



This review method
is ESG-compliant

International Quality Accreditation

Mohamed Bin Zayed
University for Humanities

Review Report

April 2026

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About this review

This is a report of an International Quality Accreditation (IQA) conducted by The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities. The review took place from 13-15 April 2026 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Peter Rae
- Dr Harry Williams
- Ms Chrystalle Margallo (student reviewer).

International Quality Accreditation (IQA) offers institutions outside the UK the opportunity to have a review by the UK's The 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

Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities (MBZUH) is a public university founded in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, UAE, established as an independent legal entity with full legal capacity. It is funded by the Abu Dhabi Government and operates in accordance with applicable laws and regulations under licensure by the UAE Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHESR) at the national level and the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) at the local level.

Its mission is to generate high-quality knowledge that fosters citizenship, intellectual leadership, and specialised competence grounded in tolerance and coexistence. The University's ethos is rooted in presenting Islam and Arab culture in a civilised and humanitarian manner, promoting tolerance, love, and respect for human rights, while upholding the values of moderation and openness to global cultures. These directions are set out in its Strategic Plans 2023-2025/2026-2030

MBZUH has headquarters and a main campus in Abu Dhabi City, with branches in the Emirate of Ajman and the Al Dhafra Region. MBZUH supports the nation's development and scientific research through academic programs in the humanities, social sciences, and philosophy at bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. The university operates under a governance structure under the oversight of a Board of Trustees comprising senior leaders from national and local entities that support and benefit its mission. The University Supreme Council provides proposals to position MBZUH as a globally recognised academic centre in Islamic and human sciences.

Since its establishment and initial licensure in 2020, MBZUH has expanded substantially in both its physical footprint and academic portfolio, this includes the opening of a third campus in the Asl Dhafra region in 2026. Further changes include, local regulatory approval of 11 new programmes, significantly expanding its educational provision. Identified key challenges include the recruitment and retention of qualified faculty, marketplace competition and student recruitment, and the diversification of income away from government funding.

In reaching conclusions about the extent to which Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities meets the 10 ESG Standards, the QAA review team followed the evidence-based review procedure as outlined in the handbook for International Quality Accreditation (February 2026). The University provided the review team with a self-evaluation and supporting evidence. During the review visit, which took place 13-15 April 2026, the review team held a total of 8 meetings with Chief Academic Officer and senior leadership, senior academic managers, students, academic staff involved in teaching, support staff, staff responsible for the virtual learning environment and student management system, and senior staff engaged with quality. The review team also had the opportunity to observe the University's facilities and learning resources remotely in Abu Dhabi, Ajman, and Al Dhafra.

In summary, the team found **one** example of good practice and was able to make **eight** recommendations for improvement/enhancement. The recommendations are of a desirable rather than essential nature and are proposed to enable the University 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 Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities **meets all standards for International Quality Accreditation**

QAA's conclusions about Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities

The QAA review team reached the following conclusions about the higher education provision at Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities.

European Standards and Guidelines

Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities meets all of the 10 ESG Standards and Guidelines.

Conditions

The team did not set any conditions.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following feature of **good practice**:

- Significant and sustained external stakeholder engagement in the design and development of new academic programmes, reflecting the policy of the university (ESG Standard 1.2).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following eight **recommendations** to Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities:

- Implements further measures that support the development of a proactive and enhancement-focused quality culture (ESG Standard 1.1).
- Considers further initiatives to engage students as active partners in quality matters (ESG Standard 1.1).
- Develops and clearly communicate a standalone mitigating circumstances policy, separate from arrangements for Students of Determination, alongside clearer step-by-step guidance on academic appeals procedures (ESG Standard 1.3).
- Develops and implement a formal mechanism by which applicants to the university can appeal negative admissions decisions, and ensure this policy is published (ESG Standard 1.4).
- Ensures key current and relevant data points, formerly published under 'Facts and Figures', are again made publicly available to staff, students, and external stakeholders (ESG Standard 1.7).
- Ensure that the rationale for decisions taken, including the use of data, are properly and fully recorded in formal deliberative meetings (ESG Standard 1.7).
- Strengthens the currency, visibility, and accessibility of institutional information on its website by developing a clearly defined governance section, ensuring that key policies, processes, decisions, and action plans are presented in a consistent and transparent way (ESG Standard 1.8).
- Establishes mechanisms whereby faculty are able to periodically reflect and input on the development of their own programmes, rather than rely solely on external oversight (ESG Standard 1.9).

Explanation of the findings about Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities

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 Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities (MBZUH) is a relatively new higher education established 2020 and is currently provisionally accredited by the UAE (United Arab Emirates) Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) with plans to achieve full 5-year institutional licensure pending the outcome of an external review (scheduled for April 2026) using the CAA's new outcomes-based evaluation framework.

1.2 MBZUHs approach to quality assurance is described in their Quality Assurance and Institutional Effectiveness Manual (QAIEM). The manual establishes a framework for "quality assurance and institutional effectiveness, including teaching and learning, the assessment of student learning outcomes and administrative units, and programme review and approval." The current iteration of the QAIEM, which does not currently appear on the university website (see recommendation under Standard 1.8: Public information about ensuring this policy and others are available), was approved in June 2024 by the MBZUH Chancellor. Overall, the panel felt the current iteration of the Quality Assurance and Institutional Effectiveness Manual was fit-for-purpose.

1.3 The Chancellor of MBZUH is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the QAIEM with the Quality and Institutional Effectiveness Office (QIEO) taking responsibility for implementing measures on a day-to-day basis. The QIEO is a relatively new feature at MBZUH having been first established in 2024. During the online visit, the team heard from senior staff who reported the impact of its introduction had been broadly positive, particularly in relation to systematising quality matters such as collecting student views on their academic experience.

1.4 Operationalising the approach outlined in the QAIEM are several process-specific policies. For example, the Periodic Review and Amendment of Academic Programs Policy outlines the objectives, persons involved, and specific procedures for the periodic review of the university's higher education programmes whereas the Examinations and Grading Policy outlines the systems in place to ensure that student assessment is conducted in a consistent manner. These and other examples provided to the panel generally provide the detail necessary to support staff with implementing quality procedures in line with MBZUHs institutional policy for quality assurance. The implementation of these policies and procedures is covered in greater detail in the succeeding sections.

1.5 To ensure faculty awareness and understanding of MBZUH quality policy and procedure, the QIEO provides training on an ongoing basis.

1.6 The QAIEM indicates that there are substantive roles for several of the university's committees in different quality processes. However, there remains a significant amount of executive action with business dealt with outside of the university's quality framework. The panel understands that MBZUH is a relatively young higher education institution and it may be that policies and processes still need time to become fully embedded. Ensuring this happens will presumably be partly the role of the newly established QAIEO. Nevertheless, the panel still believes that more can be done. For example, formalising the role of quality committees at the school and college-level. The panel heard that these groups had some

role in bridging institutional quality policy with faculty on-the-ground but could not find this explained anywhere in the MBZUHs policy for quality assurance. The review team recommends that the university implement further measures that support the development of a proactive and enhancement-focused quality culture.

1.7 Policy reviews are coordinated by the QAIEO and managed via the university's Unified Management System (UMS). Currently, all MBZUH policies and manuals, including the Quality Assurance and Institutional Effectiveness Manual, undergo a comprehensive formal review every three years. During the online visit, the panel heard that the manual is currently undergoing a full review to ensure currency, which should include consultation with external stakeholders.

1.8 There are multiple opportunities for dialogue between the university, its staff, and the student body. The QAIEO launches around twenty different surveys per year aimed at different stakeholder groups. Students in particular are invited to engage with a large number of surveys. However, from the evidence presented, the extent to which students and student representatives are involved directly in the MBZUH quality framework is limited. The review team recommends that the university consider further initiatives to engage students as active partners in quality matters.

1.9 The institution has a strategic approach to quality assurance that is outlined in the university QAIEM, and this underpins a quality framework that seeks to promote excellence and enable continuous improvement. There are effective arrangements for ensuring staff knowledge and currency with institutional quality policy. Notwithstanding, the recommendations in this area, 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 MBZUH has a process in place for its design and approval of programmes, which is largely determined by government regulations in the UAE due to its public institution status. The accreditation process is overseen by the UAE's Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHESHR) Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) and is in line with the UAE National Qualification Framework.

2.2 Within MBZUH, the regular programme development, management, monitoring, and review are carried out in accordance with applicable laws and regulations under licensure by the MOHESR at the national level and the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) at the local level. MBZUH adheres to the Standards for Licensure and Program Accreditation issued by the CAA. The MBZUH Policy for Establishing and Discontinuing Academic Programs articulates processes to be undertaken when introducing new programmes. The review team saw evidence of a clear process for course development: new course proposals are prepared by the College concerned, subsequently evaluated, and approved by the University's Academic Programs and Plans Committee, then by the University's Scientific Council, then by the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees, before being submitted for consideration and approval by the CAA. Through meeting with staff and examining evidence, the review team concluded that procedures are effective to ensure the programmes reflect the educational philosophy and goals of MBZUH and demonstrate that MBZUH has a formal institutional approval process for its programmes. The proposals are revised during the process to address the various committees' recommendations.

2.3 MBZUH's design and approval process is appropriate because it addresses the regular curriculum development requirements under the Higher Education Law of UAE and follows other relevant regulations to regulate its programmes. Its approach is credible because the University starts with well-defined goals for the review and revision process. The review team considered the programme design, approval, development, and revision process of the new Bachelor of Arts in Russian Language (BARL) programme as clear evidence of the effectiveness of MBZUH's documented approach. The team reviewed evidence which demonstrated extensive engagement with data from a wide sweep of diverse sources (such as current students, alumni, local and international subject experts, and industry partners) and demonstrated a benchmarking process against leading programmes from around the world, followed by several rounds of revisions of initial curriculum drafts. Such a detailed consultation process, outlined as part of the systematic structure of the design process at MBZUH, is clearly documented in the appendices which support the BARL programme development. The comments from the relevant primary committee structures at MBZUH are evidenced in the related meeting minutes, and the review team heard evidence of this in meetings with senior leaders and teaching staff. As a result of this, the review team identified the following features of good practice at MBZUH: Significant and sustained external stakeholder engagement in the design and development of new academic programmes, reflecting the policy of the university.

2.4 MBZUH has followed an Outcome-Based Education (OBE) approach to align course outcomes with programme outcomes and ensure that progressive academic standards, competencies, and expectations across the study duration are met. The review team observed that degree programmes have clearly defined programme intended learning outcomes, mapped against course units and unit assessments. All course units have outcomes that are mapped against the programme ILOs. The review team confirmed that course mappings in the evidence are consistent, with lower-level courses generally focussing on comprehension, mid-level courses on application, and higher-level courses on mastery of the subjects by focusing more on analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. These arrangements are effective in helping students understand relationships among different modules and how different courses will help them achieve different programme learning outcomes.

2.5 The review team observed that MBZUH has designed its programmes with reference to the UAE National Qualifications Framework (QFEmirates), the national reference for structuring qualifications in the UAE and for aligning them with international qualifications frameworks. This ensures that MBZUH awards achieve the core objectives of the UAE Quality framework. As part of the approval process for new awards, MBZUH submits full documentation to both ADEK and CAA, who each appoint independent external subject matter experts to conduct a comprehensive academic review of the programme, including its curriculum, learning outcomes, assessment structure, staffing, and alignment with national qualification frameworks. The review findings, together with any required actions, are communicated to the University prior to the issuance of any formal accreditation decision.

2.6 The team learned that the student handbooks are used as an information source to answer the questions students may have during the studies, and they provide general information on the individual programmes, including core requirements and course mapping. MBZUH's programmes at different levels define the expected student workload. The team saw that the curriculum documents provide clear details on credits for different courses at different years and required credits to gain the related bachelor's degree qualifications and the postgraduate programme.

2.7 Having examined policy documents, reviewed their implementation through scrutiny of evidence, and discussed the process in detail with staff, students, and stakeholders, the review team concludes that Standard 1.2: Policy for 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 MBZUH's Self-Evaluation Document (SED) states that student-centred learning is supported through teaching strategies that encourage active participation and self-directed learning, with reference to the Smart Learning Policy. The policy describes e-learning as moving from "rote learning to creativity, interaction, and skills development," and supports individual learning according to students' ability and pace. During meetings with staff, the review team heard that MBZUH has sought to move away from more traditional rote approaches through training provided each semester on more interactive methods, including flipped learning, the use of apps to encourage participation, discussion boards, mind mapping, and the recent pilot use of AI-supported platforms. Staff also described an institutional approach in which students are encouraged to formulate, evidence, and communicate their ideas, supported by workshops, symposia, and dialogue-based teaching. This approach is further operationally reflected within the Undergraduate Student Handbook, which outlines expectations relating to teaching programmes, courses and quality measures that support the University's Smart Learning approach, including evaluation mechanisms such as employer surveys. Alignment between programme learning goals and programme learning outcomes is also evidenced through Mapping of Course Learning Outcomes and Program Learning Outcomes demonstrating how intended learning approaches and outcomes are structured and monitored at programme level.

3.2 Teaching practices are further supported through peer review processes, as evidenced in Peer Review of Staff, which contribute to the ongoing development of teaching approaches. This is further supported through the Undergraduate Student Handbook, which outlines expectations relating to teaching programmes, courses and quality measures linked to the University's Smart Learning approach. Alignment between teaching activities, programme learning goals and intended learning outcomes is also evidenced through Mapping of Course Learning Outcomes and Program Learning Outcomes and Quality Assurance Manual. The students confirmed during the review meeting that they experience a range of teaching methods, including group work, projects, teamwork, presentations, seminars, academic research, and guided reading, and noted that reference works and guiding questions are used to encourage deeper engagement with the subject. The students also confirmed during the review meeting that these approaches support them in developing understanding through independent reading and research, rather than receiving information passively. The review team also viewed virtual campus tour materials which demonstrated learning spaces intended to support interactive teaching, student engagement, and collaborative learning activities.

3.3 Taken together, this evidence indicates that students are encouraged to take an active role in their learning, supported by a range of pedagogical approaches, including both group and individual learning formats, and opportunities for self-directed learning and learner autonomy.

3.4 The SED states that student voice is incorporated through course evaluation surveys, with results used to review courses and educational services. The Student Rights Policy further states that students have the right to participate in course, faculty, and programme evaluation surveys, and to contribute to the review and development of curricula and institutional policies. In meetings, senior staff described two main routes through which student views inform change: formal student feedback through surveys and the Student

Council, and matters raised through faculty observation and academic channels. This is further evidenced through the Course Instructor Evaluation Survey, which provides a structured mechanism for collecting student feedback on teaching and assessment. One example provided was a Master's programme in which student feedback led to the removal of a classroom participation element and its replacement with an examination component.

3.5 Staff also explained that course evaluation results are considered through the course file process - compiled through the course leader, passed to the section head, and then reviewed and approved through committee structures as part of an ongoing enhancement cycle. Deliberation was further evidenced through the Course Instructor Evaluation Survey, Survey Outcomes to Improvement Actions, and the Annual Program Evaluation, which demonstrate the analysis of student feedback and the identification of enhancement actions. The review team also saw evidence within course reports and committee documentation of feedback, performance data and proposed improvements being formally reviewed through institutional processes. Evidence reviewed within course evaluation reports also demonstrated quantitative analysis of student satisfaction, including feedback on teaching methods, assessment, learning resources and student engagement, alongside documented recommendations for course enhancement.

3.6 The review team also saw range of course-level evidence within Course Files that provides further illustration of assessment practice. The Artificial Intelligence course report shows that assessment is distributed across several components, including a final examination, midterm, projects, assignments, and quizzes, with marks allocated to each and analysed quantitatively at the end of the course. This report also evaluates the achievement of course learning outcomes against a stated benchmark, noting that a course learning outcome is achieved where at least 70% of students meet it. Student work samples demonstrate marking supported by qualitative comments identifying strengths and areas for improvement. This is further supported using defined marking criteria, as evidenced in the Grading Rubric, which provides structured guidance on assessment expectations and supports consistency in marking. Student evaluation data also indicates positive perceptions of the timeliness and fairness of grading. The students confirmed during the review meeting that assessment requirements are clearly explained at the beginning of the semester, supported by detailed rubrics, and that feedback is provided in a timely manner. Students' understanding of assessment is also supported through induction processes and formal guidance, as evidenced in Induction Materials and the Undergraduate Students Handbook. This suggests that assessment practices are understood by students and applied consistently.

3.7 The students confirmed during the review meeting that course evaluations take place each semester and that, while changes are not always visible immediately, they have seen instances where courses were made easier to understand or improved following feedback. The students also confirmed during the review meeting that while feedback is regularly collected, changes are not always immediately visible, suggesting that student involvement in programme design and enhancement is present but somewhat limited in visibility. Evidence of feedback informing change is further demonstrated through Survey Outcomes to Improvement Actions, which shows how student feedback is translated into identified improvements. This indicates that feedback mechanisms are established and used, although the closing of the feedback loop is not always clear to students.

3.8 The Student Rights Policy states that students have the right to study in an environment that supports freedom of self-expression, allows them to ask questions and express alternative views, and promotes professional and respectful interaction. The students confirmed during the review meeting that their learning experience includes seminars, discussion, academic research, and reading-based approaches that position them as active participants rather than passive recipients of information. The students also

confirmed in meetings that the delivery of programmes in Arabic supports accessibility and engagement with learning materials and discussions. This reflects the ESG expectation that the learning environment supports student-centred learning, engagement, and participation.

3.9 In relation to assessment, the SED states that programme and course documentation must define learning outcomes, assessment tools, grade distribution, and alignment between course and programme outcomes. It also states that examination questions must align with approved learning outcomes and clearly indicate mark allocation, with oversight by relevant academic committees. The review team saw that the Examinations and Grading Policy states that students must be informed of all regulations and instructions related to examinations, and that examinations must be conducted according to approved schedules and procedures. It requires examination questions to be aligned to course outcomes, varied in difficulty, clearly written, and to specify the marks allocated to each question and the learning outcome addressed. The review team confirmed in the meeting with academics and students of alignment between assessment tasks and learning through Syllabus and Assessment Tasks and Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs), which demonstrates how assessment is mapped to intended learning outcomes. It also provides for rescheduling where students have more than two examinations in one day. These arrangements indicate that assessment is designed and managed through defined institutional procedures intended to support fairness, transparency, and consistency, with no significant concerns identified in relation to assessment design or implementation.

3.10 The Course Files Audit Report provided further evidence to the review team of course-level monitoring. Course files contain syllabi, teaching materials, assessment instruments, marking schemes, graded samples across performance levels, student attendance data, analysis of student performance, summaries of student feedback, and records of improvement actions. It also requires instructors to comment on the appropriateness of learning outcomes, the balance of assessment, learning resources, and prerequisite structures. This indicates that teaching and assessment are reviewed through a structured and consistent evidence base.

3.11 The review team also noted that the Examinations and Grading Policy describes the role of examination committees in monitoring the conduct of examinations, approving examination questions, and addressing examination-related issues. The Faculty Regulations require academic departments and coordinators to ensure alignment between assessment tools and course learning outcomes, monitor the achievement of programme outcomes, and undertake periodic review of curricula and academic performance. Programme-level monitoring is further evidenced through the Annual Program Evaluation, Course File Audit Report, and reviewed Artificial Intelligence Course Files, which demonstrated analysed student performance data, mapped assessment tasks, marked student work, course enhancement actions and ongoing review of learning outcomes and assessment practices in operation. Alignment between assessment tasks and intended learning outcomes was also evidenced through Syllabus and Assessment Tasks CLO documentation.

3.12 The Review Team recommends that MBZUH review and enhance its assessment regulations and associated student procedures to ensure that clear, accessible, and consistently applied processes are available for students seeking consideration in relation to all forms of assessment, including examinations, coursework, assignments, and other assessed activities. The Review Team noted that the University's procedures for petitions relating to incomplete grades appear to apply specifically to final examinations and do not clearly address other forms of assessment. The University should therefore ensure that equivalent provisions and procedures are clearly articulated for all assessment types where students may be unable to complete or submit work due to exceptional circumstances

3.13 The University should also ensure that information regarding academic appeals, complaints and requests for assessment consideration is clearly communicated and readily accessible to students, and that students are aware of the support and processes available to them when exceptional circumstances affect their studies UMS demonstration of appeal service request process during the review visit.

3.14 Staff stated that teaching and assessment may be adapted to meet different student needs through differentiated instruction, varied teaching formats, adapted examination arrangements, and changes to timing where appropriate, while maintaining the same academic standards. Staff also noted that the relatively small cohort sizes at MBZUH support this flexibility in practice. Additional support for diverse learners is provided through institutional processes, where lists of Students of Determination are shared with faculties to enable targeted support, and students may be registered on specific courses designed to meet their needs. The review team also saw documented Cases of Students of Determination and Student Academic Weaknesses records, which evidenced the implementation of support arrangements, assessment adjustments, and intervention processes in practice. This suggests that assessment and teaching practices take into account learner diversity within defined academic standards.

3.15 In relation to learner diversity, the Policy for Services for Students of Determination states that the University provides appropriate teaching techniques, assistive technologies, adapted examinations, and individual support plans to support participation and academic achievement. The policy also includes progress monitoring, coordination with academic departments, training for faculty, and awareness activity. In meetings, staff described support in practice as including adapted examinations, extended time, writing support, tailored teaching methods, office-hours support, and communication with faculty through identified student lists and individual plans. This indicates that MBZUH has established arrangements to support students with diverse needs and promote inclusive learning.

3.16 The Admission and Registration Policy refers to academic appeals procedures and outlines processes through which students may challenge academic decisions. Admissions and Registration staff explained that, where a student wishes to appeal a final grade, there is a defined period for submission through UMS, after which the appeal is reviewed by the relevant Dean and committee before a final decision is communicated to the student. This indicates that an institutional route for academic appeal exists. However, while the existence of an appeals process is evidenced at policy and staff level, the process is not clearly set out in detail within course-level documentation. In addition, the desk-based evidence reviewed did not identify a clearly evidenced standalone mitigating circumstances policy, separate from the support arrangements available for Students of Determination. Therefore, the review team recommends that the University develops and clearly communicates a standalone mitigating circumstances policy, separate from arrangements for Students of Determination, alongside clearer step-by-step guidance on academic appeals procedures.

3.17 Overall, the evidence indicates that MBZUH has established structured approaches to student-centred learning, with teaching methods that encourage active participation, self-directed learning, and the use of varied pedagogical approaches. Assessment practices are clearly aligned to learning outcomes, supported by defined institutional processes, and are understood by students, with evidence of consistency and transparency in their application. Arrangements to support learner diversity, including provision for Students of Determination, are in place and applied in practice. Student feedback mechanisms are established and contribute to course-level enhancement, although student involvement in programme design and the visibility of the feedback loop remain more limited. On this basis, the arrangements in place are aligned with the expectations of ESG Standard 1.3.

3.18 The review team therefore concludes that Standard 1.3: Student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment, is **met**.

Standard 1.4: Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

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

Findings

4.1 MBZUH's approach to student admission, progression, recognition, and certification is outlined in their Admission and Registration Policy. The admissions process is overseen by the university's Admissions and Registration Department which reports to the ultimately the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs. A recommendation under Standard 1.8: Public information to ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are made available on the university's website also applies here in respect of policies relating to admission, progression, recognition, and certification, which are currently not available online.

4.2 Prospective students apply to MBZUH via the university's website. Applicants must submit their completed application and supporting documentation in advance of the published deadline to the university's Student Information System (SIS). Staff within the Admissions and Registration Department are then responsible for ensuring that applications contain the information required. A sample of completed student applications reviewed by the panel demonstrated these checks taking place. Applicants are invited to an interview where MBZUH explores their academic achievements and language skills. Offers to study are then communicated by email. Students with whom the review team met during the online visit did not report any concerns and instead felt the application and interview system worked well.

4.3 During the review process, the panel noted that the university's Admission and Registration Policy did not contain explicit reference to an admissions appeals procedure. Exploring this with senior staff, the panel heard that while the university has an open-door policy and applicants could request MBZUH reconsider their application if and when it was rejected, this is not contained anywhere in a formal policy. The review team recommends that the university develop and implement a formal mechanism by which applicants to the university can appeal negative admissions decisions, and ensure this policy is published.

4.4 Applicants with additional learning requirements, deemed "Students of Determination" by government policy, can disclose conditions at the time of application. During the online visit, the panel heard that, on average, MBZUH receives around twenty applications annually from these students. Following enrolment, it is the Student Life Division who is responsible for organising and coordinating individualised support for students with additional learning requirements. The panel saw evidence of the university's approach at work during the online visit including the coordination of interventions for students of determination.

4.5 There are no English Language requirements, however, given that the language of instruction at MBZUH is Arabic, applicants are required to show proficiency in the Arabic Language. Applicants not meeting the specific Arabic Language score (typically a minimum of 75% is required) may be admitted to a Preparatory Program. Successful completion of the MBZUH Preparatory Program allows students to then apply for credit-bearing courses.

4.6 There are arrangements for the recognition of prior learning (RPL). Prior experiences must be sufficiently similar to that delivered at MBZUH. In response to an application for RPL, the relevant College Dean will form a scientific committee to evaluate the request and submit a recommendation to the MBZUH Scientific Council for approval. If negative, the

applicant may appeal within one week of the result being announced by contacting the University Chancellor directly. During the review process, the panel heard that there had been no recent (last three academic years) applications for RPL meaning that it was not possible to fully evaluate the effectiveness of the RPL process at the time of the review.

4.7 Upon enrolment, the university's Student Affairs Department is the first port-of-call for students with questions related to policies, regulations, and university systems. The two weeks of each semester represents an induction fortnight where new students are provided support by returning students and faculty members although no induction programme was provided to the team to substantiate this. A subset of students with whom the panel met during the online visit reported that some felt "lost" at the start of semester but confirmed that the university was generally supportive.

4.8 There are processes to monitor and support student progression throughout their academic journey. Central to these is the university's academic advising system, which is provided by faculty based in the students' college of study. All students are assigned an Academic Advisor. Most of the university's colleges have a student: advisor ratio of around ten students per advisor, the exception to this being the College of Graduate Studies which has around twenty-one students per advisor. The role of the advisor is to provide guidance on any academic matters, including course advising, tutoring, and counselling. The team learned that Academic Advisors identify students at-risk of non-progression to their Head of Department allowing interventions to be put in place. During the online visit, the team met with students who confirmed that they had a named academic advisor, and the positive nature of support provided.

4.9 MBZUH has clear requirements for graduation, and these are outlined in the Admissions and Registration Policy. For example, for bachelor's programmes, a student must complete the minimum programme hours, complete all courses with a grade of at least 1.0, and obtain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0. Students must all pass courses in their specialisation with a score of at least 75%. The requirements for graduating from a master's and PhD programme are separately outlined in the Graduate Studies Programs Policy. The final approval for graduation is given by the university's Board of Trustees. The review panel reviewed a sample of graduation certificates and transcripts and concluded that the documentation confirmed the qualification gained, including the name and status of the courses that were pursued and successfully completed during the programme.

4.10 Notwithstanding the recommendation in this Standard, the review team concluded that the processes for the admission, progression, graduation, and certification of students are aligned with the requirements of Standard 1.4 and that the Standard 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 The University notes it has established 'a rigorous recruitment and induction process' and has 'set a specific benchmark to recruit faculty members holding degrees from top-ranked international universities to support the maintenance of global standards.' MBZUH seeks to recruit qualified academic staff internationally by publishing recruitment advertisements, through partnership with other institutions, and through prioritising presence at international conferences.

5.2 MBZUH includes within its Faculty Regulations the core requirements for being appointed to the academic staff. The Regulations also define the required qualifications, core expectations, and key responsibilities of different faculty roles, including expectations regarding teaching, research, and supervision, and associated academic or administrative tasks. A review of the qualifications of faculty members confirms that those appointed as lecturers or above have master's degrees, and assistant Professors and above hold the PhD degree.

5.3 Meetings with students and with alumni underline their perception that faculty are qualified, are able teachers, and are supportive of students through systems of pastoral care. Student evaluations support this assessment. Although MBZUH has identified a challenge in attracting suitably qualified faculty in the areas of the humanities and Islamic studies, given a competitive environment and limited availability of specialists with the required language skills who can teach, publish, and supervise in Arabic, the review team noted no current shortages.

5.4 MBZUH has a system of performance evaluation and enhancement which requires an annual appraisal of faculty members, balancing a formative evaluation (at the start of the academic year) with a summative evaluation (which takes place in April). This involves a meeting with the Head of Department, and an agreed appraisal which is reviewed by a 3-4 person evaluative committee. The team discussed the appraisal process with faculty, and reviewed documents which form part of that process, including student evaluations and peer evaluations, both of which offer detailed analysis of lecturer performance. MBZUH encourages the teaching staff to undertake peer-review teaching observations, and faculty confirmed that such reviews take place regularly. The annual evaluation cycle is then linked to the institutional Performance Management System, so that faculty evaluation is part of a defined institutional cycle.

5.5 MBZUH conducts periodic professional development and training activities for academic and administrative staff through the Academic Support Division and the Performance Management Section. These activities are linked to identified needs (through a training needs survey), and are intended to enhance teaching effectiveness, research capacity, quality assurance awareness, digital competencies, and administrative performance. The team saw evidence that MBZUH has a cycle of such offerings, running each semester across all campuses, with some in person delivery supplemented by online offerings, and a range of standing offerings available through an online learning platform.

5.6 The Faculty Regulations function as an employee handbook, and offer an introduction to MBZUH, its internal regulations, salary and allowances, annual leaves and absences, promotional policies, and instruction on disciplinary procedures and contract termination.

The team reviewed the Staff Induction presentation, provided to all new employees of MBZUH during the first week of employment, delivered by HR, the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and the College Deans, which offers an introduction to University history and structure, and a review of regulations, procedures, and campus safety.

5.7 The University encourages its academic staff to undertake research in their disciplinary areas, with sabbatical leave available every six years, and funding available for conferences, workshops, and publications. Research activity is a contributory factor in promotion decisions. Recognising the paucity of academic journals available in Arabic, the University has established its own suite of academic journals, published in cooperation with Brill Publishers. MBZUH aims to seek Scopus indexing for its journals in due course.

5.8 MBZUH has established various grants (for example study grants, conference grants, research grants, training grants), and they are open for application with the aim to support faculty and staff development.

5.9 Overall, the team concluded that MBZUH communicates and implements clear standards for the hiring of academic staff and for promotion. A regular process of appraisal, reinforced by peer review and student evaluations, ensures standards of teaching are maintained, and professional development activities are provided to enhance teaching effectiveness and other competencies. MBZUH invests in research activity, ensuring teaching staff remain active in their discipline.

5.10 The review team therefore 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 MBZUK's SED describes an integrated set of learning resources and support arrangements intended to enable students to access learning opportunities, remain engaged, and progress successfully, including library provision, academic advising, inclusive support, international student support, housing, and co-curricular activity. This indicates that MBZUH seeks to provide support across the student lifecycle.

6.2 The Library and Learning Resources Policy sets out an approach to resource provision that is explicitly framed around student need. It states that the library's mission includes supporting accredited programmes and expanding students' cultural horizons through the continuous updating of resources and by facilitating access according to recognised standards. It further states that resources are centred on student needs and interests and that the library aims to create an environment that supports active learning, including by providing references required for study and electronic information sources accessible on and off campus. These arrangements indicate that the library is positioned as a core part of the learning environment.

6.3 The policy also sets out arrangements intended to help students use these resources effectively. It refers to an orientation programme for new and existing users covering electronic catalogues, periodicals, research resources, internet-enabled library computers and training on library systems, alongside current awareness services, staff guidance, and the dissemination of information through printed and online means. This is further supported through Induction Materials, which provide students with early guidance on accessing services and resources. This suggests that access to resources is supported through information literacy and user guidance rather than being left entirely to student self-navigation.

6.4 The SED states that key library services are accessible through UMS and references a library services menu including the digital repository, library guide, digital portal, unified search, information exchange service, external borrowing requests, database rules, automated indexing, training requests, study room booking and book requests. During meetings, staff demonstrated UMS and explained that it gives access to student-facing policies, the library system, IT services, academic advising notes, volunteering records, complaints, and other support services through one platform. This is further supported by evidence of system integration and service access through institutional processes. This indicates that MBZUH has taken steps to centralise access to resources and support through formal online systems.

6.5 The Library and Learning Resources Policy also describes internal and external circulation, renewal, reservation, tracking of borrowed materials, inter-library loan, and circulation arrangements under agreements with other universities and institutions. It further refers to virtual library arrangements and the requirement that these be evaluated periodically. These arrangements indicate that MBZUH seeks to broaden access to learning resources beyond its immediate holdings.

6.6 The review team learned that there was a Library Committee responsible for managing appropriations, distributing resources to departments, and overseeing acquisition according to user need. The SED states that funding for library and learning resources is secured

through the University's annual government-provided budget to support acquisition, renewal and updating of collections in line with academic needs. This is further evidenced through the Annual Budget Letter of Approval. Senior leadership also stated that all students are funded through full Abu Dhabi Government scholarships covering study costs, accommodation, flights, insurance, and stipends. This suggests that a stable and well-resourced funding model underpins learning resources and student support.

6.7 The review team also noted that the Library and Learning Resources Policy contains defined mechanisms for feedback and service enhancement. These include suggestion and complaint boxes, email routes, annual analysis of complaints and suggestions by the Library Director, and consideration of that analysis by the Library Committee in decisions relating to substantial changes and improvements. The policy also sets out staged complaint procedures. In meetings, staff explained that surveys are conducted termly or annually by QAIEP and used to produce reports and action plans to improve services or create new ones, while suggestion boxes, the Student Council and direct communication with relevant staff provide further routes for raising issues. This is further supported through Survey Outcomes to Improvement Actions. Staff also gave an example of housing complaints leading to a change in dormitory arrangements. This indicates that processes are in place to review support services and respond to student feedback.

6.8 The SED describes academic support as delivered through structured advising arrangements, including follow-up and remedial planning for students at academic risk. The Admission and Registration Policy states that each college assigns an academic advisor and organises advising before each registration period, and that the advisor supports the student from enrolment until graduation. The policy sets out advisor responsibilities including support with course registration and add/drop, contacting instructors regarding struggling students, monitoring performance, maintaining records, developing remedial plans, escalating concerns, and updating students on their progress towards graduation. The review team saw that these arrangements are further supported by the Academic Advisement Guide. Staff also stated that records are kept on UMS and that formal meeting summaries may be sent to students following Teams meetings, though some informal conversations also take place outside that system. Staff further described a term-wide process of identifying students with academic warnings or low grades and supporting them to improve through targeted intervention, supported by data on student academic weaknesses, while Student Life provides more general academic skills sessions such as time management. This demonstrates that academic advising is a structured part of student support.

6.9 The SED also refers to additional support for students studying via e-learning routes, including a proprietary data hub, a Student Information System, announcements portals, discussion tools, email, chat, instant messaging and WhatsApp and the review team were able to see demonstrations of this. The policy also states that key publications are made available electronically to these students. This indicates that support arrangements are adapted for different delivery modes.

6.10 The SED references specific support arrangements for Students of Determination, including support plans, assistive technology assessment, progress monitoring, access to facilities and examination adjustments. The Policy for Services for Students of Determination provides further detail. In meetings, staff described adapting examinations, library access, and wider campus arrangements to student needs, and creating individual support plans including extended time and writing support. This is further supported by documented cases of Students of Determination. This suggests that MBZUH has a structured and applied approach to inclusive support.

6.11 The Students Rights Policy states that the University provides health insurance to students under its sponsorship and a health clinic during working hours. It also notes that

students have the right to benefit from University services, resources, and facilities. These arrangements indicate that welfare and practical support are recognised as part of the student experience.

6.12 The University Housing Policy sets out eligibility criteria intended to support attendance and stability. Staff reported that housing arrangements are monitored through feedback and that complaints had led to changes in dormitory provision indicating that housing is treated as part of the broader support framework.

6.13 The SED states that international student support is intended to reduce administrative barriers and support continuity of study. The International Student Benefits Policy describes formal processes for visa, insurance, and residency arrangements. Senior leadership described additional practical support, including airport collection, accommodation support, a 24-hour helpline and regular engagement with students. This evidences that support for international students extends beyond administrative processes into pastoral and practical provision.

6.14 The SED also links student support to engagement and co-curricular development. The Student Activities Policy outlines structured extracurricular provision. The students confirmed during the review meeting that a wide range of clubs and activities are available and that they participate in initiatives and external representation. The Student Volunteering and Community Engagement Policy sets out volunteering as a structured requirement and students confirmed during the review meeting that volunteering is required for graduation and were able to describe participation in a range of activities, further evidenced through Student Volunteering Hours records.

6.15 Overall, the evidence indicates that MBZUH has established a comprehensive and structured approach to learning resources and student support across the student lifecycle. Learning resources are accessible both physically and digitally, supported by the UMS as a centralised platform for accessing services and systems. Library provision is supported through clear governance arrangements and ongoing development. Academic advising is structured, with processes in place to monitor student progression and provide targeted support where required. Arrangements for Students of Determination are clearly defined and supported in practice through individual plans and adapted provision, and support for international students is extensive in practice, including pastoral and financial support, although not fully formalised within a single overarching policy. Opportunities for engagement beyond the classroom are established through clubs, volunteering and co-curricular activities, and feedback mechanisms operate through multiple channels to inform service improvement. On this basis, the arrangements in place are aligned with the expectations of ESG Standard 1.6.

6.16 The review team therefore 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 MHZUH has established processes for collecting, analysing, and using information in the management of its higher education offer and other activities. In particular, the QIEO (Quality and Institutional Effectiveness Office) is responsible for overseeing MBZUH's performance assessment of both academic and administrative units.

7.2 Between 2014-15 and 2018-19, the university published several key datasets online under the "Facts and Figures" part of their website. This included metrics like overall student-to-faculty ratio as well as student satisfaction and retention. However, this information has not been updated since that time. The review team recommends that the university ensures key current and relevant data points, formerly published under Facts and Figures, are again made publicly available to staff, students, and external stakeholders.

7.3 MBZUH tracks a number of key performance indicators (KPIs) to help it evaluate programme effectiveness. Tracking progress against KPIs rests with the relevant department leadership and, at the institutional level, the Strategic Affairs Office. For academic programmes, this includes average achievement of course and programme learning outcomes, programme licensure status, alignment of individual course files with institutional policy and others. Other services such as the Human Resources Department have their own KPIs, such as ensuring each member of staff undertakes a certain amount of professional development within an academic year.

7.4 The university has developed several systems and platforms to support the process of collecting and analysing information. The university's UMS (Unified Management System) allows staff and students to access policies and procedure documents, contact central departments and, depending on the user, see essential information, for example, faculty can access their teaching schedule. The UMS is also used to manage the academic advising system, with students and faculty able to speak with each other to discuss study plans or issues the student may be facing. Dashboards support the university's senior staff in managing MBZUH's operation further by providing headline data on students, staff, and programmes. Further systems include the Student Information System (SIS), which is used throughout the student lifecycle from admission and registration to graduation. Student data such as attendance is recorded in the SIS, while student marks are ported across automatically from the university's VLE. These systems support various administrative and academic functions such as generating registration reports, staff, and student timetables, as well as drawing up graduation lists.

7.5 New staff are provided with individualised training during their on-boarding and induction process in relation to information management by the university's Human Resources Department. Part of this initial training includes becoming familiar with the university's Information Security Management System (ISMS) Manual, which outlines the steps taken by MBZUH to protect key datasets from both internal and external threats. Ongoing training and support is then provided on an as-needed basis.

7.6 MBZUH provides some evidence of how collected information directly impacts and influences decision-making processes. For example, the Feasibility Study for the Bachelor of Arts in Russian Language (BARL) demonstrates the extensive use of data (student and employer views, market analysis, student number expectations, benchmarking with other

institutions, cost, and expenditure projections) in planning for an upcoming programme. The panel saw evidence of the university's systems in action generating reports to aid decision-making. The team also heard from staff and faculty that data was regularly used in the university's deliberative committee structure, however, documentary evidence to demonstrate that was very limited. The panel concluded that while it may be the case that data is collected and analysed, its use is not always captured in the official record where decisions are made. The review team recommends that the university implement measures to ensure that the rationale for decisions taken, including the use of data, are properly and fully recorded in deliberative meetings.

7.7 Overall, notwithstanding the recommendations in this area, MBZUH has well established processes for information management and information security. The investment in new technology, such the introduction of new dashboards, demonstrates an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement in this area, supporting data-informed strategic and operational planning. The review team therefore conclude 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 The SED states that the University follows a centralised approach to public communication, described as a “gatekeeper” model, in which all advertising and promotional materials are subject to approval by the Corporate Communication Office under the Advertising and Promotion Media Policy. In meetings, staff gave further detail on this process, stating that public communications, including website changes and programme-related information, are reviewed through Academic Affairs, then passed to the Communications Office, and finally approved by the Chancellor. Staff also explained that communications relating to programmes are checked through the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs before reaching the Communications Office and Chancellor’s Office. This is further supported by institutional governance arrangements, which outline approval and oversight structures. This indicates that MBZUH has defined internal processes intended to ensure public information is controlled and institutionally approved before publication.

8.2 The SED also states that the University publishes annual “Facts and Figures” information and makes this publicly available. However, as noted under Standard 1.7 and its accompanying recommendation, this information is not current. During meetings, staff demonstrated dashboards and integrated institutional systems holding data on student numbers, staff, attendance, workload, and international students, and showed how UMS and SIS operate as central information platforms. This is further supported by institutional KPIs and reporting structures as seen by the team, which demonstrate how data is collected and monitored. While much of this evidence relates to internal systems, it indicates that the University maintains centralised data sources from which public-facing information may be drawn.

8.3 The University’s Privacy Policy ensures that personal data collected via the website is secured and not shared with third parties. This is supported by formal policy documentation, which sets expectations around data protection and information handling. This provides some assurance that public communication channels are underpinned by formal expectations around data security and appropriate handling of information.

8.4 The students confirmed during the review meeting that, prior to application, the University website was used as a primary source of information, and that orientation sessions following admission provided further clarification on programme requirements and documentation. The students confirmed during the review meeting that information provided was generally clear and aligned with their experience of the programme, including courses, teaching methods, and expectations. At the same time, some students indicated that they initially became aware of the University through informal sources such as friends or social media before consulting the website. The students further stated that, in some cases, the information available publicly was less detailed than what they later learned through informal channels, although the programme itself met or exceeded expectations once enrolled. This suggests that while public information is generally accurate and reliable, the completeness and visibility of information available to prospective students may vary.

8.5 Staff also demonstrated that UMS provides access to student-facing rules, regulations, and policies, and stated that all policies relevant to students are visible to student users, while administrative policies are restricted. They also described how students access handbooks, academic advice, classes, service requests and transcripts through UMS and

SIS. This is further supported by Student Handbook and institutional documentation, which provide structured information to students. While this relates more directly to information access after enrolment, it indicates that formal institutional channels exist through which information is made available in a controlled and structured way.

8.6 The team noted that institutional information is controlled through defined internal approval processes and that students and staff access policies, procedures, and services through systems such as UMS. However, it was less clear how this information is presented externally through the University website, or whether a clearly structured and accessible governance section is in place for prospective students and external stakeholders. The review team recommends that the University strengthens the currency, visibility, and accessibility of institutional information on its website by developing a clearly defined governance section, ensuring that key policies, processes, decisions and action plans are presented in a consistent and transparent way. This would support greater clarity for prospective students and external stakeholders and enhance understanding of institutional processes and decision-making.

8.7 Notwithstanding recommendations made, overall, the evidence indicates that MBZUH has established centralised and controlled processes for the approval and publication of public information, supporting consistency and accuracy. Information is available through the University website and is generally aligned with the student experience, although reliance on informal sources suggests that the visibility and completeness of information for prospective students could be further strengthened. The review team therefore 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 MBZUH observes that it “employs a rigorous monitoring cycle. Each administrative and academic unit produces short-term (1-2 years) and long-term (5+ years) plans derived from the institutional mission. Progress is tracked through annual reports submitted to University Top Management, which evaluate activities, record lessons learned and recommend enhancements.” The Periodic Review and Amendment of Academic Programs Policy mandates periodic program reviews every 4-6 years, and academic programmes are reviewed by each College annually, by means of the ‘Quality Assurance of Academic Programme’ report submitted to the QIEO (Quality and Institutional Effectiveness Office).

9.2 The QIEO oversees an annual cycle of monitoring, which includes the evaluation of Administrative and Academic Units (November); the evaluation of polls and surveys (November), the Summary and analysis of institutional data (December), the shaping of the institutional Quality Assurance report (January), combined with the quarterly follow-up of action items. The review team examined evidence that showed this pattern of review and discussed monitoring practice with academic and administrative staff.

9.3 The review team scrutinised examples of the annual ‘Quality Assurance of Academic Programmes’ report, produced for each degree programme for the QIEO, and explored their use in analysing and informing formal, material changes. The review team evaluated examples of these reports, prepared by the programme assessment coordinator in each College in consultation with teaching staff, then discussed and approved by the College’s Quality Assurance team, and found them to be satisfactory. The Colleges also each submit their analysis of the current year’s performance and prepare an action plan for the following year. The team reviewed the detailed feedback provided on the report to Colleges by the Quality and Institutional Effectiveness Office, and the annual academic evaluation report, which informs continuous improvement.

9.4 The annual academic evaluation report is submitted by the QIEO directly to the Chancellor. This report is designed to provide evidence that the University itself is fulfilling its mission, as articulated through the strategic objectives set out in its strategic plan, and the report is based on a review of Programme Evaluation reports, evidence of responses to and implementation of action points from previous years, and an assessment of recommendations for future action in the following year.

9.5 The review team considered the numerous different forms of feedback and survey data collected by the QIEO, which are analysed and used as a basis for institutional improvement: these include course evaluation surveys; training needs surveys; faculty, staff, and student satisfaction surveys; Graduate student surveys; employer Surveys; stakeholder surveys; and a range of others.

9.6 MBZUH notes that “Each administrative and academic unit produces... long-term (5+ years) plans derived from the institutional mission.” The Periodic Review and Amendment of Academic Programs Policy mandates periodic program reviews every 4-6 years, and the documents notes that such reviews are carried out by faculty members, based on the

collection of a wide range of evidence. If a review results in substantial amendments, those are intended to be approved by the CAA; non-substantial amendments are to be approved by the University Scientific Council and presented to the Chancellor. Although there is evidence of substantive changes being presented to and approved by the CAA, and of a regular process of internal annual reviews, the review team determined that the internal periodic review process has largely been replaced by external periodic reviews. In light of this, the review team recommends that MBZUH establishes mechanisms whereby faculty can periodically reflect and input on the development of their own programmes, rather than rely solely on external oversight.

9.7 Recommendation notwithstanding, the review team concluded that the institution systematically implements its policy for internal annual programme review and engages consistently with periodic review processes required by external bodies to which it is accountable. Notwithstanding the recommendation in this area, overall, the review team concludes that Standard 1.9: Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes, is **met**.

Standard 1.10: Cyclical external quality assurance

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

Findings

10.1 As previously set out in 1.1, the university operates under the aegis of the UAE Ministry of Education and Scientific Research (MOESR) and the CAA. Locally, the university is also subject to regulation by the Abu Dhabi Department of Knowledge (ADEK). Accreditation activities by CAA include an evaluation of the university's infrastructure, administration, information systems, and support services. Currently, the university is provisionally accredited by the CAA with plans to achieve full 5-year institutional licensure pending the outcome of an external review scheduled for April 2026 using the CAAs new outcomes-based evaluation framework.

10.2 The university's involvement with QAA International Quality Accreditation (IQA) is a further example of its active engagement in external quality assurance. Part of the IQA process involves conducting a self-evaluative exercise, collating a body of documentary evidence, and engaging with external experts during an on-site panel visit. The outcome of this process is a report which identifies recommendations that MBZUH will need to address as they move through the 5–6-year period of validity.

10.3 MBZUHs QIEO, specifically the Academic Programmes Development, Accreditation and Evaluation Section, is responsible for overseeing and coordinating its accreditation activities. When reports are received by the university, they are distributed to staff, faculty and, in some cases, students by email. Responses are collated by the QIEO and action plans developed to address recommendations. Progress against said actions is overseen on a strategic level by SMT, and on a day-to-day basis by the QIEO.

10.4 In addition to institutional accreditation and licensure, the team saw that MBZUH has received programme-level for a significant number of programmes. Thus far, MBZUH has acquired the following programme- or subject-specific accreditation.

- BA Russian Language, provisional accreditation as of April 2025.
- Master in Emirati Folk Literature, provisional accreditation as of May 2025.
- Bachelor of Social Service, Master in Philosophy of Religion, Postgraduate Diploma in Intellectual Protection and Deconstructing Extremist Discourse, and Doctorate in Islamic Studies, provisional accreditation as of August 2025.
- Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology, Doctor of Philosophy in Tolerance and Coexistence, provisional accreditation as of September 2025.
- Master of Digital Media, provisional accreditation as of October 2025.
- Postgraduate Diploma, Hamdam Bin Zayed Program for Sustainable Humanitarian Action, provisional accreditation as of November 2025.

10.5 The institution is subject to ongoing monitoring and oversight by the UAE Ministry of Education and Scientific Research and the UAE Commission for Academic Accreditation. Recommendations and actions from these activities are implemented leading to an improved academic experience. For these reasons, the panel 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, which enables the review team to identify its initial findings and subsequently supports the review team as it develops its review findings.

Enhancement

See **quality enhancement**.

European Standards and Guidelines

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

Examples of practice

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

Externality

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

Facilitator

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

Good practice

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

Lead student representative

An optional voluntary role that is designed to allow students at the institution applying for 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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