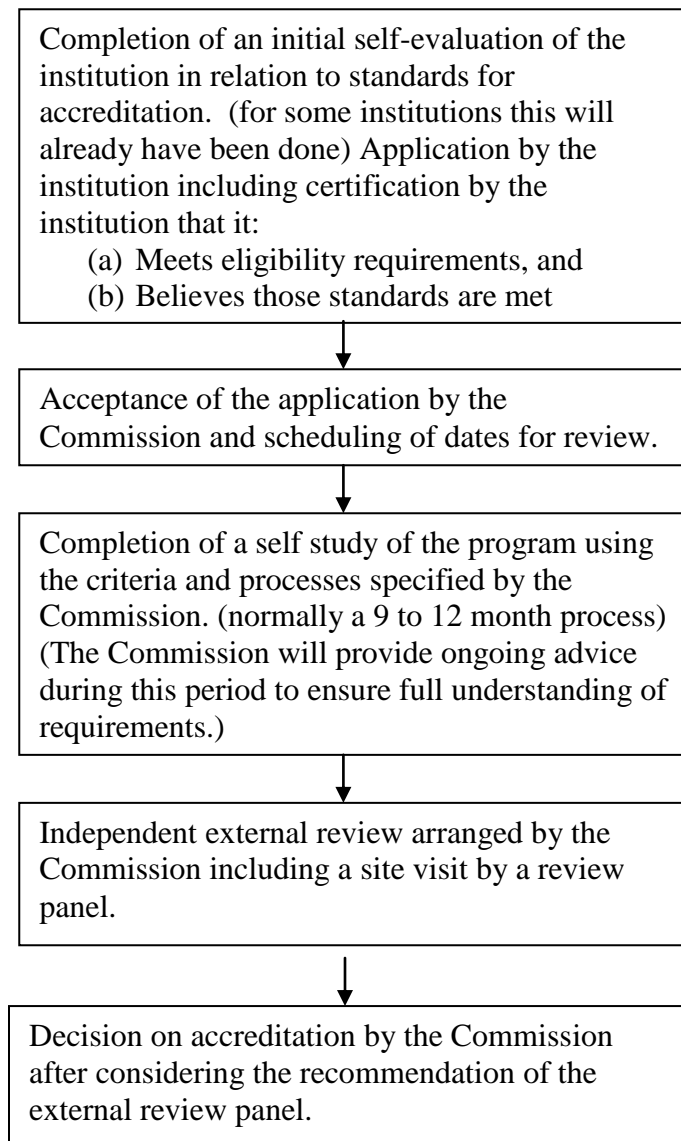


Eligibility Requirements for an Application for Program Accreditation June 22, 2009

The Commission wishes to encourage institutions to seek accreditation as soon as they are in a position to do so. However it wants to recognize quality, not to make negative judgments which would cause difficulties for the institution and program concerned and for the students who are enrolled. Consequently premature applications before a quality system is fully in place will not be considered. Like most other accrediting agencies, the Commission has set some eligibility requirements that must be met before a program can be considered for accreditation.

Before this process begins the Commission must be satisfied that certain requirements are met. These requirements relate to core elements in the standards for quality assurance and accreditation, and to compliance with the terms and conditions of its official approval or (for a private institution) its license to operate.

The major steps involved are:



Details of requirements for a self study and the external review process are included in Part 3 of *Handbook for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions*.

Accreditation is public recognition that necessary standards are met in the management and delivery of a program, and the quality of learning outcomes achieved by students. The standards must be at least equivalent to what is done in high quality international institutions.

The process for full accreditation of a program involves a rigorous self evaluation in relation to the eleven standards specified by the Commission followed by an independent external review. In that external review a panel of reviewers will verify the conclusions of the program self evaluation and consider the quality of performance in relation to the NCAAA standards.

Relationship to Institutional Accreditation

Criteria for program accreditation relate primarily to the program concerned. However the quality of a program and the evidence that is required for accreditation depend to a considerable extent on processes within the institution as a whole. These may be beyond the control of those managing the program but they still affect its quality and must be considered in any program evaluation. Consequently the Commission prefers to review an institution as a whole before going on to accredit individual programs.

However it is recognized that at this transitional stage in the introduction of the quality assurance system in Saudi Arabia considerable work is required before many institutions meet all the requirements for institutional accreditation. This could cause considerable delay for good quality programs that meet eligibility requirements. The Commission does not want to delay accreditation of programs unnecessarily and is prepared to consider programs that meet eligibility requirements before the institution has been accredited, provided certain specified quality assurance requirements are met in the institution.

It is important to recognize that these special arrangements relate to eligibility for consideration for accreditation. If a program is to be accredited ALL the standards required must be met, regardless of who is responsible for delivering particular services.

If the institution has full accreditation by the Commission these institutional requirements will be assumed to have been met. If the institution has not yet been accredited by the Commission the institutional requirements described below will have to be met before a program can be reviewed for accreditation.

Eligibility Requirements for Accreditation of a Higher Education Program

1. The program must be one which the institution is authorized to offer by the relevant government authority. (i.e. at a level and within a field of study that is included in its final license or Ministry or other government approval.
2. The application must have been approved by the Rector of the university or the Dean of the college within which the program is offered.
3. A program specification must have been prepared in the form required by the Commission and approved by the relevant senior committee within the institution.
4. Course specifications must have been prepared in the form required by the Commission and approved for all courses included in the program.
5. Clearly stated descriptions must be available of course content, program requirements, and other regulations affecting students in the program, including institution or college-wide requirements as well as those specific to the program concerned.
6. Completed annual program and course reports in the form required by the Commission must have been prepared for at least one year for the application to be approved and for a second year by the time of the site visit.
7. Student evaluation surveys must have been conducted with a minimum of a 50% response rate for all courses, and for the program. Reports on survey responses must be available for at least two years by the time the self study report is completed.
8. At least one group of students must have completed the program, and feedback from that group of students must be available. (Not required for provisional accreditation)
9. For any program designed to prepare students for professional practice a program, department or college advisory committee must have been established with a majority of members in the profession(s) concerned who are external to the institution. Terms of reference of that committee must include reviewing program evaluation data and providing advice on program content and delivery arrangements.
10. One or more institutions or agencies must have been selected for benchmarking the quality of the program, and a list of indicators that are considered in using these benchmarks must be available. If these indicators include unpublished data agreements must have been completed for the relevant data to be provided.
11. A brief summary report must be provided demonstrating consistency of the program with the requirements of the Qualifications Framework for Higher Education as specified in Part 2 of the Handbook for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education, Section 2.7. These requirements include the title of the award to be granted on completion of the program, the number of credit hours (which must be in addition to any studies in a foundation or preparatory program), learning outcomes in the domains of learning, and evidence of the level of achievement of learning outcomes in those domains.
12. The Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Programs must have been completed with a rating of at least 3 stars on all standards and sub standards applicable to the program. (Note: It is not necessary for every single item within the scales to be given three stars or more. However that rating for each group of items must be at that level and the Commission may specify certain individual items on which a minimum three star rating is required).

Minimum Institutional Requirements for Eligibility for Program Accreditation

1. Existence of a strategic plan for the development of the institution.
2. Establishment of a quality center and preparation of a strategic plan for quality assurance.
3. Existence of an approved set of key performance indicators for use within the institution that include indicators of program quality. Data from these indicators should be available for the institution as a whole and for a majority of programs in the institution. (including the program seeking eligibility for accreditation)
4. A clear description of the institution's processes for program approval, monitoring program quality, and approval of program changes.
5. Use of student course and program evaluation surveys in at least 50% of colleges or departments across the institution and provision of data for the institution as a whole on common items in a form that can be used for within-institution benchmarking.
6. Provision of student advising and counselling services and processes for the evaluation of the adequacy of those services for the students attending the institution.
7. Provision of adequate facilities for extra curricular activities appropriate for the students attending the institution.
8. Provision of learning resources adequate to support the programs offered by the institution and processes in place to identify and respond to program requirements and evaluate the adequacy of this provision.
9. A system within the institution for providing summary statistical data to departments, colleges and central committees (Quality committee and Curriculum Committee or equivalent) This data must include at least the following information and be available for purposes of benchmarking of programs throughout the institution:
 - a. Grade distributions for all courses.
 - b. Mean grade distributions for all courses for each department (or program), college, and the institution as a whole. (desirably provided for courses at each year level)
 - c. Completion rates for all courses.
 - d. Mean completion rates for all courses for each department (or program), college, and the institution as a whole. (desirably provided for courses at each year level)
 - e. Year to year progression rates for all year levels, and total program completion rates for all programs.
 - f. Data on employment outcomes of graduates.

If programs are offered in sections for male and female students the statistical data must be available for both sections as well as in aggregated form or both sections combined.

Special Note

Accreditation by the Commission will be based on all the standards for higher education programs and will apply regardless of whether services are managed by the college or department concerned or by institutional level organizational units. However in the initial accreditation judgments particular emphasis will be given to the standard for learning and teaching and all of the subsections of that standard.

Eligibility for Program Accreditation

Name of Institution _____

Name of Program _____

Tick the column beside each criterion to indicate that it is met.

Eligibility Check List		Criteria	
Program Name _____		Criteria Met	Confirmed (NCAAA)
Program Requirements			
1.	Program authorized		
2.	Application for accreditation approved		
3.	Program specification		
4.	Course specification		
5.	Descriptions of course and program requirements and regulations		
6.	Annual course and program reports		
7.	Student evaluation survey results		
8.	Students graduated, evaluations available		
9.	Program advisory committees		
10.	Indicators and benchmarks		
11.	Consistency with qualifications framework		
12.	Self evaluation scales		

Complete Once for All Programs			
Institutional Requirements for Program Eligibility		Criteria	
		Criteria Met	Confirmed (NCAAA)
1.	Strategic plan for institution		
2.	Quality Center and plan for quality		
3.	Data on KPIs affecting programs across the institution		
4.	Regulations and descriptions of processes for program approval, changes, and review		
5.	Data on Student evaluation surveys across the institution		
6.	Student advising and counselling system		
7.	Facilities for extra curricular activities		
8.	Provision of learning resources and system for responding to program requirements		
9.	Institutional system for provision of statistical data		

Signed (Rector or Dean)

