International Quality Review

Mid-Cycle Review

British University in Dubai

Review Report

May 2025

Contents

About this mid-cycle review

This is a report of a mid-cycle review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at British University in Dubai (BUiD). The mid-cycle review is usually desk-based and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- MS Katie Akerman
- Mr Alan Weale.

The full International Quality Review (IQR) in May 2022, resulted in a [published report](). The QAA review team concluded that The British University in Dubai met all 10 standards set out in Part 1 of the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)](). The team identified six features of good practice and made four recommendations.

This mid-cycle review evaluates progress against the key actions since the IQR and considers any significant changes that may impact on the ability of The British University in Dubai to continue to meet the ESG standards.

Mid-cycle review usually takes the form of a desk-based review. In the instance of the May 2022 IQR, the review visit had to take place virtually due to the Covid pandemic restrictions. This mid-cycle review has therefore included an onsite visit and review of learning resource provision.

Outcome of the mid-cycle review

From the evidence provided, the review team concludes that The British University in Dubai is making **satisfactory progress** since the May 2022 International Quality Review and that the period of validity of the IQR be extended to July 2027.

Summary of IQR outcomes

Overview of the institution

1   The British University in Dubai (BUiD), established in 2003 by Dubai Law No. 5, is the region's first research-based university. It was founded through a collaboration between government, private sector, and UK academia, with ongoing strategic alliance with UK universities such as Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Manchester.

2   BUiD comprises three faculties, Business and Law, Engineering and Information Technology, and Education, together offering a range of accredited undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, all aligned with the National Qualifications Framework of the Emirates (QFEmirates).

3   BUiD has been accredited by the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) since 2004. The CAA employs institutional licensure and programme accreditation to assess and assure the quality of higher education institutions in the UAE. Since receiving its first institutional licence in 2004, BUiD's licence has been renewed three times: in 2009, 2014, and most recently in 2019.The current institutional licence is valid until December 2025.

4   As of March 2025, the University has approximately 971 active students enrolled across its programmes, 35% at the undergraduate level and 65% at the postgraduate level. The student body is notably diverse, representing 54 different nationalities. The University employs 81 staff members, comprising 46 academic and 35 administrative staff. The staff profile demonstrates diversity, with representation from 20 nationalities.

Good practice identified by the 2022 International Quality Review

- The establishment, maintenance and effective operation of a dedicated Office (Office for Quality and Institutional Effectiveness) with responsibility for quality assurance, extended to incorporate managing the quality systems and closing the loop in processes such as the assessment of teaching (ESG Standard 1.1).
- The formation and operation of a stakeholder Advisory Board with a focused strategic, operational and advisory remit (ESG Standard 1.2).
- The establishment and maintenance of a Doctoral Training Centre to further enhance institutional research and scholarship priorities and support all students and staff (ESG Standard 1.3).
- The focus on learner independence, equity and inclusion for 'students of determination' (those with additional needs) (ESG Standard 1.3).
- The submission of model and/or indicative answers for assessment by the external examiner along with assessment briefs and rubrics, as part of the assessment process (ESG Standard 1.3).
- The introduction of a bespoke feature on the student intranet, allowing enquiries and requests to be tracked in real time by both University staff and individual students (ESG Standard 1.7).

Recommendations of the 2022 International Quality Review

- To further strengthen the existing capacity and resource within the University for subject specialists to develop pedagogically enhanced programmes across a range of modes of delivery (ESG Standard 1.2).
- To further develop and expand careers support and guidance for both existing students and alumni (ESG Standard 1.6).
- To consolidate the University's existing guidance and expertise in addressing diversity and equality, and to extend this expertise more broadly across faculties (ESG Standard 1.6).
- To review in partnership with student representatives the discharge of their role and responsibilities, and the pathways to further enhance student engagement and involvement (ESG Standard 1.7). Changes since the last IQR review visit

5   BUiD has made several strategic and operational changes to enhance academic quality and institutional effectiveness. These changes reflect the University's commitment to continuous improvement and its responsiveness to evolving academic and regulatory environments.

6   In line with the scheduled renewal of its Strategic Plan, BUiD initiated a comprehensive review in May 2024. This process involved broad consultation with internal and external stakeholders and was informed by current and emerging trends in higher education. As a result, the University's Vision, Mission, and Strategic Goals were revised to better reflect its aspirations, priorities, and evolving role in the UAE and the wider academic community. Additionally, a set of Core Values was articulated to underpin the University's ethos. These revisions are intended to guide future planning, resource allocation, and quality enhancement initiatives across all levels of the institution.

7   Changes have been made to the Governance and Leadership Structure, and include changes in Council Members, the restructuring of the role of Registrar into two distinct positions: Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and Registrar (although these are yet to be appointed to). New Board Committees have been created, including the BUiD Artificial Intelligence (AI)-Integration Committee, aimed at exploring AI integration across administrative, teaching, and research processes, although this is in early stages.

8   BUiD has expanded its academic offerings with the introduction of new programmes. The newly launched MSc in Finance and Risk Management, MSc in Cyber Security, BSc in Civil Engineering; BSc in Mechanical Engineering and BSc in Electrical and Electronics Engineering programme aim to equip students with specialised knowledge in high-demand fields, strengthening their employability and expertise in the global job market.

9   BUiD has formally closed the BSc in Accounting and Finance and the MSc in Information Technology Management programmes, these closures were part of a strategic realignment to consolidate academic offerings and focus on programmes with stronger market demand.

Findings from the mid-cycle review analysis

10   BUiD has significantly expanded its academic capacity through recruitment in key disciplines. By January 2023, new academic staff had been appointed in the areas of business, law, education, and sustainability, with additional appointments made for the September 2023 intake. Staff were aware of mandatory and optional training available to them which included sessions on equality, diversity and inclusion and referenced, for example, Universal Design for Learning. primarily. Staff were also aware of the creation of an AI-Integration Committee and discussion on the use of AI within teaching and assessment, alongside ensuring academic integrity was maintained. There are academic staff meetings where topics relevant to learning and teaching are presented. There is involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance, but individual programmes might benefit from more explicit engagement of external expertise and reference points to continue to support the development of pedagogically enhanced programmes.

11   The BUiD Accomplishment and Career Excellence (B.ACE) Centre has made noteworthy progress in enhancing career support and guidance for both students and alumni. Initiatives have been implemented including a dedicated careers section has been added to BUiD's website since October 2022, providing resources for undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as alumni. [https://www.buid.ac.ae/buid-achievement-career-excellence/] The Commission for Academic Accreditation requires that students participate in internships and BUiD has various mechanisms that support this expectation. For example, the careers fair which has been held annually since 2022, with positive student feedback. The need for additional career fairs will be assessed based on demand . Students noted the value of this in relation to securing internships.

12   Career development workshops have been launched, with initial sessions focused on resume/CV writing and the use of artificial intelligence in the job application process, including sessions specifically tailored for undergraduate law, IT and Business students .

13   New academic staff are inducted to BUiD's values and policies, with emphasis on diversity, equality and inclusivity . Mandatory University-wide training sessions on diversity and inclusion awareness have been organised and staff confirmed their engagement with the training.

14   The Equality and Diversity policy was approved by the Senate in June 2022. The Equality and Diversity committee membership includes academic staff from each faculty, one administrative staff and one student.

15   The Marketing, Admissions, and Student Services (MASS) team have been working on refining the election process for student representatives, with a focus on ensuring broader peer representation. In instances where nominations are not received, academic staff are encouraged to support the process by motivating students to self-nominate. Students confirmed this and confirmed that actions taken because of their feedback are implemented.

16   OQIE organised an online information session for student representatives in 2022 and 2023 . Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, the session could not be held in 2024. However, an information booklet was distributed to the newly elected student representatives for that cohort. Additionally, plans for an annual Student Representative Evaluation Survey have been established with the first survey successfully conducted this Year . Feedback from the evaluation survey is intended to inform future enhancements to student representation.

Development of quality assurance and enhancement procedures

17   BUiD remains firmly committed to advancing quality assurance and fostering an inclusive, innovative, and student-centred environment that supports academic excellence, impactful research, and student success. This was evident through policies and staff development on processes to support students with disabilities.

18   There is an intention to continue implementation of annual operational plans across academic and administrative units to monitor performance, ensure quality, and align outcomes with institutional goals, and undertakes curriculum review processes to ensure alignment with industry trends, merging knowledge areas, digital technologies, and the needs of a diverse student body, with increased engagement from external stakeholders. There is involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance, but individual programmes might benefit from more explicit engagement on external expertise and reference points to continue to support the development of pedagogically enhanced programmes.

19   The review team were told the BUiD will continue investing in technological solutions to improve the teaching and learning experience and streamline operations. Peer observation of teaching is undertaken, and new staff are allocated mentors, which supports enhancement of the learning experience.

20   BUiD also plans to improve student involvement in university governance, ensuring that student representatives play a more active role in decision-making. BUiD has recognised that representatives need to have opportunity to discuss policies, for example, to inform the contribution of the representatives attending Senate or Board meetings.

21   The review team heard that BUiD will continue to enhance its institutional research capacity by supporting faculty development, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration, and aligning research efforts with national and regional development agendas. Staff confirmed that they benchmark their provision against other regional providers.

22   The rapid and intense development of AI is driving BUiD to explore innovative ways to integrate AI and other advanced technologies into learning, assessment, research and administrative processes. This will ensure that BUiD remains responsive to the evolving needs of students and faculty in a rapidly changing educational landscape. However, BUiD has yet to fully determine underpinning policies such as on the ethical use of AI, for example.

23   BUiD will continue to optimise its infrastructure and resources, and is engaged in discussions with DIAC (Dubai International Academic City)/TECOM (the TECOM Group portfolio consists of 10 business districts catering to six knowledge-based economic sectors, including design, education, manufacturing, media, science, and technology) to expand facilities within Academic City, enhancing the academic and support spaces available to the student community.

Findings from the observations of facilities and learning resources

24   The review visit provided an opportunity to view the physical facilities available at the University, including the classrooms, laboratories and other learning spaces, the library, and social spaces. There are teaching rooms of varying size and layout, and there is sufficient office space for staff. These include an auditorium, seminar rooms and examination spaces. The reviewers saw engineering laboratories. The facilities were well maintained and had white boards and overhead projectors. The buildings were equipped with appropriate health and safety equipment and access to all levels was available via lifts. There is a dedicated student services team, who assist with providing additional support to students with disabilities. BUiD is responsive to student needs, for example providing a group study space in response to feedback.