Building a culture of trust in external quality assurance of higher education in Oman

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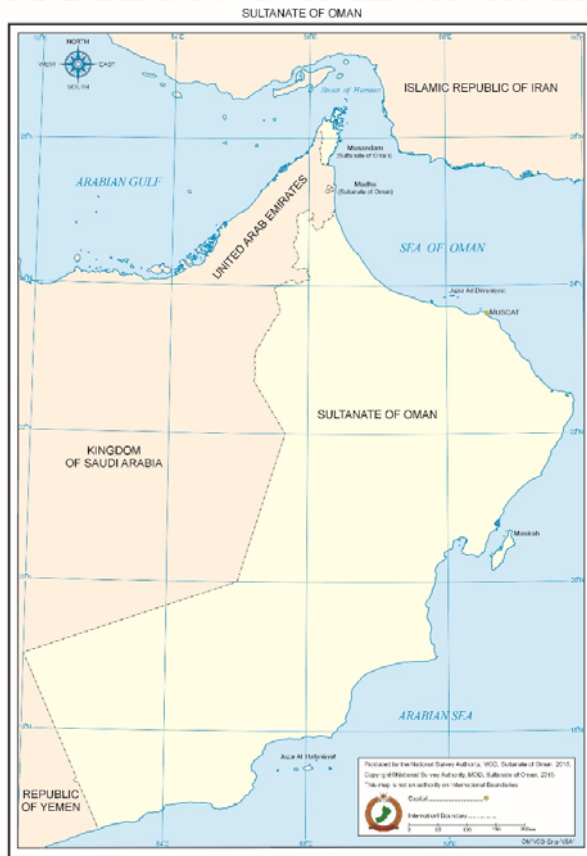
INQAAHE Conference

26 - 28 March 2019, Sri Lanka

Outline

1. Oman: key facts and figures

2. The higher education context in Oman

3. External quality assurance (EQA) in Oman

4. Building trust: concepts

5. Building trust in the OAAA

6. Building trust in the EQA system

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Oman: key facts and figures

Ruler:
- Sultan Qaboos Said bin Al Said (since 1970)
- Monarchy with two advisory councils (one of which is elected)

Population:
- 4.6 million *(NCSI 2018)*
- 2.6 million Omanis (55% 24 years or under)
- 2 million non-Omanis

Main income:
- Oil and gas important sources of revenue
- National strategy to diversify in areas such as logistics and tourism

The higher education context in Oman

HM Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said

Speech to the Oman Council, 14 November 2006.

Educational institutions should provide high quality education for students since quantity is useless unless high standards are maintained in order to advance scientific and applicable skills.
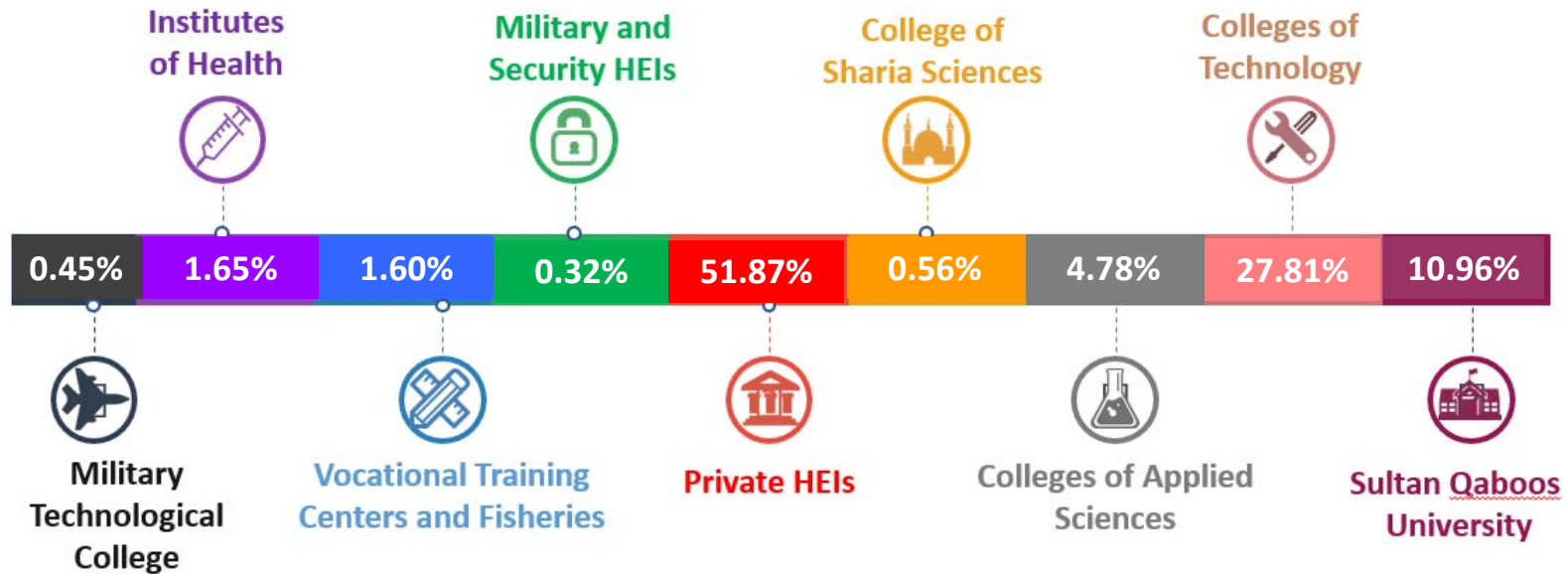
Oversight of HE in Oman

Education Council

Ministry of Higher Education
- o 6 Colleges of Applied Sciences.
- o Scholarships
- o Private Universities & Colleges.

Sultan Qaboos University
- o 1986, Public
- o Only comprehensive national university

Ministry of Endowments & Religious Affairs
- o College of Shari'a Sciences.

Central Bank of Oman
- o College of Banking & Financial Studies

Ministry of Manpower
- o 7 Colleges of Technology
- o Vocational Colleges

Ministry of Health
- o One College
- o One Higher Institute for Health Specialisations

Ministry of Defence
- o Military Technical College
- o Specialised MoD institutions

Ministry of Justice
- o Higher Judiciary Institute

Based on an original infographic provided by the Education Council delivered at OQNHE Conference, Muscat, March 2017

Number of students in HEIs

Institutes of Health — 1.65%

Military and Security HEIs — 0.32%

College of Sharia Sciences — 0.56%

Colleges of Technology — 27.81%

| 0.45% | 1.65% | 1.60% | 0.32% | 51.87% | 0.56% | 4.78% | 27.81% | 10.96% |

Military Technological College — 0.45%

Vocational Training Centers and Fisheries — 1.60%

Private HEIs — 51.87%

Colleges of Applied Sciences — 4.78%

Sultan Qaboos University — 10.96%

Based on an original infographic provided by the Education Council delivered at OQNHE Conference, Muscat, March 2017
Percentages based on NCSI/HEAC data 2014/2015

External quality assurance in Oman

Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA) is an independent government entity established by Royal Decree in 2010 (54/2010) to provide confidence to the public that the quality of higher education in Oman meets international standards, and to encourage continuous improvement in the management of the quality of higher education.

OAAA Vision and Mission

Vision:

The OAAA aspires to provide efficient, effective and internationally recognised services for accreditation in order to promote quality in higher education in Oman and meet the needs of the public and other stakeholders.

Mission:

The OAAA guides and supports the Omani higher education sector to meet international standards; **maintains the national qualifications framework**; and, through a transparent and rigorous **system of institutional and programme accreditation**, provides reliable information to the public and other stakeholders on the quality of higher education in Oman.

OAAA Values

- Integrity

- Professionalism

- Transparency

- Reflectiveness

- Commitment to international best practice

- Accountability

- Collaboration

- Diversity

Building trust: concepts

Trust: the firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something.

https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/trust

Tierney: Grammar of Trust

The Grammar of Trust As	Explanation
A repeated interaction	Interactions between two or more individuals, organizations
A dynamic process	"Without trust, or its proxy, interactions that lead to a result could not take place."
An end	Trust is developed over time as a result of actions worthy of trust
An exchange	A utilitarian exchange, a reciprocal relationship
Utilizing faith	Faith in the other party, a psychological orientation
Taking risks	Making a choice to trust that another individual will perform an expected action
An ability	Trust is an ability that is learned over time, there are conditions of trust
A rational choice	"The trusted have incentives to fulfill the trust, and the trusters have information and knowledge that enables them to trust."
A cultural construction	"The social bonds and shared identities that enable trust to occur."

Trust and the public good: Examining the cultural conditions of academic work (Tierney, 2006, p. 44-57)

What strategies does the OAAA use to build trust in the agency?

OAAA Board members are required to declare any potential conflicts of interest

A consultative approach: National Symposium on institutional and programme standards November 2013
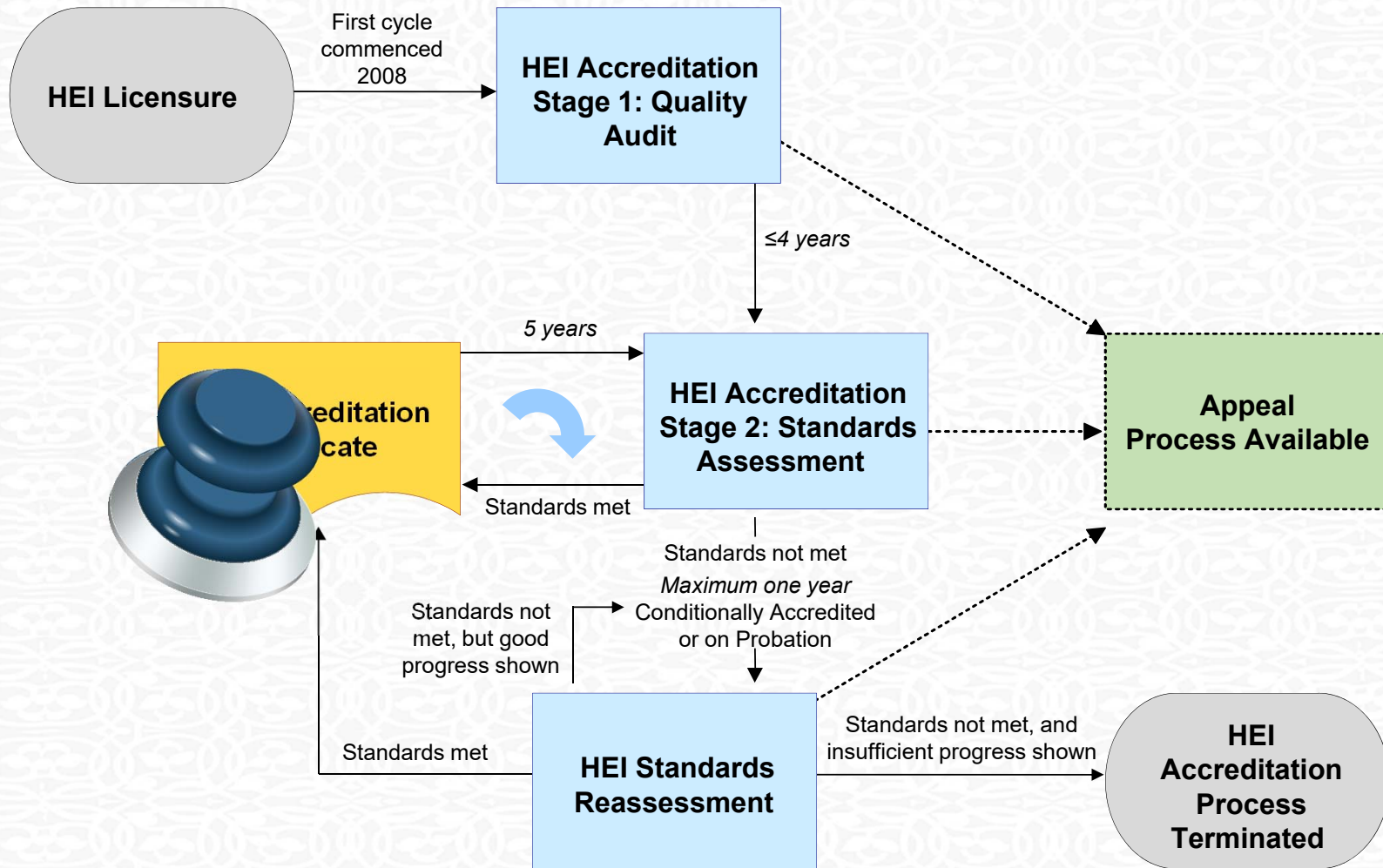
What strategies does the OAAA use to build trust in the EQA system?

OAAA HEI Accreditation System

HEI Licensure

First cycle commenced 2008

HEI Accreditation Stage 1: Quality Audit

≤4 years

5 years

HEI Accreditation Stage 2: Standards Assessment

Standards met

Accreditation Certificate

Appeal Process Available

Standards not met
Maximum one year
Conditionally Accredited or on Probation

Standards not met, but good progress shown

Standards met

HEI Standards Reassessment

Standards not met, and insufficient progress shown

HEI Accreditation Process Terminated

KEY

Start / End

Process

Document

Building trust in the EQA system

Developing robust processes that are internationally benchmarked

Accommodating diversity of local context

'Saying what we do, doing what we say'

Publically reporting outcomes

Building capacity through training the sector

Developing and implementing a transparent appeals process

Publication of manuals on OAAA website

Reporting outcomes

OAAA reports on the quality of higher education and institutions are expected to respond to its findings leading to quality improvement.

Quality Audit reports are published on the OAAA website
www.oaaa.gov.om

Oman Academic Accreditation Authority
الهيئة العمانية للاعتماد الأكاديمي

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ABOUT THE OAAA

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> HEI Accreditation Outcome
> Compare HEIs
> Compare HEIs based on your priorities
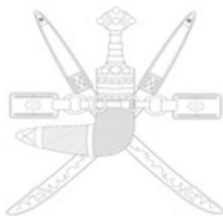
HEI Accreditation Outcome «

Are you interested in the Accreditation Outcome and ratings of a specific institution? Select the institution from the following list:

HEI A

HEI A

Accreditation Outcome

Accredited with Merit in Student Learning by Coursework F and Student Support Services

Standard 1 Governance and Management	
Standard 2 Student Learning by Coursework Programs	
Standard 3 Student Learning by Research Programs	
Standard 4 Staff Research and Consultancy	**Met** Satisfactory ▾
Standard 5 Industry and Community Engagement	**Met** Satisfactory ▾
Standard 6 Academic Support Services	**Met** Satisfactory ▾
Standard 7 Students and Student Support Services	**Met** ▾

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Institutional Standards Assessment outcomes are published on the OAAA website

How does the OAAA build trust in the implementers?

Building trust in the implementers

- Setting out clear specifications (in manuals)
- Implementing a robust approval process
- Including international and locally-based reviewers
- Publishing external reviewers biographies on website
- Face to face training of locally-based external reviewers
- Electronic training materials for international ERs
- Encouraging use of common analytical tool (ADRI)
- Managing consistency and reliability
- Seeking feedback on implementation of processes

External Reviewers

Prof Yusra Mouzughi

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Vice Chancellor

External Reviewers

Prof. Sam Wamuziri

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...llege of Engineering at
...uty Vice Chancellor for
...ah University in
...ent and Strategic
...rsity in the United

External Reviewers

Prof Mohammed Badr Eldin Aboul Ela

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Commission for Academic Accreditation
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, UAE

...M.Sc. in Agriculture from Cairo University, and his Ph.D. in Animal ...Aberdeen, UK, in 1980. His university career started as Assistant ...ture, Mansoura University, Egypt, and was promoted as Professor ...mic administrative positions at Mansoura University and UAE ...hair, Director of Graduate Studies, Director of Faculty Recruitment

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External Reviewers

Dr Khalaf Al Abri

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Head, Quality Assurance & Accreditation Unit, Assistant Professor
Dept. of Educational Foundation and Administration, College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University

Dr. Khalaf Al Abri is the Head of Quality Assurance & Accreditation Unit and an Assistant Professor in the College of Education at Sultan Qaboos University. He is researching education policy in the Arab Gulf States with a focus on the global and regional impact. More specifically, Dr. Khalaf studies the

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...al Director , Higher Education Review Unit
...orate General of Education & Training Quality Authority, Bahrain

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External Reviewers

Emeritus Professor Mairéad Browne

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Quality Assurance Consultant in Higher Education
Sydney, Australia

After an early career in Ireland at University College Dublin, Emeritus Professor Mairéad Browne held positions at University of Sydney, Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education and University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). She was Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at UTS from 1991-1996 and Dean of the University Graduate School from 1997 until commencing as a freelance consultant in 2001.

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...y, Bahrain

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...en is holding Doctorate of Philosophy from Brunel University London, focused on ...ons and quality in the context of Higher Education, and obtained postgraduate studies ...Business from Leeds Business School. Currently holding the position Director of ...editations and Quality Assurance (CAQA) at Ahlia University, as part of the daily ...role of supporting various nature of units within the university with all the quality assurance activities and ensuring high quality standards and promulgating the best practices across the university, units has been supported in relation to Quality Management & Control standards

Face to face of training of locally-based external reviewers: building a community of practice

International and locally-based reviewers work together on EQA panels

Measuring trust

Indicators of trust:

- Prior to 2010, government HEIs volunteered to undergo Quality Audit
- Vocational and military institutions are seeking national accreditation although this is not included in OAAA's mandate
- Nearly all HEIs in Oman have a staff member on the OAAA Register of External Reviewers
- Local media publishes accreditation outcomes
- OAAA is seen as a partner by key bodies, such as the Ministry of Higher Education

Conclusion

'…a culture where trust is embedded in the organization's fabric is likely to be better prepared for dealing with the myriad problems that exist on the horizon than those institutions that reach for bureaucratic and hierarchical solutions'

W.G Tierney (2008) 'Trust and Organizational Culture in Higher Education',
Chapter 3 in *Cultural Perspectives on Higher Education.* Springer Netherlands

شكراً لحسن استماعكم
Thank you

www.oaaa.gov.om