GULF UNIVERSITY
الجــامعــة الخــليجيــة

Title: Certification, Authentication and Retention Procedures

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Review: The procedures are subject to periodic reviews as per amendments of Certification, Authentication and Retention Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to describe the procedures to be followed for the certification process at Gulf University.

2. Scope

This document applies to all certificates issued by Gulf University.

3. Acronyms

A&R	Admission and Registration
BQA	Education and Training Quality Authority
GU	Gulf University
HEC	Higher Education Council
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
VPAA	Vice President for Academic Affairs

4. Definitions

Academic Transcript: An academic transcript is an official document containing a record of the students' academic work. The transcript documents the courses taken, noting performance in those courses, any equivalences, any transfer of credits and withdrawals and dismissals.

Certificate: A certificate is a document which attests to the competence of the student named on it in respect of the outcomes of the qualification to which it is related.

Course: A course is composed of teaching and learning activities, which guide and support students towards the attainment of a set of learning outcomes. A course is the smallest unit of teaching and learning activities at Gulf University.

Graduand: A graduand is a student, who has met all the requirements for a qualification to be awarded but on whom the degree has not yet been conferred.

Graduate: A graduate is a student on whom a degree has been conferred.

Graduation: A graduation is the conferring of a degree on students. This usually takes the form of an official ceremony. Degrees may be conferred upon a student without s/he actually being present at a graduation ceremony.

Student File: A file contains all the documents related to the student, which are specified by the Higher Education Council.

Notional Learning Hours: Notional learning hours describe time allocated to study. This study time can comprise formal classroom instruction, time spent in self-study (for example, reading and revising notes) and time spent on assessment. Notional learning hours are calculated by those with experience in the subject area by envisaging the time that the average student would spend on tasks required by a course or program.

NQF Credit: A NQF credit is a measurement of learning at specific levels of the National Qualifications Framework. It is assumed that one credit of learning will result from ten 'notional' hours of study. Credits are assigned to courses, programs and qualifications. The credits assigned to qualifications comply with Bahrain National Qualifications Framework.

NQF Level: Bahrain National Qualifications Framework comprises ten levels. Each level signifies a stage of achievement with respect to learning, ranging from the less to the more complex and demanding.

NQF Level Descriptors: NQF Level descriptors provide a general, shared understanding of learning and achievement at each of the ten levels of the NQF. Each descriptor relates to generic statements that describe the expected level of achievement with respect to:

- Knowledge (theoretical understanding and practical application).
- Skills (generic, problem solving, analytical skill and communication, ICT, numeracy).
- Competence (autonomy, responsibility, and context).

Level descriptors are used to map qualifications on the NQF and were designed to be used across a wide range of learning contexts.

Program: A program is a carefully designed and structured series of teaching and learning activities, which support and guide students towards the achievement of the intended learning outcomes set for it.

Program Intended Learning Outcomes: Program Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) describe the knowledge, skills and attributes envisioned to be achievable by students who have followed a program of study. Demonstration of achievement of the PILOs is a necessary requirement for the award of a qualification associated with a program.

Program Requirements: Program requirements describe all the courses which must be passed in order to attain a qualification. Program requirements may also detail the order in which courses must be taken.

Qualification: A qualification recognizes and certifies the learning achieved as a result of following a program of study. It, therefore, signifies and certifies the achievement of the PILOs by a student, who has followed the program.

Verification of Information Letter: A verification of information letter is a requirement of the Higher Education Council in the Kingdom of Bahrain. A verification of information letter is provided for each student registered at Gulf University by the Unit of Admission and Registration. The letter contains a statement that all information it contains are correct – i.e. that it has been verified.

Wall Certificate: A wall certificate attests that a qualification has been awarded to a graduate by Gulf University. It is marked by a serial number and is written in Arabic/English. A wall certificate cannot be reissued or replaced.

5.   Procedure Details

The Unit of A&R shall take issue the following documents in regard to graduation:

- Graduation Certificates (Wall certificates).
- Issuing Acknowledgement of Graduation letters.
- Official Transcripts.

5.1   Certificate Accuracy and Validation:

- The Unit of A&R shall maintain a secure archive room with a safe for the stock of unissued certificates along with both the issued and the canceled ones and ensures that access to this room is limited.
- The Unit of A&R shall take protective measures in every step through the certification process cycle against any fraud by:
  a) defining the special paper, purchasing and keeping its stock.
  b) handling the batch of special papers before, during and after printing the certificate templates by the contracted external provider(s).
  c) defining and securing the provision of serial numbers (approved by VPAA) into the certificates and maintaining the log file.
  d) defining and securing the process of embedding watermark (approved by VPAA) into the certificates.
  e) defining and securing the provision of barcoding of the certificates (approved by VPAA).
  f) monitoring and controlling the process embossing the certificates with GU stamp.

5.2   At the beginning of each semester:

5.2.1   Unit of Admission and Registration shall:

- identify students, who shall be eligible to graduate provided they successfully meet the assessment requirements of the courses for which they are registered in the semester. In order to be eligible for graduation, students must have met all Program Requirements related to the qualification, which is to be awarded with the exception of the courses for which they are currently registered.
- check for completeness of the file of each student identified as eligible to graduate.
- provide lists of students eligible for graduation to relevant Deans for confirmation.
- inform students about their eligibility for graduation upon meeting assessment requirements of courses for which they are currently registered.
- deal with any queries or appeals from students, who do not appear on the 'eligible for graduation' list.

5.2.2   Deans of Colleges shall:

- check the list provided by the Unit of A&R against their own records.
- confirm to the Unit of A&R that students on the list are eligible to graduate upon meeting assessment requirements of the courses for which they are currently registered.

5.3   At the End of Each Semester:

5.3.1   Deans of Colleges shall:

- ensure that assessment is complete and assessment results of each student are checked and recorded accurately.

5.3.2   Unit of Admission and Registration shall:

- check the results of the students on the 'eligible for graduation' list.
- remove any student from the list, who has not met the assessment requirements of the courses taken in the semester.
- forward the revised 'eligible for graduation' list to Deans for final check.

5.3.3 **Deans of Colleges shall:**

- check, confirm and sign the revised 'eligible for graduation' list.

5.3.4 **Unit of Admission and Registration shall:**

- provides the list of students eligible to graduate to the library and to the Finance Department.

5.3.5 **Library shall:**

- check that all materials recorded as 'on loan' against the name of students on the 'eligible for graduation' list has been returned.
- inform the Finance Department of any fines and charges against delayed and lost materials.
- provide 'library clearance' to the Unit of Admission and Registration for each student on the 'eligible for graduation' list.

5.3.6 **Finance Department shall:**

- check the names of students on the 'eligible for graduation' list for outstanding fees and charges.
- ensure that all outstanding fees or charges are paid.
- provide 'finance clearance' to the Unit of A&R for each student on the 'eligible for graduation' list.

5.3.7 **Unit of Admission and Registration shall:**

- submit a list of students, who have met all academic requirements and have been cleared by the Library and Finance Department to University Council for approving their graduation.

5.3.8 **University Council shall:**

- approve the graduation of students on the 'eligible to graduate' list. This list shall then become the 'graduation list'.

5.4 **Unit of Admission and Registration:**

The following steps shall be taken:

- The registration officer shall request for number of wall certificates and official transcripts as per the graduation list.
- The Head of A&R shall approve the request and shall provide them with requested number of blank wall certificates and official transcripts.
- The registration officer shall print both the wall certificates and official transcripts, followed by sending them to the Head of A&R for review and signature.

- The Head of A&R shall sign the wall certificates and the transcripts, and shall send them to relevant deans, together with "Acknowledgement of Graduation letters."
- Deans shall sign and send the wall certificates, transcripts together with "Acknowledgement of Graduation letters" to the Unit of A&R that forward all documents to the President of the University.
- The President of the University shall sign all documents followed by sending them back to the Unit of A&R.
- The Unit of A&R shall request for number of GU golden stamps from the VPAA as per graduation list.
- The VPAA shall approve the request followed by providing with the requested number of golden stamps.
- The Unit of A&R shall fix the stamps on the wall certificates, shall stamp the official transcripts and the "Acknowledgment of Graduation" letters with GU stamp.
- The Unit of A&R shall send all completed documents to HEC, for authentication, with a formal letter.
- The Unit of A&R (GU representative) shall collect the "HEC approved" documents.
- Upon receiving documents, the Unit of A&R (Registration Department) shall:
  a) change the student status in AIMS from "Pending Graduate" to "Graduate".
  b) change the student status in the list of graduates from "Send to HEC" to "Approved by HEC."
  c) retain copies of all certificates in Student Files.
  d) scan all the Graduate Certificates and save them as soft copies.
  e) hand-deliver all Graduate Certificates to the student(s) or to their authorized nominee(s).
  f) maintain a logbook that contains student information, such as Student Name, Student ID, Specialization, List of the Document that has been delivered and the information of the authorized person that received documents, if any.

5.5 Duplicate Certificate:

- Graduates who have irretrievably lost their original certificates, shall apply for duplicates with a declaration that their originals have been lost or destroyed.
- The Unit of A&R shall check all original documents carefully before issuing any duplicate.
- The Unit of A&R shall issue duplicates only to the graduates to whom they were awarded.
- The Unit of A&R shall consider all originals as "Invalid" once the duplicates are issued by GU, therefore, shall not verify them as authentic document.

5.6 Authentication:

In case of a request for authentication of certificate(s), the Unit of A&R shall:

- review student log and check all information such as student ID, specialization, list of documents that have been delivered, and match the submitted certificate.
- examine and match the submitted certificate with the retained HEC approved copy.
- examine and match the submitted certificate with the scanned soft copy in electronic system.
- accordingly authenticate the certificate as "original" and stamp it or decline with reason(s).

6. Responsibilities

Students and Graduates are responsible for:

- Following this document appropriately

Deans are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all faculty members are fully informed of this document.
- Appropriate implementation of this document

Unit of Admission and Registration is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all students and graduates are fully informed of this document.
- Appropriate implementation of this document

The Finance Department is responsible for:

- Appropriate implementation of this document

The University Library is responsible for:

- Appropriate implementation of this document

University Council is responsible for:

- Approving the graduation for students in the 'eligible to graduate' list.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for:

- Appropriate implementation of this document

The University Policy Development and Review Committee is responsible for:

- Systematic review of the effectiveness of this document.

7. Related Policies

- Certification, Authentication and Retention Policy

8. Related Procedures

- No related procedures.

9. Related References and Standards

BQA	Institutional Review Handbook
BQA	National Qualifications Framework Handbook
BQA	Programs-within-College Reviews Handbook
HEC	Academic Regulations