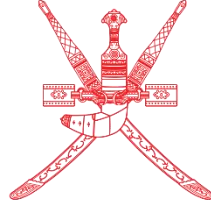


Sultanate of Oman  
Oman Authority for  
Academic Accreditation and  
Quality Assurance of Education



سلطنة عمان  
الهيئة العمانية للاعتماد الأكاديمي  
و ضمان جودة التعليم



## POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SUBMISSIONS AND OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS

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<b>Initiator</b>	Centre for Higher Education Quality Assurance (CHEQA)		
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## **POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SUBMISSIONS AND OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to detail the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education's (OAAAQA) academic integrity expectations from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) making formal submissions, for any OAAAQA External Quality Assurance (EQA) activity. When submitting Quality Audit Portfolios, Standards Assessment Applications or any associated supporting materials, HEIs are expected to adhere to the principle of respect for the intellectual work of others. In addition, this policy outlines the OAAAQA's response to breaches to academic integrity detected in formal submissions and any associated supporting materials.

### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to HEIs presenting an EQA submission and supporting materials to the OAAAQA. While highlighted under specific Standards or scope areas in OAAAQA Manuals, academic integrity applies to all types of documents, all aspects of the HEI activities and all members of the HEI. The policy also outlines the actions that OAAAQA takes to check, verify and report any violations to academic integrity identified in EQA submissions.

### **3. Policy Statement**

Respect for people's intellectual property, such as the 'production in the literary, artistic, or scientific field regardless of its genre, mode of expression, importance or purpose behind it' is enshrined in legislation (Royal Decree No. 65/2008 Copyright and Related Rights Law). It is also one of the most fundamental tenets of higher education. It is the principle by which

significant contributions to knowledge can properly be identified, acknowledged and built upon.

The established academic method for showing respect for the principles of academic integrity within written documentation is through the use of three tools:

- In-text citations for materials that have directly contributed to the work
- Reference lists of cited materials
- Bibliographies of materials that have contributed to the work less directly

Examples of academic integrity malpractices include, but are not limited to, the following (HEC, 2008):

- Quoting verbatim or near-verbatim another person's work without due acknowledgment
- Paraphrasing another person's work (eg, by changing some of the words or the order of the words) without due acknowledgment of the source
- Using another person's ideas without reference to that person as the originator of those ideas
- Cutting and pasting from the Internet to make a 'pastiche' of online sources
- Self-plagiarism, whereby published material by the author is reused without acknowledging the original source

Academic integrity issues may affect any type of materials, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Books, journal articles, conference papers, posters, media articles
- Computer programmes, mathematical models, maps
- Plays, speeches, performances, manuscripts, recordings and broadcasts
- Pictures, photographs, sculptures
- Online sites and downloadable files

To prevent, detect and address all forms of academic integrity misconduct, HEIs are expected to have in place policies and procedures, which support the protection of academic integrity and to ensure these are implemented and adhered to by students and staff. In particular, the OAAAQA expects HEIs to clearly outline in their academic integrity policy and procedure the means by which the HEI identifies and detects plagiarism. These should include a clear set of parameters, benchmarked with reputed similar HEIs, with clear maximum limits of similarity allowed, and how this is calculated. The expectation is that any work exceeding the maximum similarity allowed should be failed rather than penalised by deduction of marks.

In the course of participating in EQA activities, HEIs making formal submissions, must ensure the submissions fully respect academic integrity principles articulated in OAAAQA's definition of the term (see the definitions section below). The OAAAQA formally acknowledges and reports on any violations of academic integrity principles detected during the EQA, and these are reported on within the framework of the EQA activity being undertaken. In the case of Quality Audit, detection of such violations is reported on comprehensively in the Audit Report. In the case of Standards Assessment, the detection of academic integrity misconduct normally results in the HEI or programme failing to meet one or more standards (in accordance with the specific requirements of the relevant criteria and associated standards).

#### 4. Procedures

- a. Using appropriate tools, all submissions presented to the OAAAQA for EQA purposes are checked for adherence to academic integrity principles at the earliest opportunity and as may be required throughout the EQA activity. In doing so, the EQA Panel takes a primarily qualitative approach to determining the extent and significance of any material identified as being in violation of academic integrity principles.
- b. Suspected academic integrity violations are explored through the external review activity within the framework of the EQA activity being undertaken. As in other areas, the EQA Panel's findings are reflected in the outcome of the EQA activity (such as standards and criteria ratings; Accreditation Outcomes and Reports).

#### 5. Abbreviations

(EQA) ..... (External Quality Assurance)

(HEI) ..... (Higher Education Institution)

(OAAAQA) ..... (Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education)

#### 6. Definitions

- **(External Quality Assurance (EQA)):** (Any OAAAQA Quality Audit or Standards Assessment activity such as:

- Institutional Quality Audit
- Institutional Standards Assessment
- Programme Standards Assessment
- General Foundation Programme Quality Audit
- Reaccreditation of HEI or Programme Activities
- Reassessment activities resulting from the HEI or the Programme being placed on Probation
- **(Academic Integrity):** (The demonstration of **honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage** through the explicit acknowledgement of other people's ideas in the intellectual works of an individual or an institution (Adapted from International Center for Academic Integrity).

## 7. References

- (Royal Decree No. 65/2008 Copyright and Related Laws, Sultanate of Oman)
- (Royal Decree No. 9/2021 Establishing the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education, Sultanate of Oman)

