



## **Executive Summary**

### **Renewal of Licensure Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government**

**November 12-15, 2017**

A Re-Licensure Review Team (RLRT) visited Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government (MBRSG) from 12 - 15 November 2017 to assess its *Self-Study* for the Re-Licensure of the institution. The exit interview was held on November 15, 2017.

The MBRSG, known as Dubai School of Government at inception, was launched in 2005 under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai. In 2013, the School changed its name to Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government by a decree from His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum. The School was established as the first research and teaching institution aimed at improving both governance and public policy in the UAE and the Arab world. The School is also focused on building future leaders through its portfolio of educational and focused training programs. MBRSG also works in collaboration with a multitude of government and private institutions with the UAE, regionally, and internationally. The John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University of Harvard University, which is a public policy and public administration school, is an example of a renowned institution MBRSG collaborates with.

As stated in one of the School's publications, *"over the nine years since its establishment in 2005 under the name Dubai School of Government, the School has proved its importance as a unique role model for academic institutions . The School works in close partnership with UAE government departments, combining applied research, training and education programs, and provides a platform for knowledge exchange"*.

The School is committed to develop leadership skills and meet the demand for government workers in the UAE and the region.

Since its establishment in 2005, the MBRSG has graduated 110 students and provided customized and open enrollment programs to 826 participants. Currently the school enrolls 137 students who are supported by 7 faculty members.

MBRSG has made significant advancements since the last licensure visit including new programs and development of more effective library and internal learning space. This, combined with further planned developments of a new bespoke campus in the Business Bay district of Dubai, augurs well for future developments.

MBRSG has competing demands on its mission and vision and whilst the RLRT were made aware of the executive education, policy and training arms of the MBRSG portfolio, this review is based is concerned solely with the Higher education elements of MBRSG's work.

The *Self-Study*, although containing some strong features on processes, lacked reflection that aligned to the evidence. For example, the RLRT discovered examples of good practices such as cross moderation, but this was not included in the *Self-Study*.

The Mission/Vision of MBRSG is both interesting and unusual and it is critical that alignments to the different stakeholder groups are made clear and unequivocal and that both Mission/Vision for the Higher Education component meet the expectations of the Standards. Similarly, the Program Effectiveness Framework should be considered work-in-progress as evidence is currently inconsistent. It is critical that MBRSG ensures this receives strategic priority as the four programs now in operation will only serve to make this process more complex.

The licensure period mainly covered the MPA program as the other programs are only in their first year of delivery. It was clear that the process of learning outcome of modules and program to National Qualifications Framework (QF*Emirates*) Level 9 is well advanced and the RLRT were pleased to report curricula for the MPA to be sound.

Matters pertaining to faculty are perhaps the most pressing. Faculty numbers are insufficient to sustain the programs, and some are misaligned in terms of experience to the subjects being taught. There is an urgent need for academic leadership in all four programs to ensure performance across all academic features from quality assurance through to research and performance management. MBRSG needs a 3–5-year human resource plan for faculty and also needs to ensure compliance with the Standards on matters of part-time and full-time faculty at the program level. There are also staffing issues for library and IT functions where both are operating with no spare capacity; any sickness absence could jeopardize functionality and disturb the student experience.

Student experiences are broadly satisfactory although the alumni network is dysfunctional. Employers are broadly supportive but require opportunities to input into the design and delivery of the curriculum; something they would welcome.

Research is moving forwards but also requires a distinct strategy for Higher Education within MBRSG. There are clear opportunities for alignment across MBRSG domains but this is not yet in place. There is a real need for traction at the level of the four programs to establish

expectations for research. The RLRT were pleased to hear of the importance of research impact but this too needs to be embedded at a strategic level.

MBRSG is founded on sound principles of community engagement and there was some evidence of faculty, staff and student engagement in communities served. There is now, however, an urgent need to see community engagement strategized by the leadership for the Higher Education component of the MBRSG portfolio.

The RLRT makes its recommendations and suggestions in a spirit of constructive engagement, with the aim of ensuring that the Standards are met, and to aid MBRSG in its desired objective of attaining re-licensure.