



This review method
is ESG-compliant

International Quality Review

Mid-Cycle Review

Abu Dhabi School of Management

Review Report

October 2025

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About this mid-cycle review

This is a report of a mid-cycle review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Abu Dhabi School of Management. The mid-cycle review is desk-based and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Dr. Dave Dowland
- Mr. Kevin Kendall

The full International Quality Review (IQR) in May 2022, resulted in a [published report](#). The QAA review team concluded that Abu Dhabi School of Management met all 10 standards set out in Part 1 of the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\)](#). The team identified seven features of good practice and made four recommendations.

This mid-cycle review evaluates progress against the key actions since the IQR and considers any significant changes that may impact on the ability of Abu Dhabi School of Management to continue to meet the ESG standards.

Outcome of the mid-cycle review

1 From the evidence provided, the review team concludes that Abu Dhabi School of Management is making **satisfactory progress** since the May 2022 International Quality Review and that the period of validity of the IQR be extended to May 2027.

Summary of IQR outcomes

Overview of the institution

2 Abu Dhabi School of Management (ADSM or the School) is located in Freej Al Teebat Street, Al Hisn, W2, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and is a private non-profit organisation which started in 2007-08 and is owned by Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ADCCI). ADSM is a licensed Higher Education Institute (HEI) in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, and its academic programmes are locally authorized and accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR), Commission of Academic Accreditation (CAA), and authorized by the Abu Dhabi Education Council, currently Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK).

3 ADSM aims to align its service with the Abu Dhabi strategic, economic, social, and cultural priorities. Its Strategic Plan 2021-2025 (CSP8), is aligned with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) federal initiatives including UAE National Innovation Strategy, Strategy for Fourth Industrial Revolution, as well as the 50 Year Innovation Challenge. These themes are evident within ADSM's mission, vision, values, and strategy.

4 ADSM maintains its Vision statement, as approved in the Strategic Plan 2021-2025 "To be a center of excellence for entrepreneurship, leadership, innovation, sustainability and management through the discovery and dissemination of knowledge." ADSM has five core values namely: aspire to excellence; intellectual curiosity; professionalism; cultural respect; and unrelenting commitment.

5 At the time of the previous IQR, ADSM delivered the following programmes at Sheik Zayed Bin Sultan Street in Abu Dhabi:

- Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Master of Science in Quality and Business Excellence (MSQBE)

- Master of Science in Leadership and Organisational Development (MSLOD)
- Master of Science in Business Analytics (MSBA)

Many students studying these programmes were already employed in responsible positions in industry and were able to share their experiences and apply their learning directly into their job role.

Good practice identified by the 2022 International Quality Review

6 The clear and extensive links between the School's vision, mission and strategic planning process and the quality assurance system through all processes and at all levels (ESG Standard 1.1).

7 The development and implementation of the ADSM Internal Quality Review process as an internal mechanism for ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the School's processes and policies (ESG Standard 1.1).

8 The approach to student engagement through interactive, co-creative teaching and learning and the linkage of teaching and research is a living embodiment of the School's vision and mission (ESG Standard 1.3).

9 The explicit connection between institutional strategic and operational planning and the professional development of each member of faculty staff (ESG Standard 1.5).

10 The thoughtful, committed, collaborative engagement of the School with students through the delivery and ongoing enhancement of the Academic Support Centre (ESG Standard 1.6).

11 The strategic and operational management cycle of the School enables the systematic use of data, leading to the ready identification of risks and quality enhancement and supports the realisation of the mission and vision of the School (ESG Standard 1.7).

12 The Critical Self-Evaluation Reports (CSER) process, in particular the provision of templates that provide a link to the institutional strategic goals and KPIs (ESG Standard 1.9).

Recommendations of the 2022 International Quality Review

13 Make the Quality Policy publicly available on the School website (ESG Standard 1.1).

14 Ensure that students and external stakeholders such as employers and alumni have a formal means of involvement in the development and revision of the Quality Assurance Policy (QAP) and associated quality assurance (QA) processes (ESG Standard 1.1).

15 Review the regulations for academic appeals, mitigating circumstances and non-academic complaints ensuring clear definitions, criteria, and processes for making and reviewing decisions (ESG Standard 1.3).

16 Review the processes to ensure that the information on the website remains current and accurate (ESG Standard 1.8).

Changes since the last IQR review visit

17 ADSM are developing a new Strategic Plan 2025–2030 which takes effect from the Academic Year 2025–2026. This is due to significant institutional transitions, including the

move to a new campus, changes in leadership, evolving objectives, enhancement to existing curriculum and the further introduction of new programmes.

18 The move to the new campus in Abu Dhabi's central business district was necessary in order for the School to grow and introduce new programmes. It includes an expansion of facilities for teaching, learning and research as well as student services and increased car parking space.

19 A new Acting President was appointed in March 2024, and this brought about significant restructuring and role realignment across the institution. Several members of staff left but the new appointments create opportunities to refresh perspectives and strengthen operational capacity.

20 ADSM has well established master's programmes and this has been the School's primary focus. However, ADSM has introduced a Bachelor of Science in Management (BScM) undergraduate programme in Fall 2024 and is pursuing plans to develop a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) programme in response to what it sees as rapidly evolving industrial needs particularly in respect of digital transformation.

21 ADSM operates within a dynamic and highly regulated higher education sector in the UAE. For example, evolving requirements from the ADEK, CAA, MoHESR, and the Qualifications Framework for the Emirates demand compliance and institutional readiness. For example, the MoHESR is currently transitioning to a new Outcome-Based Evaluation Framework (OEF) for accreditation and licensure.

22 ADSM is strengthening digital integration across its academic and administrative functions to ensure smooth operations and effective communication and to support governance and operational stability. The objective is to develop a fully integrated digital platform for all institutional data. ADSM is investing in infrastructure and in staff development to enable quality assurance, programme monitoring, and strategic planning processes to be reliable and sustainable.

23 ADSM remains committed to advancing its global presence through securing international accreditations and memberships and benchmarking against globally recognized standards. These include, for example, the Data Science Council of America (DASCA), the AMBA Development Network - Business Graduate Association (BGA), the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), and the United Nations initiatives: Principles for Responsible Management Education 'PRME'.

Findings from the mid-cycle review analysis

24 The Quality Assurance Policy has been published on the ADSM website at: <https://adsm.ac.ae/about-us/quality-assurance/>. Therefore, the first recommendation is complete.

25 The review team noted that ADMSM is undertaking a review of quality assurance policies to involve academic staff on policy development. ADSM is investing in alumni relations, with particular emphasis on international development, and preparing for the launch of an alumni association. Moreover, the team noted the growing emphasis in the School on industrial and business connections to address national and international business and industrial needs. ADSM facilitates stakeholder involvement through Academic Program Advisory Committees (APAC) including alumni, faculty members and industrialists, addressing programme monitoring and review, curriculum development, market, and industrial needs. The team noted evidence of consultation, supported by employer surveys

and market studies, for example, contributing to the development of the Master's in Leadership and Organizational Development and the incoming Doctor of Business Administration degree. The team noted changes to curriculum made in response to feedback from employers and other stakeholders, for example, the introduction of a non-thesis option for master's programmes. ADSM has introduced an International Conference on AI Management & Trends (ICAIMT) through its industrial and international links. ADSM has also engaged in regular consultation with alumni and is preparing for the launch of an Alumni Association, therefore the second recommendation has been addressed successfully.

26 ADSM has made amendments to policies, including amendments to the Grade Approval and Change Policy. The policy requires the Office of Student Affairs to maintain records of all grade appeals, enabling academic management to monitor and address any issues. The Student Appeals Policy includes clearer definitions of mitigating circumstances and decision-making criteria for each stage of the appeal process, including resort to the Academic Appeals Committee and the President. The team reviewed whether there were sufficiently explicit checks and balances to ensure the fair treatment of students in disciplinary, academic appeal and, indeed, student grievances or complaints about service issues. The team did not, for example, see evidence of an explicit right for a student to be accompanied by a support to a hearing. The constitution of appeals panels did not include a clause precluding conflicts of interest. It was also not clear whether the School had any formal means of assimilating feedback from specific student complaints about service issues, although the School maintains a Student Experience Survey as a source of wider feedback on services. The team, however, found no evidence that the institution is other than positive, proactive and fair in relationships with students. ADSM acknowledged that there was scope for further work on recommendation three to clarify the terms of policies on academic appeals, disciplinary and complaints to show how fairness of treatment is assured to students. ADSM has subsequently made some alterations to the Student Disciplinary Policy to enable the President's Office to prevent the occurrence of conflicts of interest and to give a student the right to be accompanied to any hearing.

27 In relation to the fourth recommendation, ADSM has created processes to ensure that all information published on the web site is current and accurate. There is a Website Policy articulating responsibilities and a process for reviewing the content of websites.

28 In relation to the identified good practice, the ADSM Strategic Plan 2021–2025 was prepared in full alignment with Abu Dhabi's economic, social, and cultural priorities, as well as UAE-wide initiatives such as the National Innovation Strategy and the Fourth Industrial Revolution Strategy. A new Strategic Plan is being developed for 2026 to 2030. ADSM continues to operate the governance and operational structures under tight oversight from the Government. The Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry established ADSM. It remains a licensed Higher Education institution, with programmes authorized and accredited by the MoHESR, the CAA and authorized by the Abu Dhabi Education Council and the ADEK. The governance, operational and quality assurance structures have facilitated the introduction of several initiatives, including the new campus, the launch of the new BSc program and the MBA concentrations, all gaining approval from the regulatory authorities. There is a plan to introduce a DBA programme.

29 The Institutional Effectiveness Unit plays a central role aligning strategic and operational goals with quality assurance outcomes. The Critical Self Evaluation report (CSER) processes are a central component of the internal quality assurance system (QIAP), to enable a structured cycle of quality assurance and enhancement linked to institutional strategic goals and key performance indicators. The CSER process is applied across all qualification levels, administrative units, research functions, and community engagement. The process is linked to institutional risk management and business continuity planning under the oversight of the Risk Management Committee.

30 The Quality Improvement Action Plan process (QIAP) was designed as the central mechanism for consolidating unit-level self-evaluations into an institution-wide monitoring tool. The School is reviewing the QIAP process to ensure its continuing alignment to national and international accreditation and quality assurance requirements and is maintaining the underlying programme level Critical Self Evaluation report process in the meantime.

31 ADSM cites multiple examples of continuing student engagement through co-creative learning and research linked teaching, starting from orientation. There are research methods courses in each programme and support for students from the Academic Support Center and faculty led workshops, and thesis preparation sessions. Students receive support from full-time members as Academic Advisors, assisting with course selections and research projects and helping weaker students. There are specific academic advising and customized learning paths. The Office of Student Affairs and other support service provide real world projects, employment talks, co-curricular activities, career development, and resources for personal well-being. ADSM continues to use surveys to enable the evaluation and adaption of services through student, employee, and alumni input. The review team heard that ADSM is working on the adaption of support services to meet the needs of the new undergraduate population, including emphasis on the development of employability skills; the review team encourages this initiative.

32 ADSM continues to manage faculty and staff recruitment, evaluation, and development through a systematic process, addressing the institutional strategic and operational priorities. There is a professional development plan for each faculty and staff member. Faculty receive encouragement to pursue research through training and financial support.

33 ADSM is developing a new and integrated Enterprise Resource Planning System, as part of an initiative to improve operations. Dashboard and analytic tools are being developed to increase management information reporting capacity across the institution. The review team heard of the high priority given to investment in improvement to data reporting capacity and the tracking of student numbers. ADSM is therefore continuing to build on the good practice identified in the 2022 review.

Development of quality assurance and enhancement procedures

34 ADSM has completed several major initiatives, including the re-accreditation of the MSBA programme, the renewal of national institutional licensure and institutional accreditation for the MBA.

35 There have been various organizational changes. In 2023/4, the changes included the repositioning of the Chief Quality Officer as Chief Planning and Performance Officer, with the Quality Committee becoming a wider Planning, Performance and Quality Committee. The program directors have been consolidated under one Director of Academic Programs with the aim of streamlining academic oversight and improving program monitoring. The School subsequently reverted to a Quality Committee, without the planning and performance function. Planning and Performance was restyled 'Business Excellence' with the aim of creating a broader mandate for benchmarking, quality enhancement and institutional improvement and the creation of dedicated governance pathways and continuous monitoring mechanisms. A Vice-President for Academic Affairs was appointed, alongside a Director of Operations. The Quality Assurance and Risk Management Office retains a centrally significant role, with increased emphasis on doctoral level quality assurance, data driven program evaluation, and readiness for international accreditation. The KPI framework has been expanded to include innovation, sustainability, and community engagement.

36 The Quality Improvement Action Plan process (QIAP) was designed as the central mechanism for consolidating unit-level self-evaluations into an institution-wide monitoring tool. The School is reviewing the QIAP process to ensure its continuing alignment to national and international accreditation and quality assurance requirements and is maintaining the underlying programme level Critical Self Evaluation report process in the meantime.

37 ADSM has linked risk management processes and the risk register to the Critical Self-Evaluation report (CSER) process as part of the institutional quality assurance structure. The CSER process was extended to include a template for undergraduate and doctoral programmes as well as postgraduate taught programmes.

38 ADSM states that arrangements will be introduced for the evaluation, feedback and programme monitoring for the DBA in readiness for the implementation of that programme following approval, including standard dissertation structures.

39 Therefore, the team can confirm that ADSM is developing its quality assurance and enhancement procedures to align with the changing needs of the School.

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Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Email: accreditation@gaa.ac.uk

Website: www.gaa.ac.uk