

Ministerial Decision No. (220) of 2025 Concerning the Licensing of Higher Education Institutions and the Accreditation of their Academic Programs

The Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research:

- Having reviewed Federal Decree-Law No. (28) of 2024 amending some provisions of Federal Law No. (1) of 1972 concerning the competencies of ministries and the powers of ministers.
- And Federal Decree-Law No. (48) of 2021 concerning Higher Education,
- And Cabinet Decision No. (106) of 2024 concerning the adoption of the National Qualifications Framework,
- And Cabinet Decision No. (21) of 2025 concerning the organizational structure of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research,
- And Ministerial Decision No. (27) of 2024 concerning the licensing of higher education institutions and the accreditation of their academic programs and the outcomes-based quality assurance framework and its amendments,
- And as required by the public interest,

Has decided:

Article One

1. The attached pathways for higher education institutions in the State to obtain the necessary licenses and accreditations are adopted as follows:

- * A new higher education institution obtaining initial institutional licensure and commencing its operations: The pathway outlined in Appendix No. (1)
- * A new higher education institution obtaining full accreditation for academic programs for the first time: The pathway outlined in Appendix No. (2).
- * Renewal of institutional licensure or accreditation of academic programs for existing higher education institutions: The pathway outlined in Appendix No. (3).

* An existing higher education institution obtaining academic accreditation for a new program: The pathway outlined in Appendix No. (4).

2. The Commission for Academic Accreditation shall publish the requirements and procedures for each pathway in a special guide.

Article Two

1. The higher education institution shall comply with all requirements and standards for institutional licensure and program accreditation in accordance with the standards, mechanisms, and stipulations of the Commission for Academic Accreditation and the regulations and conditions approved by the Ministry.

2. A higher education institution that has obtained institutional licensure must establish an electronic link with the Ministry within a time frame specified by the licensure decision for the purpose of sharing data related to the outcomes-based quality assurance framework for higher education, the institution's data, its students, and its employees, and other data and information.

3. The higher education institution is required to obtain academic accreditation for the programs it will offer from the Commission for Academic Accreditation during the initial licensure period.

4. The institutional licensure decision, issued to the higher education institution in accordance with the pathways specified in this decision, shall determine the academic units (such as colleges, departments, institutes, and centers) included in the institution, and the academic fields and programs it will offer. Prior approval from the Ministry is required when adding any new academic unit or closing any existing academic unit.

Article Three

Higher education institutions wishing to obtain academic accreditation for medicine or other health programs must provide proof of entering into binding partnerships with practical clinical training centers (hospitals, pharmacies, laboratories, etc.) to ensure the continuous and uninterrupted provision of practical training for the expected number of students. The partnership must be through an approved agreement between the higher

education institution and the training center, such that this agreement includes, at a minimum, the type of training and its requirements, details of the number of trainees that can be accommodated, roles and responsibilities, trainers' qualifications, tools and facilities available for training, evaluation methods, and responsibility for health insurance and professional liability insurance. The requirements will be detailed in a guidance manual.

Article Four

The relevant sectors and departments in the Ministry shall coordinate with higher education institutions and relevant local authorities to verify the quality assurance of information and the completion of licensing requirements and stipulations to ensure the optimal implementation of this decision.

Article Five

1. The Ministry has the right to reconsider the initial institutional licensure before its expiration according to the results of the evaluation and inspection carried out by the relevant teams in the Ministry or in the event the university fails to accredit any of its programs during that licensure period.
2. The Ministry has the right to revoke this initial institutional licensure in case of violation of the regulations and conditions approved by the Ministry. Revocation does not preclude the imposition of any other penalties stipulated in the relevant laws, regulations, and decisions.

Article Six

The Undersecretary of the Ministry shall issue the decisions, circulars, and executive regulations necessary for the implementation of the provisions of this decision.

Article Seven

The aforementioned Ministerial Decision No. (27) of 2024 is hereby repealed, and any provision that contradicts or conflicts with the provisions of this decision is also repealed.

Article Eight

This decision shall be published in the Official Gazette, and shall come into force from the date of its issuance.

Dr. Abdulrahman Abdulmannan Al Awar

Minister of Human Resources and Emiratisation

Acting Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research

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