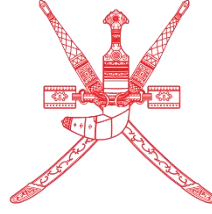


Sultanate of Oman
Oman Authority for
Academic Accreditation and
Quality Assurance of Education



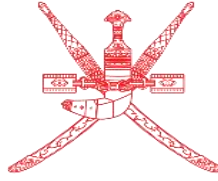
سلطنة عمان
الهيئة العمانية للاعتماد الأكاديمي
و ضمان جودة التعليم

نقدم بثقة
Moving Forward
with Confidence



POLICY ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE OMAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

Number of Policy	OAAAQA/OQFM/06		
Category	OQF Matters (OQFM)		
Initiator	Directorate General of the National Qualifications Framework (DGNQF)		
Contact Person	Director General of the National Qualifications Framework Email: OQF@oaaaqa.gov.om		
Related Policies/Manuals	OQF Document OQF Manual OAAAQA Policy for Listing Qualifications on the OQF OAAAQA Policy for the Alignment of Foreign and International Qualifications to the OQF		
Version	1		
Approved by	OAAAQA Executive Committee	26 March 2023	(v 1)
	OAAAQA Legal Affairs Department	23 March 2023	(v 1)
	OAAAQA Board	13 April 2023	(v 1)
Circulation	Internal and External		
Review Date	December 2026		



POLICY ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE OMAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the principles and procedures to support the effective, transparent and consistent selection, approval and management of OQF External Reviewers (OQFERs) and their inclusion in the National Register of External Reviewers (National ER Register).

2. Scope

This policy applies to all aspects of the selection, approval and management of OQFERs, including the issuance of contracts and the removal process.

3. Policy Statement

OQFERs fulfil an important role in the implementation of the OQF. Selected for their knowledge and skills to assist with Listing Omani qualifications on the Oman Qualifications Framework (OQF) and the Alignment of Foreign and International qualifications to it. OQFERs support the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA) in relation to all OQF activities. In addition to serving on Listing or Alignment Panels, some OQFERs may serve as OQF Review Directors (OQFRDs), as well as serving on Re-Listing and Re-Alignment Panels and OQF Appeal Committees.

3.1 Criteria for the Selection of Locally Based OQFERs

OQFERs must perform their role according to the highest professional standards. These standards encompass confidentiality, punctuality, curtesy, integrity and commitment (for example in timeliness of completing allocated tasks).

OQFERs must:

- Have knowledge and experience of the subject area of the qualification
- Have knowledge of the OQF processes and criteria
- Have completed the OAAAQA capacity building training on the OQF processes
- Have experience in designing and/or reviewing programmes¹, module learning outcomes, related assessment methods and/or quality assurance of education or training
- Be willing to undertake the OAAAQA capacity building training for OQFERs and other OQF development opportunities when they arise
- Have excellent written and verbal communication skills in English and/or Arabic

¹ In either higher education, technical and vocational, professional, school or employment contexts.

- Maintain confidentiality
- Be able to provide feedback in an understanding and supportive manner
- Be able to work individually and in a team
- Be able to work under pressure to agreed deadlines

Prospective OQFERs come from the wide range of education and training sectors in Oman, including the military. They can be self-nominated, nominated by their institution or identified by OAAAQA. Self-employed or retired individuals that meet the requirements may also be eligible.

To this end, the OAAAQA contacts education and training providers on a regular basis to invite applications to ensure the National ER Register has sufficient approved OQFERs, across a wide range of subject areas, to meet the demand of all OQF activities.

All applications are scrutinised to ensure the integrity of the selection and approval process. As part of the approval process, all prospective OQFERs attend the OAAAQA capacity building training for OQFERs.

Employees of OAAAQA are not eligible to act as ERs for the duration of their tenure (see Section 4.6).

3.2 Criteria for the Selection of International OQFERs

On occasion, it may be necessary to engage internationally based individuals to fulfil the role of the OQFER, for example, where there are a limited number of individuals with the required knowledge and expertise in Oman. Potential internationally based OQFERs must meet the criteria given in Section 3.1 and have knowledge and experience in the subject, discipline, occupation or profession. They must also know and understand the principles behind a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and be able to apply that to the Omani context and to the OQF in particular.

3.3 Equal Opportunity

Those who are self-employed or retired are eligible for appointment regardless of age, ethnicity or gender.

3.4 The National ER Register

The OAAAQA updates the National ER Register as and when the OAAAQA CEO approves an OQFER for inclusion or, where necessary, the removal of an OQFER.

The Head of the External Reviewers Affairs Section (ERAS) regularly reviews the National ER Register to ensure there is a sufficient number of approved OQFERs, from a wide range of subject areas, to carry out the scheduled and anticipated OQF activities.

3.5 Formation of OQF Panels

The OAAAQA Policy for Listing Qualifications on the OQF or the Policy for the Alignment of Foreign and International Qualifications to the OQF, as appropriate, governs the formation of Listing and Alignment Panels. The OAAAQA Policy for Re-Listing and Re-Alignment of Qualifications on the OQF governs the formation of a Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Panel².

² See OAAAQA (2023), OQF Document, Appendix C.

OQF Panel members are selected from the approved OQFERs on the National ER Register.
OQF Panel members must:

- Have knowledge and experience of the subject area of the qualification
- Have completed the OAAAQA capacity building training on the OQF Listing and Alignment processes
- Be from different organisations
- Have no conflict of interest with the Awarding Body applying for Listing or Alignment
- Hold a qualification at least one OQF level above the qualification they are reviewing: or hold the same qualification level and specialty with ten years of experience in the field post-qualification?

Approved OQFERs are contacted by the External Reviewers Affairs Section (ERAS) to ascertain their availability and willingness to participate in an OQF Panel before being appointed by the Director General of the DGNQF³.

OQF Panel members are contracted by OAAAQA for undertaking time limited and defined work in relation to Listing, Alignment, Re-Listing or Re-Alignment. When the work is completed, the OQF Panel is disbanded.

4. Procedure

This section sets out the procedures for the selection, approval and management for OQFERs, including the removal of an OQFER from the National ER Register.

4.1 Selection of Locally Based OQFERs

- a. Those interested in becoming an OQFER complete the online OQFER Application Form (**see Appendix A**) accessed from the OAAAQA website at www.oaaaqa.gov.om. Applicants submit the completed online application to the ERAS in the DGNQF together with their CVs
- b. Received applications are logged by the ERAS
- c. The ERAS forwards applications to the Director General and the Directors of Listing and Alignment Departments
- d. The Director General, Head of the ERAS and the Directors of Listing and Alignment Departments review the application in accordance with the OQFER Application Review Form (**see Appendix B**)
- e. Based on the outcome of the review, the Director General makes an initial recommendation on whether to progress or reject the application
- f. Initially approved OQFERs are invited to attend the Capacity Building Workshop for OQFERs where their performance is evaluated (**see Appendix C**)
- g. The OAAAQA CEO approves the appointment of OQFERs based on the data provided by candidates⁴ and the recommendations of the Director General
- h. Successful candidates are informed by the ERAS and asked to submit a current 200-word biography
- i. The ERAS informs unsuccessful candidates
- j. Details of the OQFERs are added to the National ER Register by the ERAS

³ Henceforth the Director General.

⁴ In the application form, the applicant provides key data such as their name, position and place of work.

- k. The OAAAQA Board is informed of updates to the National ER Register

4.2 Selection Process for International OQFERs

- a. Internationally based individuals interested in becoming an OQFER complete the online OQFER Application Form (**see Appendix A**) accessed from the OAAAQA website at www.oaaaqa.gov.om. The completed application is submitted to the ERAS together with the most recent CV
- b. Received applications are logged by the ERAS
- c. The ERAS forwards applications to the Director General and the Directors of Listing and Alignment Departments
- d. The Director General, the Head of ERAS and the Directors of Listing and Alignment Departments review applications in accordance with the OQFER Application Review Form (**see Appendix B**)
- e. Based on the outcome of the review, the Director General makes an initial recommendation⁵ on whether to progress or reject the application
- f. The Head of ERAS informs unsuccessful candidates that their applications will not be progressed
- g. Initially approved candidates are invited to an online interview with the Director General, the Head of ERAS and the Directors of Listing and Alignment Departments in order that the candidate's knowledge, experience and understanding of NQFs, the Omani context and the OQF can be determined.
- h. The Director General, the Head of ERAS and the Directors of Listing and Alignment Departments complete the OQFER Online Interview Assessment Form (**see Appendix D**)
- i. The OAAAQA CEO approves the appointment of OQFERs based on the data provided by candidates⁶, the outcome of the online interview and the recommendations of the Director General
- j. Successful candidates are informed by the ERAS and asked to submit a current 200-word biography
- k. The ERAS informs unsuccessful candidates
- l. Details of the OQFERs are added to the National ER Register by the ERAS
- m. The OAAAQA Board is informed of updates to the National ER Register

4.3 Appointment of OQF External Reviewers

- a. Once an Awarding Body has confirmed its intention to submit a Listing or Alignment Application⁷, the Head of ERAS generates a long-list of potential OQFERs with relevant knowledge and experience in the subject area for the Listing or Alignment Panel
- b. The ERAS submits the long-list to the Director General for approval
- c. The approved longlist is sent to the Awarding Body to identify any potential conflicts of interest
- d. Following the response from the Awarding Body, the Director General appoints the Listing or Alignment Panel and, where required, the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Panel

⁵ Based on the outcome of the collective review 4.2 d

⁶ In the Application Form, the candidate provides key data such as their' name, position and place of work

⁷ Or Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Application

- e. Before being engaged by OAAAQA for an OQF activity, OQFERs sign a service contract and OQF Declaration (**see Appendix E**)
- f. Once the formation of the OQF Listing or Alignment Panel is finalised, the appointment of the OQFERs is recorded by the ERAS within the OQF Activities Record

4.4 Monitoring Performance of OQFERs

- a. Following the approval of the Listing or Alignment outcome by the OAAAQA Board⁸, the Head of ERAS in conjunction with the either the Director of Listing or Director of Alignment Department (as appropriate) evaluate the effectiveness of the OQF Listing or Alignment Panel
- b. The Head of ERAS informs the Director General of the evaluation outcome
- c. The ERAS updates the OQF Activity Record that the work of the Listing or Alignment Panel is complete
- d. Where the Listing or Alignment Panel is deemed ineffective, the Head of ERAS harnesses the viewpoints of all the Panel members to establish the cause
- e. The Head of ERAS reports the findings to the Director General and the Directors of Listing or Alignment
- f. Where an individual is the cause of the ineffectiveness of the Panel, the OQF Activities Record is updated that the OQFER is '*not recommended for future work*', to inform decisions regarding the inclusion of the OQFER in future OQF Panels

4.5 Removal of an OQFER from the National ER Register

- a. Cases of poor performance, unethical or unprofessional behaviour, or any activity deemed unbecoming in the role of an OQFER (see criteria below) results in removal from the National ER Register following a recommendation from the Director General and approval from the OAAAQA CEO
- b. On approval from the CEO, the Director General communicates the outcome to the OQFER
- c. Criteria for removal from the National ER Register include but are not limited to:
 - Three instances of unjustified decline of invitation to participate in an OQF activity
 - Poor performance, judged as a result of the OAAAQA review mechanisms (see 4.4)
 - Unethical or unprofessional behaviour, or any activity that may be damaging to the reputation of OAAAQA
 - Permanent disability that prevents an OQFER from performing their role effectively
 - Self-requesting withdrawal
 - Death

4.6 Updates to the National ER Register

Circumstances requiring updates to the OQF section of the National ER Register are shown in Table 1 below.

⁸ The final stage of the Listing or Alignment Process.

Table 1: Circumstances requiring updates to the OQF Section of the National ER Register			
	Reason	Status on OQFER Database	Actions in National ER Register
1	Poor performance or misconduct; three instances of unjustified decline of OQF activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanently move from `active` to `inactive` Note the reason on the OQF database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove from the National ER Register Remove name, bio and photo from the OAAAQA website Inform the CEO
2	Death, or self-requesting withdrawal from the National ER Register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanently move from `active` to `inactive` Note reason on the OQF database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove from the National ER Register Remove name, bio and photo from the OAAAQA website Inform the CEO
3	Justifiable unavailability (Short term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep under `active` Note the short period of unavailability on the OQF database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep on the National ER Register Keep name, bio and photo on the OAAAQA website No need to inform the CEO
	Justifiable unavailability (Long term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily move from `active` to `inactive` Note reason on the OQF database 	
4	Employment at OAAAQA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily move from `active` to `inactive` Note reason on the database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporarily remove from the National ER Register Remove name, bio and photo from the OAAAQA website Inform the CEO

4.7 Reactivation of an OQFER on National ER Register after Tenure at OAAAQA

If and when an approved OQFER is recruited as an OAAAQA staff member or is appointed to the OAAAQA Board, he or she is removed from the National ER Register for the duration of their tenure. The names of former OQFERs in this category are retained on the OQFER database but rendered 'inactive' so that they cannot mistakenly be appointed to a Listing or Alignment Panel. Their profiles are removed from the OAAAQA website.

At the end of the period of tenure within OAAAQA or on the OAAAQA Board, any former OQFER is reinstated on the National ER Register and they are requested to update their profile for the OAAAQA website.

5. Abbreviations

DGNQF	Directorate General of the National Qualifications Framework
ER	External Reviewers
ERAS	External Reviewers Affairs Section
NRQ	National Register of Qualifications
OAAAQA	Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education
OQF	Oman Qualifications Framework
OQFER	Oman Qualifications Framework External Reviewers
ToR	Terms of Reference

6. Definitions

Listing [a qualification on the OQF]	An evaluation of an Omani qualification against the Listing Criteria and the OQF Level Descriptors to determine the OQF Level and the OQF Credit Value of the entire qualification
Alignment [of a qualification to the OQF]	An evaluation of a Foreign or International qualification against the Alignment Criteria and the OQF Level Descriptors to determine the OQF Level that the qualification aligns to and, if applicable, the comparable OQF Credit Value of the entire qualification
Re-Listing or Re-Alignment	A review process for Listed and Aligned qualifications to ensure that the Listing or Alignment Criteria were maintained throughout the delivery of the qualification and no major changes were made to the Learning Outcomes of the units, modules or courses that impacted on the OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value of the entire qualification

7. References

OAAAQA (2023), OQF Document

OAAAQA Policy on the Management of the National Register of External Reviewers

8. List of Appendices

Appendix A	Sample Online OQFER Application Form
Appendix B	Sample OQFER Application Review Form
Appendix C	Sample OQF External Reviewer Trainee Assessment
Appendix D	Sample OQF External Reviewer Online Interview Assessment
Appendix E.....	OQFER Declaration

Appendix A: Sample of Online OQFER Application Form

Online OQFER Application Form			
Personal information			
Title		Current Position	
First Name(s)		Institution/Organisation	
Last Name		Country of Residence	
Date of Birth		Office Phone Number	
Nationality		Mobile Phone Number	
Photograph		Email Address	
		Postal Address	
Qualifications and Expertise			
Highest Educational Level Obtained			
Year of Qualification			
Awarding Body			
Area(s) of Expertise and/or Field of Study	<i>(Please add row for each area of expertise)</i>		
Language Skills Please indicate competence in understanding, speaking and writing English (5/5 represents 'Excellent')	Understanding		
	Speaking		
	Writing		
Please indicate competence in understanding, speaking and writing Arabic (5/5 represents 'Excellent')	Understanding		
	Speaking		
	Writing		
Relevant Experience			
Please list your experience of Listing qualifications on the OQF or Aligning qualifications to the OQF	<i>[Please specify dates]</i>		
Please list any training you have undertaken on the OQF or other involvement with the OQF	<i>[Please specify dates]</i>		
Please briefly state how you meet the OQFER criteria			

■
Upload CV

Appendix B: Sample OQFER Application Review Form

OQFER Application Review Form								
Details								
Candidate's Name								
Nationality		Subject Area						
Highest level of qualification obtained		Year of qualification						
Date of CV Submission		Language Skills		English		Arabic	Other	
Completed OAAAQA Capacity Building Workshop for Listing Qualifications on the OQF		Date of attendance						
#	OQFER Criteria						Max	Score
	The candidate has knowledge, skills and/or competence in...							
1	A subject,, discipline, occupation or profession						15	
2	OQF Criteria and knowledge of the OQF						15	
3	Designing and/or reviewing programmes in either higher education, technical and vocational, professional, school or employment contexts, module learning outcomes, related assessment methods and/or quality assurance of education or training						10	
4	Designing and/ or reviewing module learning outcomes and assessment						10	
5	Writing in English and/or Arabic to a good standard						10	
6	Speaking in English and /or Arabic to a good standard						10	
7	Providing feedback in a sensitive and supportive manner						10	
8	Working individually and in a team						10	
9	Working under pressure to agreed deadlines						10	
						100 ⁹		
Other Comments								
Signature						Date		
Sent to CEO								

⁹ Locally based OQFERs must attain ≥60% in their application to be invited onto the National ER Register, prior to training; those with 50-59% will be kept pending for the result of training; those with ≤49% will be sent a rejection letter. International OQFERs must attain ≥60% in their application to be invited onto the National ER Register. All invitations to join the National ER Register are subject to satisfactory references and approval from the CEO OAAAQA.

QQFER Application Review Form

CEO Approval		
Bio Received		
QQFER Name on QQFER Database and OAAAQA Website		

Appendix C: Sample OQF External Reviewer Trainee Assessment

OQF External Reviewer Trainee Assessment							
Candidate's Name		Subject Area					
Nationality							
Date of CV Submission		Language	English		Arabic		Other
Trainee Evaluation							
		Trainer 1		Trainer 2			
#	Demonstrates the following skills and qualities	Max	Score	Max	Score		
1	Punctuality (arrives on time and completes tasks by deadline)	10		10			
2	Gives considered answers and is evaluative	10		10			
3	Collaboration (works as a team)	10		10			
	Listening skills	10		10			
4	English language skills	10		10			
6	Engagement (focuses on the workshop, not on the mobile!)	10		10			
#	The candidate can participate in OQF Activities because						
7	Grasps the nature of the OQF activity	10		10			
8	Is flexible and non-prescriptive in approach	10		10			
#	Can participate in OQF Activities because of						
9	Strong subject knowledge	10		10			
10	Ability to focus on evaluating detail	10		10			
Evaluation Totals¹⁰		100		100			
Other Comments Justifying Recommendation				Yes	No		
Trainer 1:							
Trainer 2:							
Signatures				Date			
Trainer 1:							
Trainer 2:							

¹⁰ Training assessment only applies to locally based OQFERs who must attain $\geq 60\%$ to be invited to join the National ER Register; those with $\leq 59\%$ will be sent a rejection letter. All invitations to join the National ER Register are subject to satisfactory references and approval from the OAAAQA CEO

Appendix D: Sample OQF External Reviewer Online Interview Assessment

OQF External Reviewer Online Interview Assessment							
Candidate's Name		Subject Area					
Nationality							
Date of CV Submission		Language	English		Arabic		Other
Trainee Evaluation							
	Scorecard to be given to each interviewer						
#	Demonstrates the following skills and qualities	Max	Score				
1	Preparation for interview	10					
2	Gives considered answers and is evaluative	10					
3	Knowledge of NQFs, the OQF and Omani Context	10					
4	Listening skills	10					
5	English language skills	10					
6	Engagement with interviewers	10					
#	The candidate can participate in OQF Activities because						
7	Grasps the nature of the OQF activity	10					
8	Is flexible and non-prescriptive in approach	10					
#	Can participate in OQF Activities because of						
9	Strong subject knowledge	10					
10	Ability to focus on evaluating detail	10					
Evaluation Totals¹¹		100					
Other Comments Justifying Recommendation		Yes	No				
Director General of the DGNQF							
Head of ERAS							
Director of Listing							
Director of Alignment							

¹¹ Training assessment only applies to locally based OQFERs who must attain ≥60% to be invited to join the National ER Register; those with ≤59% will be sent a rejection letter. All invitations to join the National ER Register are subject to satisfactory references and approval from the CEO OAAAQA.

Signatures		Date
Director General of the DGNQF		
Head of ERAS		
Director of Listing		
Director of Alignment		

Appendix E: OQFER Declaration

OQFER Declaration			
	Please tick (✓) the appropriate column for each of the following statements:	Agree	Disagree 12
1	I have read and understood the OQF Manual on [type of OQF activity] and will carry out the tasks and responsibilities assigned.		
2	I know of no conflict of interest, as set out in the relevant section of the OQF Manual [type of OQF activity] which would jeopardise my participation in this OQF activity.		
3	During the contract period and at any time thereafter, I will not breach the confidentiality of any information in relation to this [type of OQF activity]. This includes information received in written form for example, the Awarding Body's Application for Listing or Alignment, supporting materials, Awarding Body's response to the draft OQF Evaluation Report [other OQF Report as appropriate] as well as information received in person		
4	During the contract period and at any time thereafter, I will not divulge any information shared during the [type of OQF activity] deliberations (for example, regarding preliminary comments and/or through draft versions of the OQF Evaluation Report).		
5	I will not enter into a consultancy relationship (or similar) with the Awarding Body undergoing [type of OQF activity], from the time of signing this form until one full calendar year after the public release of the [type of OQF activity]		
6	I will complete any end-of-activity report that is required by OAAAQA		
Signature		Date	
Print Name			
Please send the completed declaration to the External Reviewers Affairs Section at the DGNQF before the [type of OQF activity] submission date.			

¹² If you indicate disagreement with any of the statements in the declaration above, a member of OAAAQA will contact you to discuss the matter further.