team heard of the example of an assessment weighting being changed after students raised it with the Head of Department.

9.4 Periodic review at programme level is defined in the Curricula Approval and Revision Policy, which specifies a formal three-year review cycle following initial validation or the previous review. The periodic review function required by this policy is currently delivered through a combination of instruments – three annual programme-level reports prepared by programme coordinators (the competency mapping report, the cross-programme themes

integration report and the programme impact study), evidenced for 2024–25 across all four major programmes through the Programme Impact Report and NECF Alignment Report for the MEDINN together with the MEDINN Thematic Report, the corresponding EYPPGDE Programme Impact and NECF Alignment Reports, the consolidated MELSI evidence pack and the consolidated SPGDE evidence pack, the Vice Chancellor's annual two-day gathering with faculty, the Ministry of Education and the Board of Trustees, the termly refresh of course outlines through APCC, and renewal of accreditation self-studies prepared for the CAA. The substantive periodic review function is therefore being discharged. The College's full Renewal of Accreditation Self-Study Report for the M.Ed and In-service PGDE provides a substantive precedent for programme-level review documentation against the previous CAA standard set, but the new CAA Outcome-Based Evaluation Framework – set out in the Procedural Manual for Renewal of Program Accreditation – has shifted the basis on which renewal of accreditation will operate, with risk-tiered review cycles of 3, 5 or 7 years depending on institutional risk profile. The College's internal three-year review cycle as defined in existing documentation is therefore now overlaid by an annually-reported OBEF/uScore data flow and a risk-tiered external review cycle; the operational relationship between these is currently under development.

9.5 Senior managers explained during the visit that programme-level review is currently mediated through the three reports produced annually by programme coordinators – the competency mapping report, the cross-programme themes integration report and the programme impact study. The Vice Chancellor also convenes an annual two-day gathering with faculty, the Ministry of Education and the Board of Trustees focused on research impact, competency-based education, mapping of programmes to the National Educators' Competency Framework and national priorities, and growth in student competencies before and after joining a programme. Course outlines are refreshed each term against student feedback, and programme impact reports inform programme revision through APCC. None of the academic staff independently described being involved in a discrete three-year cycle of programme review, which reinforces the case for the consolidation step described in the recommendation below.

9.6 Communication of change to students and other stakeholders is partial. The College's response to the further-evidence request was candid: external monitoring feedback is not shared directly with students; instead, amendments to course outlines are documented in a Summary of Changes table on the final page of the course outline, dated and described, and the updated outline is shared with students each term. Students receive updated course outlines, lecturers explain assessment expectations and rubrics at the start of each course, and feedback is constructive and timely; the student meeting included a concrete recent example of the College surveying students on class timing and changing the schedule in response. The College also operates an institution-wide programme of broadcast communication channels – the 2024 and 2025 Convocations, the 2024 and 2025 Townhalls, the Vice Chancellor's Student Welcome Back and Meets Students events, and the Student Orientation with Leadership– together with the Student Representative Council briefing of November 2025, all of which are channels through which institutional messages and updates reach students directly. However, students were less able to point to programme-level changes that had been formally communicated back through a structured 'you said / we did' channel. Mentors and alumni note that the College responds to their feedback, but that this is delivered through school visits, roundtables and individual responses rather than through a published feedback report. The review team considers that ECAE's communication of course-level change is effective; the absence of an equivalent mechanism at programme level is a residual matter.

9.7 External input into programme review is partially evidenced. The course outlines confirm that CAA recommendations have been incorporated into course revisions with traceable change rationales ('Requirements of the Commission for Academic Accreditation'

listed against title revision, content, course learning outcomes, prescribed textbooks, assessment redesign and teaching methods); the central Register of CAA Recommendations consolidates the recommendations received, identifies the named owner of each action and tracks follow-up emails and deadlines, providing the institutional spine for traceability of external recommendations; and the EYPPGDE programme impact report records that NECF course mapping was completed in two rounds with an external moderator in the second round. Alumni and mentors are routinely surveyed and perceive ECAE as building genuine partnerships rather than transactional consultations. Programme-level analysis tying employer and alumni survey results to specific revisions is less visible at present; the 2022 employer survey analysis report, the parallel MoE schools survey and the 2023–24 Graduate Destination Survey analysis evidence the data layer that would feed such programme-level analysis, and the OBEF framework requires submission of analysis to the CAA at programme level on an annual basis.

9.8 Internal audit of academic operations is conducted by the Office of Internal Audit (IAO). The Academic Support audit report was issued on 12 June 2025; the next follow-up cycle is scheduled for June 2026 and a further audit is planned in Q3 2026. The action plan against the Academic Support report is to be developed following the semi-annual follow-up cycle; the comparable 2023 Academic Support internal audit report and its two follow-up trackers provide a precedent for how the next cycle is expected to operate. Audit outcomes are reported to the Board of Trustees and the IAO operates independently of the academic Divisions; this is complemented by the suite of standing committee annual reports for 2022–23 through 2024–25, including the GAPCC, IRB, Student Affairs and EWB annual reports, which together evidence multi-committee oversight of programme-related matters. Internal audit activity provides a complementary assurance route to APCC-led programme monitoring but is not a substitute for the consolidated periodic review pack.

9.9 On assessment, the pre-exam board Assessing the Quality of Assessments form, double-blind moderation and the LMS checklist (covering plagiarism, AI, gradebook setup and instructor course evaluation) operate alongside a closed-loop process whereby pre-exam board findings are communicated to programme coordinators with required written responses and corrective actions. On feedback, course outlines carry a Summary of Changes table with dated, rationale-linked entries (including ‘Requirements of the Commission for Academic Accreditation’ annotations on the translated Arabic-medium outlines), responsiveness is demonstrated through worked examples such as the class-timing survey, and alumni and mentors confirm that feedback leads to visible response. Together these provide rigorous, traceable course-level quality assurance that supports programme integrity across the three campuses. The review team therefore identifies as a feature of good practice the integrated, closed-loop approach to course-level quality assurance, which brings together structured assessment verification and the systematic use of internal and external stakeholder feedback to drive course-level enhancement.

9.10 The review team recommends that ECAE introduce a consolidated programme-level periodic review process aligned with the three-year cycle defined in the Curricula Approval and Revision Policy (termly course-and-faculty evaluations, programme learning outcome evaluations, the annual institutional survey, alumni and employer feedback, programme impact reports, pre-exam board findings and internal audit outcomes) and that the resulting findings, actions and outcomes are communicated to students and other stakeholders at programme level. The introduction of this consolidated process should also clarify the operational alignment between ECAE’s internal three-year cycle and the new CAA Outcome-Based Evaluation Framework risk-tiered external review cycles. This is framed as a recommendation rather than a condition because the substantive periodic review function is being discharged through the instruments described above and through external CAA renewal activity; what is required is consolidation and explicit sign-off rather than the introduction of a new review function.

9.11 ECAE has demonstrably strong ongoing monitoring of its academic programmes, anchored by the ISEIE Model and operationalised through Blue Explorance, pre-exam board verification, action planning, programme impact reports and APCC oversight. The principle area for enhancement is the periodic, programme-level synthesis required by the College's own policy and the systematic communication of programme-level review outcomes back to students. ECAE recognises this gap and is working to align its internal cycle with the new CAA Outcome-Based Evaluation Framework. The substantive periodic review function is therefore being discharged; the recommendation made above addresses the consolidation gap and aligns the College's internal cycle with the CAA's incoming OBEF risk-tiered external review cycles. Based on the evidence, 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 ECAE engages systematically and effectively with cyclical external quality assurance, operating within a dual national regulatory framework and supplementing this with voluntary engagement at international level. Nationally, the College is required to participate in external quality assurance reviews through CAA (every five years) and ADEK (all new programmes). Internationally, ECAE voluntarily participates in external quality assurance through ZeVA and QAA's International Quality Review (now referred to as International Quality Accreditation).

10.2 The IRE Department serves as the institutional focal point for the coordination of all external quality assurance activities, working in accordance with the Quality Assurance Manual. Relevant departments are involved in the process and relevant action points are shared with the stakeholders responsible for their implementation. Where review findings require a formal response, this is coordinated by IRE in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and submitted following Vice Chancellor approval. For the new CAA OBEF data review is conducted on a weekly, monthly, semester and annual basis to support ongoing institutional reporting.

10.3 Action plans arising from external quality assurance activities are embedded in the College's quality assurance framework and feed into discussion and planning activities and it's part of the College's ISEIE Model. However, the review team notes that the College currently shares only brief information regarding the outcomes of reviews across its academic community. The review team therefore recommends that ECAE share the successes, insights and good practice arising from its participation in external quality assurance and accreditation activities more systematically across the academic community, celebrating institutional achievement and supporting collective learning.

10.4 Based on the evidence provided, the review team finds that ECAE engages systematically and effectively with cyclical external quality assurance at national, emirate and international levels, that IRE Department provides mature and well-coordinated oversight of this activity, and that the College treats external review as an opportunity for organisational learning rather than as a compliance exercise. The review team concludes that Standard 1.10 cyclical external quality assurance is 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 IQA 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.engq.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 IQA 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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