

Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE)

Abu Dhabi Conference 2011

(First Announcement & Call for Papers)

The Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE) is pleased to announce the first full conference offered by the Network. The conference will be hosted by the Commission for Academic Accreditation in the United Arab Emirates, under the patronage of His Excellency the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan. The conference will be held from 13th through 15th December 2011 at the Park Rotana Hotel in Abu Dhabi. The first day will be for pre-conference workshops followed by two days of conference presentations, committee meetings and a ‘round-table’ forum .

The Conference theme is “*Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Challenges in the Arab Region*”. Through presentations and workshops, speakers and delegates from QA agencies and HE institutions will explore the unique issues facing higher education in Arab countries, and present good practices to be shared across the region.

The conference presentations may be in English or Arabic languages. Special sessions will be in Arabic where translation service will be provided as required.

There are four sub-themes:

1. The impact of quality assurance on higher education

With the establishment of quality assurance agencies in the region and the implementation of their review processes over recent years, this sub-theme calls for reflection on the true impact that these activities have had, or should have had, on the institutions under their purview. How might the impact of QA agencies on quality and standards in higher education be measured? What are the most effective mechanisms for agencies to bring about a continuous process of quality improvement in institutions?

2. Benchmarking and performance

In the competitive environment of higher education in the Arab region, with many new institutions seeking a niche in the HE market, institutions seek comparisons with their competitors in order to improve, develop and attract good quality students. The external perspective of future students, and other stakeholders also calls for comparisons to judge the performance of institutions and the best place to invest tuition fees. Benchmarking is needed

to inform planning at all levels within institutions and this needs to be informed by reliable and relevant statistics, and information gained from the measurement instruments deployed in the quality assurance model. How can effective benchmarking of performance be achieved?

3. Qualifications Frameworks: challenges in the implementation

Qualifications Frameworks have been developed and are being launched in a number of Arab nations involving QA agencies across ANQAHE. They are often seen as an essential mechanism to facilitate student mobility between academic education and training sectors, and as clarification in transnational student movement. The Frameworks are intended to map the routes for student progression from secondary school to the highest academic or professional qualifications. Will they be the solution to bring total integration of the academic and vocational pathways, or will those ‘educational cul-de-sacs’ still be there in five years time? This sub-theme will explore the issues in effective implementation of Qualifications Frameworks in the Arab region.

4. Transnational higher education

Increased student mobility, the spread of branch campus operations, and distance transmission of educational material, all pose significant challenges in quality assurance. Accrediting bodies operate to different standards implemented through a variety of processes. How should overseas quality credentials be acknowledged and respected without compromising the standards of the receiving nation? This sub-theme invites debate on the challenges and possible solutions to maintaining quality in a global education environment.

DEADLINE FOR CONFERENCE PAPERS

The submitted papers for presentation at the conference will be reviewed by a committee comprising ANQAHE Board Members and invited international experts in the field of quality assurance in higher education. Accepted papers will be published electronically as submitted, and a hard copy of abstracts will also be published. **Papers must be submitted to Dr Nadia Badrawi, Chair of the Program Committee and President of ANQAHE (nadia@badrawi.com) no later than 30th June 2011.**

ROUND-TABLE SESSION

Within the conference schedule there will be a round-table session to debate a common issue facing many ANQAHE agencies. Particularly in the emerging economies of the Arab region

the focus of higher education development has tended to be on programs with technical and direct vocational relevance. As higher education in the region continues to expand, institutions are looking to the Arts and Humanities, more characteristic of mature nations and well-established institutions. The topic of debate for the expert panel will be *'The Challenges in Developing Standards for Non-professional Fields in Higher Education'*.

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

On 13th December, there will be two workshops in the morning and two in the afternoon. There will be a limit on the number of participants so that they can function effectively as a workshop.

1. Preparing for site visits and drafting self-studies (morning session)
2. Strategic Planning (morning session)
3. Benchmarking (afternoon session)
4. Internal Quality Assurance in Higher Education Institutions (afternoon session)

Registration

The Conference and Pre-conference workshops are open to ANQAHE members and other participants from higher education institutions, and related organizations.

Registration shall be done on-line through CAA website (www.caa.ae).

Registration Fees: US\$ 600 for early registration

US\$ 650 for late registration (After October 15, 2011)

Fees for Pre-conference Workshops: The fee for one Pre-conference workshop is US\$ 120

And for two US\$ 200

Please note that payment is accepted through Bank Transfer. Steps for payment are found **here**.

Once payment is made, please inform Mrs Hanan Elmarasy, Executive Administrator Officer at the CAA (Hanan.Elmarasy@mohestr.gov.ae) so that your registration is conformed.

VISA: The Commission for Academic Accreditation, as the conference host, shall facilitate issuing entry visas to participants who completed their registration process. Following successful registration, scanned copy of passport is to be sent to Mrs. Reena.Rajiv, QA specialist at the CAA, (Reena.Rajiv@moheer.gov.ae), who shall communicate with participants regarding their visas.

Accommodation: Special Conference rate shall be available to participants at the Park Rotana Hotel, Abu Dhabi, which is the conference venue.

Please note that neither ANQAHE nor the CAA is responsible for arranging hotel rooms. Information about accommodation can be found [here](#).