



Executive Summary

Renewal of Licensure INSEAD Middle East Campus (INSEAD ME) Abu Dhabi

7 - 10 February 2022

An External Review Team (ERT) conducted a review of INSEAD Middle East Campus (ME) from 7th February – 10th February 2022 to evaluate the *Applications* (hereafter *Self-Study RIL or SSRIL and Self-Study RPA or SSRPA*) for Renewal of Institutional Licensure and Renewal of Program Accreditation of the Global Executive Master of Business Administration (GEMBA). The Exit Briefing was held on 10th February 2022.

INSEAD is a global business school located in four continents: INSEAD Europe Campus in Fontainebleau (France), INSEAD Asia Campus in Singapore, INSEAD Middle East Campus in Abu Dhabi (UAE) and the INSEAD Hub in San Francisco (USA). The Global Executive MBA Program (GEMBA) is an international program with sections at the Europe, Asia and Middle East Campuses. INSEAD Abu Dhabi was granted Initial Licensure in 2010 and the GEMBA program was granted Initial Accreditation in 2010. The last Licensure and Program Accreditation was conducted by the CAA in 2016. The new Abu Dhabi Campus was inaugurated in September 2017 under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces. The campus is located on the 29th and 30th floor of the Al Khatem Tower, ADGM Square, Al Maryah Island, Abu Dhabi.

The ME section currently has one section with 31 registered and enrolled students, of which 39% are females. The percentage of Emirate students in this section is 6%. The overall students enrolled across all campuses (Europe, Asia, Middle East) is 206 students.

As a general observation of the review experience at INSEAD ME, the ERT found a lack of awareness of the CAA *Standards* across the interviewees. This deficiency in detailed knowledge of the requirements of the *Standards* was reflected in the two Self-Studies that demonstrated a shortage of evidence to support statements and claims made, and in a number of cases the documents requested by the ERT, well in advance of the campus visit, were not provided or made accessible to the ERT during the visit.

During the review the ERT noted a number of positive attributes of INSEAD ME and the GEMBA program:

- Centrally located campus and range of teaching and learning spaces, suited to the provision of a program aimed at working professional executives. The teaching and learning spaces are flexible and well-suited to the various modes of learning in large and small groups.



- Appropriate modes of program delivery, again well-suited to the working students. The participants were clearly appreciative of the pedagogy and the opportunities to share experiences between students from diverse backgrounds.
- A close relationship with ADEK, including the interactive mechanism of the Joint Advisory Board to ensure that INSEAD meets the developmental needs of the Abu Dhabi economy.
- An established global reputation that has served to attract graduate students and facilitate their further career advancement and diversification of their opportunities in business.

The areas requiring attention to reach compliance with the *Standards* are detailed in the report and can be categorized as follows:

- **Documentation:** Despite the requirement resulting from the 2014 CAA review, there has been little progress in developing formal and approved policies, and compiling a single Policies and Procedures Manual of relevance to all operations on the ME campus. Without the benefit of seeing minutes of committees and group records as requested by the Commission, it is not possible to verify statements made in the Self-Studies or that appropriate records are compiled and disseminated appropriately.
- **Planning:** Developments and improvements to program and supporting services need to be informed and guided by predetermined plans, both at the 'global' level of INSEAD and on the ME campus. The ERT was not able to identify documented operational plans at the department or team level on the ME campus. Consequently, there was limited evidence of any objectives, KPIs, targets and monitoring of achievements normally expected in the implementation of strategic (long-term) or operational (short-term) plans.
- **Quality Assurance:** Related to the above point is the paucity of documented evidence that the cycle of quality assurance and improvement of the GEMBA program and services is operational. Little awareness from staff of evaluation processes, or any actions resulting from feedback, was evident to the ERT. Following the 2014 CAA review, some development of the QA Manual had been noted but scant evidence was provided of evaluation of effectiveness at program or support services level, e.g. library, IT, HR. The designated responsibility for QA on the ME campus is not clearly defined or evidently in place.
- **Educational Program:** Once again there was a lack of documentation made accessible to subject experts on the ERT. A refusal to release Course Files to the two online ERT members on grounds of 'confidentiality' hampered the ERT's evaluation of academic standards and course/program delivery. The Course Files available in the base room revealed a lack of many required components in the files, inconsistency in syllabus presentation, and many issues related to outcomes and their assessment. The absence of the required Program Specification was also a problem for the ERT in understanding the mode of course delivery, PLOs, completion requirements, grading and teaching and learning methodologies. It is also of concern that this information is not available for student participants.
- **Assessment:** Without full ERT access to Course Files, the team could not evaluate the standard of student work and appropriateness of assessment methodologies. However,



it is evident that clarification is needed on at least two particular aspects of assessment. Firstly, 'Participation' in courses was generally part of the grading and in one course was attributed 25% of the overall assessment. No rubrics were evident for this element and therefore it should be removed as part of the assessment criteria unless detailed justification is provided for its inclusion. Secondly, the ERT questions the norm-referencing of grades in courses that are outcomes-based and therefore should be criterion-referenced.

- **Admissions:** Section 6.3 in this report details the concerns of the ERT regarding admissions' criteria for the GEMBA applicants. Without access to Student Files and admission records it is not possible for the ERT to verify that CAA *Standards* regarding admissions are upheld. The information that is distributed on admissions' criteria indicates that evidence is needed to demonstrate the equivalence of English language scores and academic credentials, and to clarify that the CAA's *Standards* are applied.
- **Faculty:** Overall the international complement of INSEAD faculty is well-qualified and research active. However, it was difficult for the ERT to evaluate the faculty input, specifically to the GEMBA courses offered at the ME campus. The ERT is charged with evaluating compliance with local CAA *Standards*, and therefore information must be disaggregated from the 'global' context to show the facts pertaining to the ME campus. This applies to matching the faculty training to identified course topics, quantitative workload and teaching allocations, research outputs and community engagement activities.

The ERT makes its requirements in a spirit of constructive engagement, with the aim of ensuring that the *Standards* are met, and to aid INSEAD in its desired objective to renew its license.