



International Quality Review

Mid-Cycle Review

Emirates Aviation University

Review Report

May 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 Emirates Aviation University. The mid-cycle review consisted of a desk-based exercise followed by a site visit and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Professor Jeremy Bradshaw
- Mr Alan Weale.

The full International Quality Review (IQR) in October 2021, resulted in a [published report](#). The QAA review team concluded that Emirates Aviation University 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 one feature of good practice set two conditions and made 16 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 Emirates Aviation University to continue to meet the ESG standards.

Mid-cycle review usually takes the form of a desk-based review. In the instance of the October 2021 IQR, the review visit had to take place virtually due to the Covid pandemic restrictions. This mid-cycle review has therefore included an onsite visit and review of learning resource provision.

Outcome of the mid-cycle review

1 From the evidence provided, the review team concludes that Emirates Aviation University is making **satisfactory progress** since the October 2021 International Quality Review and that the period of validity of the IQR be extended to June 2027.

Summary of IQR outcomes

Overview of the institution

2 Emirates Aviation University (EAU) was established in 1991 as Dubai Aviation College. Following its affiliation with Emirates Group In 2001, it became Emirates Aviation College in 2001 and adopted its current name in 2014.

3 EAU offers undergraduate and Master's-level programs in engineering, business, mathematics and computing, mainly in fields of special relevance to aviation. There are four Faculties covering Engineering, Mathematics and Data Science and Business Management. The Higher Education programmes are accredited by the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA), Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), and General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA). Some programmes also have professional accreditation by the Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS), Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT), or the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). There is also a collaborative partnership agreement with Coventry University in the United Kingdom to offer joint degrees in the UAE.

4 The total enrolment of students is circa 3000 for the academic year 2024-25. Most students are enrolled on undergraduate programmes (64%) with 23% on postgraduate programmes, the remaining 13% are undertaking diploma level or training programmes. A staff student ratio of 1:17 was quoted on the University website.

The University's Mission is to "Provide exceptional education in aviation and related disciplines that fosters critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning, while encouraging faculty research and promoting community outreach to benefit the industry, society, and the public good."

Good practice identified by the 2021 International Quality Review

- The University's continued investment in, and use of, high-quality technical learning resources which enhance the student learning experience (ESG Standard 1.6).

Recommendations of the 2021 International Quality Review

5 The 2021 IQR resulted in two **conditions**, as follows:

- Modify the approach to the construction of institutional academic and strategic plans to ensure there is full engagement of staff, students and other parties in design and implementation (Standard 1.1).
- Ensure the implementation of learning, teaching and assessment policies and procedures are underpinned by a university-wide understanding of a student-centred approach and take steps to ensure that these are consistently applied and fully embedded across schools and the University (Standard 1.3).

6 By the time that the IQR Report was published and following submission of an action plan and additional evidence by EAU on 23 May 2022, the review team concluded that these two conditions had been fulfilled and were therefore now **met**.

7 The review team made a further 13 recommendations

- Implement the programme to advance the principles of equality and diversity to which the University is already committed in section nine of its Teaching and Learning Strategy (Standard 1.1).
- Enhance the approach for design of new programmes to fully involve students (ESG Standard 1.2).
- Ensure that there are effective arrangements to enable the sharing of good practice within and between schools and across the whole University (Standard 1.3).
- Ensure that the complaints policy covers the full range of possible complaint circumstances and is not restricted to student grievances (Standard 1.3).
- Establish arrangements for the monitoring and analysis of student complaints (Standard 1.3).
- Ensure that students are consistently provided with criteria for marking in advance of their assessment (Standard 1.3).
- Ensure that marking criteria map clearly to the grading system (Standard 1.3).
- Ensure that the policy for late submission is published and accessible to all students (Standard 1.3).
- Ensure that the mechanisms in place for reviewing the appropriateness of assessment practices are applied consistently (Standard 1.3).
- Establish and implement an institutional policy for the provision of feedback on assessed work (Standard 1.3).
- Establish and implement an institutional policy for double marking or assessment moderation at undergraduate level (Standard 1.3).
- Establish arrangements for the monitoring and analysis of grade appeals (Standard 1.3).
- Establish and implement a general university student induction that can be supported by programme level information (Standard 1.4).

- Establish and publicise a process by which admissions decisions can be appealed (Standard 1.4).
- Strengthen the arrangements in place for the monitoring and oversight of student support services (Standard 1.6).
- Complete the planned revision of the website to ensure that programme-specific admissions requirements, learning outcomes and pass rates are available to prospective applicants (Standard 1.8).

Changes since the last IQR review visit

8 Since the 2021 IQR, the University has developed and begun to implement a new Strategic Plan, which aims to maintain the University's standing within the aviation and related industries. It aligns with the national agenda, as defined in the UAE National Strategy for Higher Education 2030.

9 The five goals of the Strategic Plan are:

- Programmes and Curricula: Align programmes with industry needs and provide professional training in collaboration with industry.
- Student Experience and Success: Provide exceptional learning experience, fostering research, innovation, inclusiveness, and diversity.
- Talent Recruitment and Retention: Foster interactive work environment which offers, ergonomic workspaces, innovation, work-life balance, diversity, inclusion, and attractive compensation and benefits.
- International Presence: Expand global reach by increasing programme offerings, collaborations, visibility, and alumni network.
- Institutional Sustainability: Achieve sustainable growth, ensuring efficient and effective resource management.

10 The Plan has implications for the organisational structure of the University, which has been adjusted in response. Other changes have included a drive to recruit early-career faculty members with expertise in technology and innovation, and who demonstrate strong research potential, and the introduction of longer internships with a comprehensive pre-internship course designed to prepare students better for their professional roles.

11 Senior staff and faculty reported that lessons learnt from the Covid pandemic have led to the introduction of increased use of online and blended learning. All lectures are now recorded and are available to students, many of whom are in fulltime employment and benefit from the ability to mix and match face-to-face and online learning, as their work schedule requires.

12 Student numbers have increased markedly since the end of the pandemic and are currently around 3,000 compared with 1200 at the 2021 IQR. A number of further faculty have been recruited in response to the increased numbers of students.

13 New programmes, introduced since the 2021 IQR, are two BScs, in Aviation Management and in Logistics and Supply Chain Management, two MScs, in Artificial Intelligence and in Data Science, and two MBAs, in Logistics and Supply Chain Management and in Aviation Management and two new PhD programmes one in data science and in Aviation Management. Each of these has been designed to align with the perceived needs of the relevant industry.

14 There is a new collaborative agreement with the Ministry of Defence that introduces a pathway for students on programmes accredited by the Military Accreditation to progress onto Bachelor's programmes at EAU. There are international research agreements with New

York University , RMIT University, Australia , the University of Glasgow , the University of Southampton , and others.

Findings from the mid-cycle review analysis

15 The University's continued investment in, and use of, high-quality technical learning resources which enhance the student learning experience (ESG Standard 1.6) was identified as **Good Practice** in the 2021 IQR.

16 As the Mid-Cycle Review took place in person, it provided an opportunity to examine the learning facilities and resources. These are described in detail below, in the appropriate section. However, it was clear to the reviewers that the technical learning resources continue to be of the highest quality.

17 The IQR Report included 16 recommendations, as described in the paragraphs below.

18 A recommendation in Standard 1.1 stated "Implement the programme to advance the principles of equality and diversity to which the University is already committed in section nine of its Teaching and Learning Strategy."

19 The University has introduced a more inclusive approach. In the EAU Policies and Procedures Manual , the list of ten Teaching and Learning Objectives now include "Uphold equality in a multi-culture environment" that commits the University to making the teaching and learning environment "more inclusive for students by ensuring that different cultural backgrounds and perspectives are an integral part of our teaching and learning environment and that students are part of an academic community that treats its members with respect and creates equal opportunities for all to succeed, regardless of gender, ethnicity, cultural background or disability." This underlies the numerous references to equality and diversity throughout the manual. At the review visit, students confirmed that diversity was welcomed, and equality was embedded across the University . This was confirmed by faculty , who reported that the policy had not changed anything, it had merely formalised existing practice.

20 Under Standard 1.2, there was a recommendation "Enhance the approach for design of new programmes to fully involve students". The content of new programmes is defined by the labour market requirements of the various companies in the Emirate Group and, when available, benchmarking with the offerings of other universities and alignment with the model curricula of the CAA . Student input into the development of new, and enhancement of existing, programmes takes the form of the active participation of students in Faculty Council Meetings, where programme updates and new proposals are discussed. Evidence for this was provided in the form of Faculty Council Minutes , which show student involvement in the meetings and providing feedback on the current offerings and suggestions for enhancements. The active participation of student representatives in the Faculty Council Meetings was confirmed by senior staff , faculty and students , all of whom were able to provide examples of enhancements to programmes in response to student suggestions.

21 To address the ten recommendations under Standard 1.3, a university-wide framework for student-centred learning has been introduced . It was abundantly clear during the review visit that student-centredness has become much more evident since the IQR.

22 Nine of the recommendations under Standard 1.3 concern assessment. These are:

- Ensure that the complaints policy covers the full range of possible complaint circumstances and is not restricted to student grievances.
- Establish arrangements for the monitoring and analysis of student complaints.
- Ensure that students are consistently provided with criteria for marking in advance of their assessment.
- Ensure that marking criteria map clearly to the grading system.

- Ensure that the policy for late submission is published and accessible to all students.
- Ensure that the mechanisms in place for reviewing the appropriateness of assessment practices are applied consistently.
- Establish and implement an institutional policy for the provision of feedback on assessed work.
- Establish and implement an institutional policy for double marking or assessment moderation at undergraduate level.
- Establish arrangements for the monitoring and analysis of grade appeals.

23 The University has revised its assessment to improve clarity and consistency by requiring clear marking criteria and alignment of assessment outcomes with grading rubrics, establishing a double-marking policy for key assessments, and standardisation of feedback provided to students. These new measures are described in the Policies and Procedures Manual and the Student Handbook .

24 Turnaround time for marking student work and providing feedback depends upon the nature of the assessment. The marks and feedback for assignments and other in-course assessments is ten working days. Grading of examinations must be completed within 72 hours .

25 While the University has introduced artificial intelligence as an academic subject, both faculty and students agreed that it would be helpful to have clear guidance on the acceptable incorporation of artificial intelligence into assessments, and what must be avoided. It is therefore suggested that the University should develop a policy or guidelines on these matters.

26 The Student Handbook describes the process by which students may appeal an assessment decision. To monitor for inconsistencies in its application, the Academic Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC) oversees the grade appeal process. Grade appeals are reviewed during committee meetings to ensure they are handled consistently and fairly. . This process is also intended to identify any emerging trends, although because of the small numbers involved (typically less than ten appeals per semester), it can be difficult to identify any significant patterns in the data .

27 The policy for late submission is included in the Student Handbook . Work submitted one-week late results in a 10 percent deduction on the assignment marking. Work submitted between one and two weeks late will be subject to a 20 percent deduction on the assignment marking. After two weeks, the assignment will be considered to be a fail.

28 The remaining recommendation in Standard 1.3, “Ensure that there are effective arrangements to enable the sharing of good practice within and between schools and across the whole University,” has been addressed through the introduction of cross-faculty workshops. An example poster advertising a workshop on “Artificial Intelligence in Teaching, Learning and Research” was provided . Senior staff and faculty confirmed that the workshops were running, and that the sharing of good practice they facilitated had been beneficial.

29 There are two recommendations in Standard 1.4. The first of these, “Establish and implement a general university student induction that can be supported by programme level information” has been addressed by the establishment and implementation of a general university-wide student induction, which is conducted at the beginning of each academic semester. Students are provided with an overview of university services, academic expectations, student support and general policies and is designed to complement programme-level information delivered by individual departments . Students appreciated the one-day induction that runs twice per year for undergraduates and every other month for master’s students, for whom admission is possible every month of the year. Master’s courses are designed so that they do not require prior completion of any other course; new

students can therefore pick up the programme at any point and go on to complete the full cycle of courses.

30 The second recommendation in Standard 1.4 is “Establish and publicise a process by which admissions decisions can be appealed.” The University has taken action to enhance the transparency of student information and admissions by providing programme-specific admissions requirements, learning outcomes, and pass rates, on the University’s website, aligning with QAA recommendations. The appeals process has been formalised and publicised to ensure transparency and fairness. It is explained in the Student Handbook which, in accordance with CAA requirements, is publicly available on the University’s website.

31 There is a single recommendation in Standard 1.6, “Strengthen the arrangements in place for the monitoring and oversight of student support services.” The University has developed formal mechanisms for the monitoring and oversight of its student support services. These include the receipt of student feedback through the General Opinion Survey , the involvement of students in stakeholder meetings and an annual evaluation of the services provided . However, it should be noted that some of the student-facing services, such as accommodation and catering, are provided by other brands within the Emirates Group and are, therefore, managed at corporate level.

32 Students reported their satisfaction with the academic advising system. The academic advisor assigned to any given student may change as frequently as every semester, to ensure that the advisor’s academic speciality aligns with the current subjects being studied by their students. Due to the modest size of the University, there is no in-house provision of specialist counselling or support, but academic advisors can direct students to Student Services who can then signpost them to external provision . Faculty reported that the role of the academic advisor had changed since the Covid pandemic, in terms of workload and student expectations . It is suggested that staff would benefit from training for their role as academic advisors, together with a policy or guidelines that define the role, its expectations, and provides a clear delineation of where the advisor’s responsibility ends and trained specialists should take over.

33 In summary, the University has worked to address all the recommendations of the 2021 IQR and has made satisfactory progress with each of them. The actions described in the paragraphs above have been effective in meeting the words and the spirit of the recommendations. The Mid-Cycle submission asserts that, in combination, the work carried out to address the recommendations has contributed to “a more robust, transparent, and student-focused educational environment at the University.” The reviewers concur with this statement.

Development of quality assurance and enhancement procedures

34 The University’s IQR Mid-Cycle submission to QAA does not have a section devoted to the “Development of quality assurance and enhancement procedures. However, several of the interventions and initiatives described in the preceding section such as the formalisation of procedures for ensuring consistency and transparency in assessments, and the workshops for sharing good practice, could be repeated under this heading.

35 EAU continues to reap the benefits of being a member of the Emirates Group. The relationship between the university and the labour market for its graduates is about as close as might be expected given the close association of the university and the industry. Most of its graduates go on to work for Emirates Group companies; others mostly find employment with other airlines. The relationship also ensures that the portfolio of the University’s academic provision and each of its programmes, is closely aligned with current industry

requirements. In this context, the Mid-Cycle submission describes a development to prepare students for on-the-job training and internships, which takes the form of a preparation course conducted in collaboration with Emirates Group Human Resources, and which aims to promote professionalism and to align students with the ethical standards and requirements of Emirates Group . It also reports that the University has established several new Help Centres, including a Robotic Lab, Math Help Centre, Engineering Help Centre, and Business Help Centre. Each of these is designed to help students to enhance their skills and knowledge relevant to their fields of study.

Findings from the observations of facilities and learning resources

36 A tour of the learning facilities and resources confirmed that they are of the highest quality, and of ample capacity for existing class sizes. Of note were the engineering laboratories which were equipped with modern instrumentation, and numerous aircraft parts that are used in practical classes where students can dismantle and reassemble them. These resources include an undercarriage leg from a large airliner, and a five-ton fanjet engine. All laboratories included posters displaying health and safety information, first aid kits and fire extinguishers.

37 Study space at the University includes teaching rooms of various sizes, such as a 400-seat lecture theatre and tutorial rooms, computer laboratories and a library. There is a cafeteria, a minimarket and a coffee shop. The rooms are connected by wide corridors, giving the campus building a light and airy feeling.

QAA2941 – R14841 – June 2025

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