



RECOGNITION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

POLICY

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Relevant legislation	Higher Education Act 2008 Higher Education Regulations 2009 Revised Edition of the Laws (Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2016 Higher Education (Amendment) Act 2017
Related FHEC documents: procedures / guidelines, etc.	Fiji Higher Education Strategy 0-1-M: Assessment of Applications for Recognition of Higher Education Institutions: Assessor's Guide 0-1-ToR: Terms of reference for the Recognition Committee 0-1a-Form: Application for Recognition 0-1b-Form: Recognition Application Checklist Schedule 7 – HER 2009 – Application Fees Schedule 9 & 10 – HER 2009

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1.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE

Recognition of all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) operating in Fiji is a legal requirement. This policy sets out the principles and requirements for recognition by the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC). Recognition is designed to provide assurance to stakeholders that an institution has the basic infrastructure appropriate to its purpose to be able to deliver quality higher education services that meet the needs of the nation and international standards.

2.0 POLICY

Assessment by Recognition Committee

2.1 The process of assessing applications for recognition shall be conducted by a Recognition Committee which shall be appointed by the Fiji Higher Education Commission.

Criteria for recognition

2.2 Institutions applying for recognition must demonstrate they meet appropriate standards against the following criteria prescribed by regulation:

- 2.2.1 Legal status;
- 2.2.2 Goals and culture;
- 2.2.3 Corporate governance and organisational arrangements;
- 2.2.4 Academic governance and quality assurance;
- 2.2.5 Finances and management;
- 2.2.6 Staffing; and
- 2.2.7 Students' tuition and grievances arrangements.

2.3 For ease and transparency of process, these criteria will be broken down into a series of assessment criteria and assessment outcomes.

2.4 From time to time, the Commission may set other criteria appropriate to the type of institution for which application for recognition is made. In particular, the Commission may require demonstration of the capability for collecting and reporting details of institutional performance.

2.5 Details of how all criteria are assessed shall be made public in an Assessor's Guide for Recognition.

Process

2.6 Applicants for recognition are required to use the prescribed application form.

2.7 An application for Recognition must be processed within sixty (60) days of lodgement.

- 2.8 Recognition processes are to be effective, efficient and responsive to the changing higher education environment and to the changing needs of institutions, students, staff and stakeholders.
- 2.9 The Commission may, in agreement with the HEI concerned, determine that it is appropriate to undertake the recognition and registration process for that HEI as a continuous process.

Decisions

- 2.10 The final decision on recognition is made by the Commission following the receipt of a recommendation by the Recognition Committee. The Commission shall inform the institution in writing of the decision and make available a copy of the assessment report.
- 2.11 The decision of the Commission may be to:
- a) Approve recognition without conditions;
 - b) Approve recognition with conditions to be met in a specified time-frame; or
 - c) Not approve recognition.
- 2.12 An institution shall comply with the requirements pertaining to the outcome of its recognition application.
- 2.13 In cases where the Commission does not approve the recognition, the institution may make a representation to the Commission for reconsideration of its application.
- 2.14 An applicant that is not satisfied with the decision after reconsideration may appeal the decision to the Appeals Tribunal.

Requirement to cease operations if recognition is declined

- 2.15 If the institution whose application has been declined was operating at the time this decision was made, the institution shall cease operation by the specified deadline and shall not resume operations until after recognition has been granted.
- 2.16 When determining a specified date for an institution ceasing operations the Commission will give due consideration to protecting the interests of existing students at that institution.
- 2.17 Non-compliance by an institution with the Commission's requirements to cease operation shall be reported to the Police as a contravention of the law.

Issuing of certificates

- 2.18 All prescribed fees must be paid before a Recognition Certificate issued.
- 2.19 Recognition is not renewable and a certificate of recognition will be issued only once.

Reporting

2.20 The Director will provide regular reports to the Commission on the recognition process.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Quality education provision is fundamental both to the delivery of the Higher Education Strategy and to protect the interest of learners undertaking post-compulsory study. The recognition process is the first stage in assuring the Commission that a prospective institution can contribute to building an educated and globally competitive Fiji.
- 3.2 While designed to meet legal requirements, the process is also designed as far as possible to be an enabling one to assist prospective HEIs to meet those requirements.
- 3.3 Recognition is a precursor to registration as a higher education institution and in some cases, may best be viewed as a continuing process.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

Higher Education Institutions	An educational institution in or operating in Fiji that provides award-conferring post-secondary education or provides educational support services for students of other higher education institutions including overseas institutions, including but not limited to: a) technical and vocational education and training centres; b) information technology centres; c) secretarial schools; d) language schools; e) hospitality training centres; f) educational agencies; g) caregiving training providers; h) performing arts and sports academies; i) religious educational institutions; j) colleges; and k) universities.
Standards	Approved outcomes that act as standards against which higher education institutions are assessed.

5.0 APPROVAL BY THE CHAIRPERSON, FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION



Dr Milika Sobey
Chairperson
Fiji Higher Education Commission

Date

22/06/17