



**OAQHE**

الجمعية العُمانية للجودة في التعليم العالي  
Oman Association for Quality in Higher Education

# “Internationalisation of Oman’s Higher Education System”

Thursday March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
Sultanate of Oman

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*We devote great care and attention to the development and reform of Education in Oman. Our aims include raising standards and updating the curriculum to make it richer and more relevant to the needs of an ever-changing world.*

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His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq



Under the patronage of

**H.E. Prof. Dr. Rahma Bint Ibrahim Al  
Mahrooqi**

The Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation

# Chair's Message

On behalf of the OAQHE board of directors, I would like to welcome all of you to this conference entitled "Internationalisation of Oman's Higher Education".

I would like to take this chance to thank Her Excellency H.E. Prof. Dr. Rahma Bint Ibrahim Al Mahrooqi, Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation, for her long-term support for the field of higher education. I would also like to thank everyone who has made a contribution during the past years to supporting our students, helping the higher education sector overcome the challenges, building relationships with the community and industry, and developing research capabilities.

I would like to urge the Vice Chancellors, deans and leaders of the higher education sector in Oman to support the internationalisation process of higher education. This would include students, staff, research, innovation, and commercialisation of inventions. This conference will be an excellent opportunity to further develop this mission.

The future is fraught with uncertainties and issues concerning the global economy. Higher education institutions should plan for and provide the necessary foundation for students to move forward with confidence.

Higher education institutions should collaborate to attract international students.

1. International students contribute to a more diverse campus environment. A diverse campus helps prepare all students for life and career in a global economy.
2. International students bring cultural perspectives to the learning environment. Bringing people from different cultures together in one classroom can result in a very vibrant and effective learning opportunity.
3. International student recruitment tends to attract the cream of the crop. Seeking international students will help bring in the "best and brightest" students from all over the world, which is great for any school's reputation.
4. International students generate additional income opportunities.

Globalization, rapid breakthroughs in information technology, and the growth of the knowledge-based economy are all dramatically altering how we obtain, distribute, and transform knowledge. This means that academic institutions must keep up with changes in society and the economy.



Prof. Taqi Abdul Reda Al Abdwani

# **About the Conference**

The OAQHE 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference is a one-day conference on Internationalization in Omani Higher Education. It aims at sharing good practices in the areas of internationalizing the curriculum development, assessment, teaching and learning practices, local and international experience of governance and management structures, systems and roles, Institutional affiliations and programme accreditation, joint research and consultancy between higher education institution in Oman and their international partners, engaging the Omani higher education institutions with global communities and international industries and students support services and facilities (international students). Her Excellency, Prof. Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim Al Mahrooqi, the Minister of Higher Education, Research, & Innovation is the patron of this conference.

The objective of this conference is to create awareness of quality management and enhancement good practice, by providing a platform for policy makers, HEIs and interested stakeholders to share their experience and ideas with the sector.

# **Target Audience**

This conference is specifically designed to cater to the needs of the specific target audience and aimed at experts in academia, government organisations, industry, technology providers and educational consultants in Oman and the region whose specialist knowledge is in quality management and quality enhancement. Participants may be policy makers in higher education, higher education professionals, representatives from government, industry and HEIs with responsibility for quality assurance and quality enhancement.

# About Oman

The Sultanate of Oman is an independent country in the southeastern quarter of the Arabian Peninsula. It is bordered by the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. Muscat is situated in the north of the country and is the capital of Oman. Host to beautiful stretches of untouched coastline and a historical and fascinating culture, its rich heritage dates back thousands of years and makes Muscat one of the oldest cities in the Middle East. The city enchants visitors in a way that no other city in the Gulf Region can match and amalgamates a delightful mixture of preserving the old, and developing the new. Muscat, Muttrah and Ruwi are the capital's core districts. Muscat is the site of the Sultan's main palace, whilst Muttrah is the old port area, which was the hub of trade in historic times. Ruwi is the capital's modern commercial district. However, considerable further development is taking place in other cities, from Salalah in the south, to Sur, a traditional coastal town, on to Sohar in the north.



# Conference Themes

Internationalization of Oman's higher Education System will focus on the following themes:

- Accreditation
- Research (related to Internationalisation)
- Affiliations and programmes accreditation
- International students and scholarship

## About OAQHE

The Oman Association for Quality in Higher Education (OAQHE) is an association of Higher Education Institutions in the Sultanate of Oman. The OAQHE aims to improve the quality of higher education in Oman by promoting the use of good quality assurance and enhancement practices.

Following a review of its previous Strategic Plan, OAQHE's Board of directors has produced a new five-year Strategic Plan 2017-2021 that intends to; increase its engagement with Oman's higher education sector, improve the level of inclusivity for those wishing to contribute to the OAQHE, provide ample opportunities for the sharing of good practice within the sector, and develop stronger ties with peer networks and associations in the region.

**Vision:** To act as a facilitator in enhancing quality within higher education in the Sultanate of Oman, through the sharing of; ideas, research, and good practice.

**Mission:** To be recognized as the leading independent network for quality enhancement in higher education in the MENA region.

### **Values**

<u>Quality</u>	Maintain the standards of quality that the network seeks to promote
<u>Transparency</u> transparency	Commit to handling all its activities with transparency
<u>Diversity</u>	Respect the different educational cultures within the higher education Sector in Oman
<u>Professional Ethics</u>	Ensure honesty, integrity and professionalism in all practices
<u>Collaboration</u>	Encourage collaborative initiatives and exchange of information and data



# **OAQHE Board of Directors**

1. Prof. Taki Al Abduwani - Chairman
2. Dr. Nabila Al Macki – Deputy Chair.
3. Dr. Mona K. Ismail – Events Planning and Management Committee Chair
4. Dr. Bushra Al Hasni – Treasurer
5. Dr. Djamel Azzi, Marketing and Cooperate Identity Committee Deputy Chair
6. Ms. Alaa Al-Attili, Events Planning and Management Committee Deputy Chair
7. Dr. Mohammed Al- Azawi, Marketing and Cooperate Identity Committee Chair
8. Ms. Ghalia Al- Balushi –Co-opted, OAAAQA.
9. Mr. Bader Al- Mamri – Co-opted, MOHERi.

# Conference Program

8:30 – 9:00 – Panel Meeting

9:00 – 9:05 – Welcome and house rules by the Moderator

9:05 – 9:10 – Recital of Holy Quran

9:10 – 9:25 – Opening address by the Chairperson of OAQHE  
(Achievements, focus area and challenges)

9:25 – 9:45 – Keynote address by HE Prof. Rahma bint Ibrahim Al Mahrooqi  
Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation or her  
Nominee

**9:45 – 9:50 – Break and departure of the guest of honour**

**9:50 – 11:10 – Paper presentations Session 1** (20 mins each, 15+5)  
(Session Chair Dr. Djamel Azzi)

- **“Quality Learning Assurance Using Standard Curriculum Learning Outcomes Mapping”**  
Presenter: *Louay Al-Nuaimy, Oman College of Management and Technology*
- **“Global Accreditation and Quality Issues in Internationalization of Higher Education in Engineering”**  
Presenter: *Dr. Abid Ali Khan, Military Technological College*
- **Internationalizing the Teacher Preparation Program at Sultan Qaboos University: The Processes, Challenges and Benefits**  
Presenter: *Dr. Khalaf Al'Abri, Sultan Qaboos University*
- **International Students and Sponsorship**  
Presenter: *Dr Moza Al Malki, Dr Nagham Al-Azawi, Rustaq College of Education*

**11:10 – 11:20 – Virtual Break**

**11:20 – 12:40 – Paper presentations Session 2** (20 mins each, 15+5)  
(Session Chair Ms. Alaa Al-Attili)

- **An Insight into HEI Governance System: Challenges and Solutions**  
Presenter: *Dr. Abood Hamed Al Sawafi, University of Buraimi*

- **Internationalization of Higher Education in Oman: The Case of Sultan Qaboos University**

**Presenter:** *Dr. Khalaf Al'Abri, Sultan Qaboos University*

- **In Establishing a New College of Engineering Accreditation, Validation, and Audit – Contribute to Attaining National and International Recognition**

**Presenter:** *Dr Djamel Azzi, Military Technological College*

- **Global Citizenship and Internationalization – Perspectives of Students in Oman on Their Place in the World and How to Get There**

**Presenter:** *Ms. Felixa Wingen, German University of Technology Oman*

**12:40 – 12:45 – Virtual Break**

**12:45 – 13:20 – Question and Answer and Closing Remarks (OAQHE Board Members and speakers)**

- **Moderators:** *Ms. Nabila Al Macki, Dr. Mona Ismail and Dr. Bushra Al Hasni, Ms. Alaa Al-Attili.*
- **OAQHE Administrator:** *Ms. Naeema Al Maawali*

# **CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS**

## **QUALITY LEARNING ASSURANCE USING STANDARD CURRICULUM LEARNING OUTCOMES MAPPING**

Louay A. Hussein Al-Nuaimy

*Department of Computer Science,*

*Oman college of Management and Technology, Oman*

*Email: Loay.alneimy@omacollege.edu.om*

### **ABSTRACT**

Academic degree learning outcomes identify concrete skills and knowledge the students must develop and be able to apply upon completion of the study program. A curriculum learning outcomes mapping provides a visual representation of the relationship between a programs' learning outcomes and the courses offered to its students. A mapping can help improve the coherence of the curriculum and help students achieve the program's learning outcomes. This paper will show the widely used models to design or define the learning outcomes mapping. Many standard models of outcomes mapping from international universities will be illustrated and compared in this piece of work. The research also tries to introduce a curriculum learning outcomes mapping framework, based on revised Bloom's taxonomy that assists stakeholders of higher education institutions in tracing concept development and assessment throughout their academic programs. This study also demonstrated a curriculum learning outcomes mapping methodology that can be used to make sense and use existing data in curricular evaluation. The purpose of this paper is to find learning outcomes mapping model that is suitable, informative and vital to design academic degree curriculum at the higher education institutions, in order to unify and simplify the program accreditation process. This research proposed using the 24 cognitive category levels of Revised Bloom's taxonomy as a mapping model, and the resulted model are called the 24 knowledge dimensions mapping model. The performance of the 24 knowledge dimensions mapping model was tested and compared with four similar models. The test results showed that the 24 knowledge dimensions mapping model has higher effective grades than the four selected standard models.

Keywords: Curriculum Design, Degree Program Outcomes, Bloom's Taxonomy, Learning Outcomes Mapping Models.

## GLOBAL ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ISSUES IN INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN ENGINEERING

ABID ALI KHAN <sup>a</sup>, Mohamed Al Siyabi <sup>b</sup> and Muhammad Arif Ashraf <sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> *Department of Aeronautical Engineering,*

*Military Technological College, Oman*

*Institute of Space Technology, Pakistan*

*Email: [abid.khan@mtc.edu.om](mailto:abid.khan@mtc.edu.om)*

<sup>b</sup> *Vice Dean for Academic Affairs,*

*Military Technological College, Oman*

*Email: [Mohamed.Alsiyabi@mtc.edu.om](mailto:Mohamed.Alsiyabi@mtc.edu.om)*

<sup>c</sup> *Department of Aeronautical Engineering,*

*Military Technological College, Oman.*

*Email: [m.ashraf@mtc.edu.om](mailto:m.ashraf@mtc.edu.om)*

### ABSTRACT

Recognition of higher qualifications has become highly significant in this era of global interdependence. On the other hand, there is a recognized unbalanced development across the world that demands relocation of professionals around regions. The paper thus discusses the accreditation standards being followed in different regions of the world along with their challenges and requirements. Quality concerns due to various factors such as; internationalization, increase in number of students, number of courses and advent of multiethnic work environment has intensified in last few decades making accreditation a complex evaluation instrument. The work presented in this paper revolves around effects on quality of education due to internationalization. The understanding of avoiding the waste of engineering human resources when different regions in the world are in dire need of technical work force has led to different international accords. The necessity has therefore, led to development of benchmarks for engineering qualification and practice.

Keywords: Internationalization, Accreditation Standards, Quality Concerns, International Accords, Engineering Benchmarks

# **INTERNATIONALIZING THE TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM AT SULTAN QABOOS UNIVERSITY: THE PROCESSES, CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS**

Khalaf Al -Abri <sup>a</sup>, Sulaiman Al-Balushi <sup>b</sup> and Mahmoud Emam <sup>c</sup>

*<sup>a</sup> Department of Educational Administration,*

*Sultan Qaboos University, Oman*

*Email: [kabri@squ.edu.om](mailto:kabri@squ.edu.om)*

*<sup>b</sup> Department of Curriculum and Instruction,*

*Sultan Qaboos University, Oman*

*Email: [sbalushi@squ.edu.om](mailto:sbalushi@squ.edu.om)*

*<sup>c</sup> Psychology Department*

*Sultan Qaboos University, Oman.*

*Email: [memam@squ.edu.om](mailto:memam@squ.edu.om)*

## **ABSTRACT**

The current paper presents briefly the case of the accreditation of teacher education at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) as an exemplary program that has been successful to gain recognition from top international accrediting body of teacher education program in the world, namely National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The paper discusses how internationalization has informed the accreditation progress of the teacher education program accreditation and how this helped SQU to stand out as an exemplary case of internationalizing its teacher education program not only in the Gulf Cooperating Council (GCC) countries but in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The paper begins with providing some background of the college of education at SQU. To give a full picture of the process, the SQU teacher education program was described, elaborating how international standards informed its restructuring in order to align the program with international standards. It has been stressed that the process of accreditation has led to creating a climate for accreditation with the need to focus on evidence and assessment across all areas of the college and programs. The paper also points out to the cognitive and organizational restructuring that happened at all the levels. The paper closes with challenges that faced the program in gaining NCATE accreditation and the benefits that were gained.

**Keywords:** Teacher Education Program, Internationalization, Accreditation, Sultan Qaboos University

## **A case study about international students' sponsorships at Rustaq College of Education in Oman**

Moza Abdullah Al-Malki

*Department of English Language and Literature*

*Rustaq College of Education, Oman*

*Email: mozaalmalki.rus@cas.edu.om*

Nagham Al-Azzawi

*Department of English Language and Literature,*

*Rustaq College of Education, Oman*

*Email: naghamal-azawi.rus@cas.edu.om*

### **Abstract**

The flow of knowledge resources among nations is interconnected with global political, economic and cultural relationships. One major component of academic interaction is the international exchange at the level of higher education. This paper outlines the existence of international students within the Omani Program for Cultural and Scientific Cooperation (OPCSC) at Rustaq College of Education and explores the merits of the program. Through group discussions and questionnaires with five international students, the study found that the currently enrolled students are from African states solely and were informed about OPCSC by word of mouth disseminated by the International Istiqama Organization, which liaisons between studying opportunities offered by Ministry of Higher Education and willing international students, and through Omani delegates as well as friends. Therefore, this paper recommends that OPCSC should brand and have systematic policies and procedures and diversification of international students' portfolio in raising the quality of higher education in Oman.

### **Keywords:**

International students, Omani Program for Cultural and Scientific cooperation (OPCSC), higher education

# INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN OMAN: THE CASE OF SULTAN QABOOS UNIVERSISTY

KHALAF AL'ABRI<sup>a</sup>, OMAR ISMAIL<sup>b</sup> and KHALOUD AL' HINAI<sup>b</sup>

*<sup>a</sup> Department of Educational Foundation & Administration,*

*Sultan Qaboos University, Oman*

*Email: [kabri@squ.edu.om](mailto:kabri@squ.edu.om)*

*<sup>b</sup> Department of Educational Foundation & Administration,*

*Sultan Qaboos University, Oman*

*Email: [omerhi@squ.edu.om](mailto:omerhi@squ.edu.om)*

*<sup>c</sup> Ministry Of Education, Oman*

*Email: [S83275@student.squ.edu.om](mailto:S83275@student.squ.edu.om)*

## ABSTRACT

This paper aimed at investigating the process and experience of SQU towards internationalization. A qualitative approach was used. In which data was generated from analyzing the strategic plans (2013-2013 & 2016-20140) of SQU and interviews with 13 of SQU leadership staff. The analysis of the strategic plans (2013-2013 & 2016-20140) shows that SQU has given great attention to internationalization in four main areas which are research, teaching and learning, international cooperation and community services. The findings also show that SQU works intensively to align its programs with international standards through international accreditation of these programs. The strategies also have focused on international rankings and competitiveness. Overall, the paper argues that SQU has a rich experience of internationalization that is reflected in its programs, policies and activities.

Keywords: Internationalization, Oman, SQU, Higher Education



## IN ESTABLISHING A NEW COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

### ACCREDITATION, VALIDATION, AND AUDIT – CONTRIBUTE TO ATTAINING NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

EUGENE COYLE<sup>a</sup>, DJAMEL AZZI<sup>a</sup>, DEEPTHI PEIRIS<sup>a</sup>, MOHAMED AL SIYABI<sup>a</sup> and  
ABDULLAH AL SHIBLI<sup>a</sup>

*<sup>a</sup> Military Technological College, Sultanate of Oman*

*Email: [eugene.coyle@mtc.edu.om](mailto:eugene.coyle@mtc.edu.om)*

#### ABSTRACT

Upon establishing a new university or college of higher learning, accreditation, validation, and audit of programmes of study and supporting college infrastructure are central to achieving the standards and recognition required in creating a solid foundation for the college. In the Sultanate of Oman, whether a private or public institution, it is imperative that the college registers under the auspices of the Ministry of Higher Education and prepares in advance for audit by the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA). If partnering with a university from a different jurisdiction, the importance of mutual recognition in goal attainment and policy formation, is an extra requirement in setting the scene for the emerging college. A case study is presented of the early years in programme and educational infrastructure development at the new Military Technological College with exemplar of i) programmes developed, ii) routes to validation, audit and accreditation attainment, iii) experience gained, and iv) further provision, from commencement and first intake of students in 2013.

**Keywords:** Accreditation, affiliation, higher education in Oman

**GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AND INTERNATIONALIZATION:  
PERSPECTIVES OF STUDENTS IN OMAN ON THEIR PLACE IN THE WORLD  
AND HOW TO GET THERE**

F. WINGEN

Faculty of Human Sciences

University of Cologne, Germany

*Email: [felixa.wingen@gutec.edu.om](mailto:felixa.wingen@gutec.edu.om)*

**ABSTRACT**

Internationalization in higher education needs to be rooted in the realities of those it aims to affect – the students. This research therefore explored the perspectives of students in Oman on global citizenship and internationalization. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was employed to gain an understanding of students' perceived place in a globalized world and how they believe the university can help them prepare for this role. The final survey of 592 undergraduate students at one institution in Oman measured students' awareness of and attitude towards globalization, their identification with global citizenship, and their preferences for internationalization initiatives. The responses showed that students overall view globalization favourably, identify as global citizens, and believe the university should prepare them to enter a globalized world and work environment. While all internationalization initiatives were considered valuable, students rated outbound mobility opportunities and English language instruction as most important.

Keywords: internationalization, global citizenship, student perspective, Oman