



POLICY

REGISTRATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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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 0-2-M: Assessment of Applications for Registration of Higher Education Institutions: Assessor's Guide 0-2-ToR: Terms of reference for the Registration Committee 0-2a-Form: Application for Registration 0-2b-Form: Registration Application Checklist 0-2c-Form: Application for Conversion of Registration 0-2d-Form: Application for Amendment 0-2e-Form: Registration Site Visit Checklist 0-2a-Diagram: Registration Flow Chart 0-2b-Diagram: Conversion of Registration Flow Chart Schedule 7 – HER 2009 – Application Fees Schedule 8 – HER 2009 – Registration Conversion Fees

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1.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE

Registration of all Higher Education Institutions operating in Fiji is a legal requirement. This policy sets out the principles and requirements for registration by the Fiji Higher Education Commission. Registration is a process of institutional accreditation designed to provide assurance to stakeholders that an institution is properly equipped to fulfil its purpose in the provision of quality higher education and training. In doing so, it will contribute towards the provision of the skills and expertise necessary for economic growth and the development of a knowledge-based society.

2.0 POLICY

Registration and eligibility for funding

- 2.1 This policy applies to all HEIs operating in Fiji. Only Registered Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are eligible to receive grants from the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC).
- 2.2 The registration of an institution will be for 5 years after which it will be renewed, subject to the criteria existing at the time of the renewal and the institution's general performance during the previous registration period. Each subsequent renewal will not exceed 5 years.

Application for registration

- 2.3 An application for initial registration can only be made by a recognised HEI and should be on the prescribed form.
- 2.4 An application for renewal of registration should be made on the prescribed form 12 months before the date of expiry of registration. HEIs will be prompted by the FHEC Secretariat.
- 2.5 An application for Registration must be processed within sixty (60) days of lodgement. Any amendments to applications must be made within 30 days of lodgement on the prescribed form.

Public notification of applications

- 2.6 The FHEC will notify the public of applications for registration, advising that anyone may make an objection within 21 days and how to do so.

- 2.7 Institutions applying for registration must demonstrate they meet appropriate standards against the following broad criteria which meet requirements prescribed by legislation:
- 2.7.1 Legal status;
 - 2.7.2 Management and finance;
 - 2.7.3 Teaching and learning;
 - 2.7.4 Students and staff; and
 - 2.7.5 Infrastructure and environment.
- 2.8 For ease and transparency of process, these criteria will be broken down into a series of assessment criteria and assessment outcomes and made public in an Assessor's Guide for Registration.
- 2.9 From time to time, the Commission may set other criteria appropriate to the type of institution for which application for registration is made. In particular, the Commission may require demonstration of the capability for collecting and reporting details of institutional performance.
- 2.10 Any revisions to the criteria will be published on the Commission's website at least two months before they come into effect.
- 2.11 The process of assessing institutions for registration shall be conducted by a committee appointed by the Higher Education Commission. As the Commission determines, this may or may not be the same Committee as the Recognition Committee, having regard to:
- a) Expediting the process for providers evaluated as low risk and meeting a national priority under the Higher Education Strategy;
 - b) The avoidance of collecting the same information more than once;
 - c) The work load of Committee members; and
 - d) The need to maintain the integrity of the overall process.
- 2.12 The process for assessing institutions for registration is to be transparent, effective and responsive to the changing higher education environment and to the changing needs of the nation as well as of institutions, students, staff and stakeholders and may, therefore, be revised at appropriate intervals.

Decisions

- 2.13 The final decision on registration will be made by the Commission following the receipt of a recommendation by the Registration Committee.
- 2.14 The decision of the Commission may be to:
- a) Approve registration without conditions,
 - b) Approve provisional registration with conditions to be met in a specified time-frame, or
 - c) Not approve registration.

- 2.15 The Commission shall inform the institution in writing of the decision and make available a copy of the assessment report. A Certificate of Registration will be issued to the HEI if registration is approved without conditions. A Certificate of Provisional Registration will be issued if the Commission requires conditions to be met (as per 2.14 (b) above).
- 2.16 Certificates will be issued in accordance with the Higher Education Regulations 2009 (s24, s25). All prescribed fees must be paid before certificates are issued.
- 2.17 Once an HEI has been granted Registration, this means that the same as achieved Institutional Accreditation.

Conversion of registration

- 2.18 An institution shall comply with the requirements pertaining to the outcome of its provisional registration application.
- 2.19 Having complied, the HEI may apply on the prescribed form for conversion of its provisional registration to full registration within sixty (60) days of being notified by the Commission.
- 2.20 The final decision on applications for the conversion of registration will be made by the Commission on advice from the Registration Committee.
- 2.21 The decision of the Commission may be to:
- a) Approve registration;
 - b) Decline registration, explaining the grounds on which it does so; or
 - c) Grant an extension of provisional registration, listing conditions to be met within a specified period.

Requirements of registered institutions

- 2.22 Registered institutions must display their registration status as required by the Higher Education Regulations 2009 (s28).
- 2.23 Registered institutions must:
- 2.23.1 Notify the Commission of any major changes to the organisation or its programmes using the prescribed form;
 - 2.23.2 Offer only awards for programmes approved or recognised by the Commission;
 - 2.23.3 Publish a calendar or prospectus with accurate details of all programmes offered;
 - 2.23.4 Keep comprehensive records of student's academic achievements and make transcripts and certificates available on request;
 - 2.23.5 Provide information to the Commission as required; and
 - 2.23.6 Comply with periodic assessments, audits, reviews and investigations as required by the Commission.

Revocation of registration

2.24 In the event of proven serious breaches of these requirements, or serious legislative non-compliance, the Commission, having taken advice from the Review Committee, may revoke registration. Before making a final decision, they must:

2.24.1 Provide at least 3 months' notice; and

2.24.2 Hear and consider representations from the HEI concerned and other interested parties.

2.25 If a final decision to revoke registration is made, the HEI must cease trading at a date to be specified by the Commission. In setting this date, the Commission will give due consideration to protecting the interests of existing students at that institution.

2.26 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.

Right of appeal

2.27 An applicant that is not satisfied with a decision of the Commission with respect to registration may appeal the decision to the Appeals Tribunal.

Reporting

2.28 The Director will provide regular reports to the Commission on the registration process.

2.29 A list of Registered institutions will be maintained on the Commission's website. From time to time, the Commission will publish in the Gazette and at least one daily newspaper a list of all registered HEIs operating in Fiji.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The registration of higher education institutions is a pivotal process in the proper regulation of the higher education sector, especially in setting expected standards of educational provision and ensuring HEIs have the capacity and capability to provide them.

3.2 The policy is designed to ensure that the assessment process of registration is transparent and fair and proportionate to the size and mission of the Institution. It is also designed to ensure due regard is given to the principles of good governance in the operation of institutions.

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
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	<p>education institutions including overseas institutions, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
Institutional accreditation	Registration completes the institutional accreditation process which is designed to provide assurance to stakeholders that an institution is properly equipped to fulfil its purpose in the provision of quality higher education and training.
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