

## Terms of Reference

Version Control	
Document Number	0-1-ToR
Status (draft version / approved)	Final
Policy owner	Team Leader – Quality Assurance
Effective from	Date of approval by the Director
Review date	+3 years

Related FHEC documents: procedures / guidelines, etc.	Policy 0-1 – Policy on Recognition of Higher Education Institutions 0-1-M: Assessment of Applications for Recognition of Higher Education Institutions: Assessor's Guide 0-1a-Form: Application for Recognition 0-1b-Form: Recognition Application Checklist Schedule 7 – HER 2009 – Application Fees Schedule 9 & 10 – HER2009
---	--

### 1.0 Establishment of the Committee

- 1.1 The name of the committee shall be the Recognition Committee.
- 1.2 The Recognition Committee is established in accordance with section 8 of the Higher Education Act 2008 as prescribed by s11(1) of the Higher Education Regulations 2009.
- 1.3 The purpose of the committee is to assess and determine applications for recognition by higher education institutions and make recommendations accordingly to the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC).

- 1.4 There shall be four members of the committee appointed by FHEC. They may be from within or outside the Commission.
- 1.5 In considering the membership of such a committee, the Commission must be satisfied that members have:
  - 1.5.1 Relevant knowledge and experience working in or interacting with the higher education sector; and/or
  - 1.5.2 Relevant knowledge in financial management.
- 1.6 From time to time, the Commission may choose to establish a single committee to review applications for recognition and registration from a Higher Education Institution (HEI) in which case the committee shall be known as the Recognition and Registration Committee.
- 1.7 The initial appointment by the Commission is for a term of two years. Members are eligible for reappointment, but may not serve more than three consecutive terms.
- 1.8 A committee member will cease to be a member if he or she:
  - 1.8.1 Resigns from the committee;
  - 1.8.2 Fails to attend 3 consecutive meetings without providing apologies to the chairperson;
  - 1.8.3 Breaches confidentiality; or
  - 1.8.4 Fails to declare a conflict of interest.
- 1.9 Any vacant position will be filled by appointment of a replacement by the Commission.

## **2.0 Appointment of the Chairperson**

- 2.1 The chairperson shall be appointed by the Commission for a term of two years. The chairperson is eligible for reappointment.

## **3.0 Responsibilities of the Committee**

- 3.1 To review all matters relating to an application for recognition by an institution and determine the institution's eligibility for recognition in relation to the following:
  - 3.1.1 Legal status including the legality of agency arrangements;
  - 3.1.2 Ownership;
  - 3.1.3 History as an educational institution (where applicable);
  - 3.1.4 Goals including vision and mission;
  - 3.1.5 Institution's culture;
  - 3.1.6 Corporate governance;
  - 3.1.7 Organizational structure;

- 3.1.8 Academic governance;
- 3.1.9 Quality assurance;
- 3.1.10 Finances;
- 3.1.11 Management;
- 3.1.12 Staffing; and
- 3.1.13 Students' tuition and grievances arrangements.

Plus any other specific criteria set and published by the Commission appropriate to the type of institution for which application for recognition is made.

- 3.2 To provide a written report to the Commission of the assessment made on each institution including its recommendation on whether recognition ought to be granted.
- 3.3 To advise on any terms and conditions to be met as a condition of granting provisional recognition (see section 4.8 below).

#### **4.0 Meeting procedures and process**

- 4.1 The chairperson shall call a meeting as and when necessary.
- 4.2 The secretariat of the FHEC shall provide secretarial support including meeting coordination, preparation of the agenda in consultation with the chairperson and distribution of materials and drafting of minutes.
- 4.3 Three members shall form a quorum.
- 4.4 Persons from within or outside the Commission may be invited to attend the meetings at the request of the chairperson on behalf of the Committee for advice and assistance as necessary. They have no voting rights and may be requested to leave at any time by the chairperson.
- 4.5 The process to be followed in evaluating applications shall be as set out in the current version of the *"Assessment of Applications for Recognition of Higher Education Institutions: Assessor's Guide"*.
- 4.6 In processing an application for recognition from an institution the committee must focus on the purpose of recognition, which is to ascertain that a higher education institution operating in Fiji is properly equipped to fulfil its mission. An institution must demonstrate that it has the necessary infrastructure on an appropriate site and that it has the necessary teaching staff to offer and sustain the programmes it is proposing to offer for a pre-determined period. In assessing institutions for recognition, the committee should be mindful of the fact that institutions vary in size, complexity and purpose.

4.7 Each committee member is entitled to one vote on all matters coming before the committee. In the case of an equality of votes, the chair shall have an additional casting or deciding vote.

4.8 The recommendation by the Committee to the Commission may be to:

4.8.1 Approve recognition without conditions;

4.8.2 Approve provisional recognition with conditions to be met in a specified time-frame; or

4.8.3 Not approve recognition.

#### **5.0 Conflict of interest disclosure**

5.1 Members must declare conflicts of interest prior to the discussion of an institution's application. They must absent themselves from the discussion.

#### **6.0 Confidentiality**

6.1 Each member must maintain the confidentiality, security and integrity of all materials during and after their term of office.

#### **7.0 Sitting allowance**

7.1 Members who are external to the Commission and are not employed by government ministries may claim a sitting allowance in accordance with the Commission's policy and guidelines.

#### **8.0 Amendment to Terms of Reference**

8.1 These terms of reference may be amended by the FHEC from time to time as the need arises.

#### **9.0 APPROVAL BY THE DIRECTOR, FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION**



**Linda Aumua**  
Director  
Fiji Higher Education Commission

22:08:17

Date