



## Executive Summary

### Renewal of Institutional Licensure University of Science and Technology of Fujairah Fujairah

25 – 28 October 2022

An External Review Team (ERT) visited the University of Science and Technology of Fujairah (USTF) from 25 to 28 October 2022 to evaluate the *Application for Renewal of Institutional Licensure* (hereafter the *Application*). During the visit, the ERT reviewed relevant documents, toured the campus, and had extensive discussions with University officials and faculty regarding the institution and its programs. The exit interview was held on 28 October 2022.

USTF is a newly established full-fledged independent university since March 18th, 2019, based on the Ministry of Education (MoE) administrative decision number 79 for the year 2019. The USTF replaced Ajman University (AU) - Fujairah Campus. USTF consists of six colleges: College of Business Administration, College of Dentistry, College of Engineering and Technology, College of Humanities and Sciences, College of Law, and College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. The University offers 11 bachelor programs and one master program.

The total student enrolment for USTF at the time of the visit is 494 (239 males, and 255 females). The total number of faculty members in USTF is 55 head count (35 full-time, 18 part-time, 3 lecturers), 5% without a terminal degree. The student to full-time faculty ratio is 14:1.

The Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) visited USTF most recently in June 2022 for an Institutional Risk Assessment.

The ERT notes some areas in which USTF is currently performing well. In particular, these include:

- Aspects of quality assurance and planning that are well designed and operating to a standard that belies the limited staffing in the OIPE.
- The University's strong commitment to community engagement which has led to initiatives of mutual benefit to the institution and its external stakeholders.
- The University's well-maintained campus that meets its physical needs.
- The dedication and commitment of faculty and staff to the success of the University in the face of excessive personal duties and workloads.

There are, however, areas of particular concern. These fall under the following headings:

- **Finance:** The financial position of the University is of immediate and grave concern, with rapidly dwindling financial resources, no reserves or financial guarantees, and the absence of long-term financial planning and forecasting.
- **Student Enrolments:** An ongoing and severe decline in student enrolments across academic programs. This contributes to the institution's weak financial position, but



also affects the quality of the education it provides, through fewer faculty and other degradations of the student academic experience.

- **Leadership:** The allocation of multiple senior management roles to individual members of the administration is unacceptable. Each of the roles of Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, and Dean are full-time commitments, with distinct strategic and day-to-day responsibilities. These multiple responsibilities create issues for effective leadership, performance evaluation, as well as potential conflicts of interest relating to the combination of cross-cutting and domain-specific responsibilities.
- **Faculty:** There is an insufficiency of faculty in a number of areas. USTF has a long standing structural need for assigning faculty and administrative workload overloads built into their financial system. The *Standards* only permits overloads to cover emergencies such as illness or resignation. Systematic and continuing overloads arising from insufficient numbers of faculty is not permitted. The extent to which USTF is out of compliance in this area is difficult to assess, as there are several confounding factors that affect current workload assignments. Next is the overuse of part-time faculty. USTF employs part-time faculty at a level exceeding that which is permitted by the *Standards*. There is sufficient evidence that faculty understaffing has clear deleterious impacts on the quality of academic programming: study plans are not, or cannot, be adhered to; students have too few opportunities to select from advertised electives; courses in the summer semester increase workloads beyond the maxima; and there is too much use of independent study, which is being implemented with inappropriate measures of workload for the faculty involved.
- **Policies and Procedures:** Many of USTF's policies and procedures are not fit for purpose and do not meet the *Standards*. One further negative consequence of this is that a majority of USTF's great deal of custom and practice falls outside their formal policies and procedures. These leads to inconsistency, incompleteness, and incoherence across the institution.
- **Governance:** The *Standards* requires a clear division of responsibility between the Board of Trustees and the Executive Leadership. While the By-Laws are mostly well drafted, there is evidence that, in practice, the Board is interfering in the day-to-day management of operations through its engagement in financial approvals.
- **Research:** USTF is budgeting at a commendable level to support research. However, expenditures are well below budget. This can only be partially explained with reference to the Covid-19 pandemic. While there are elements of a good research strategy, its implementation is insufficiently proactive.

The ERT makes its recommendations in a spirit of constructive engagement with the aim of ensuring that the *Standards* are met, and to aid USTF in obtaining Renewal of Institutional Licensure.