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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS OF CANADA AND UAE

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ABSTRACT

This paper looks at literature studies spanning 14 years of research related to Quality Assurance (QA)within Canada, North America and Middle East and makes a comparative study between UAE and Canadian QA standards in higher education. Methodology proceeds by benchmarking10 evaluation criteria and their parameters in the *Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance* and creating aconceptual framework. Gaps in literature and UAE Quality Assurance STANDARDS 2011 are evaluated against this conceptual frame work and recommendations made for policy advocacy. Findings show gaps existing in severalcriteria and parameters'when reviewed against STANDARDS ranging from'*moderate'*to '*strong'*.Results show scope for improvementwithin Higher Education Institutions and the Government in criteria and parameters, which include '*Program Learning Objectives', 'Recognition of Alternate Criteria for Admission', 'Prior Learning', 'Innovative Content in Programs and Curricula', 'Program Structure', 'Overall Mode of Delivery', 'Human, Capital and Financial Resources', 'Graduate Resources', 'Applied Research Expertise*'.

***Key words**:* Quality Assurance (QA), Evaluation Criteria, STANDARDS 2011, Indicators, Parameters, Course file, Learning Outcome, Accreditation, Log file

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Study

This Study looks at Quality Assurance (QA) standards existing in UAE and benchmarking those with

10 Quality Assurance Indicators *or* Evaluation Criteria existing within the Canadian Quality Assurance mechanisms based on North American QA standards since UAE Standards have so far mostly been based on North American QA mechanisms. This study proceeds by looking at gaps within related literature and comparing existing gaps to these parameters and benchmarks.

1.2Scope and Limitations

This is a review paper based onthe study of literature existing on QA spanning across Canada, North America and Middle East during the 14 years. This paper mostly compares QA benchmarks of Canada with UAE, with a focusof its review and research devoted to Canadian QA within Higher Education.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because there are very limited studies conducted in QA related toHigher Education in UAE if not in the Middle East benchmarked to global quality assurance systems such as Ontario - one of the well-known, time tested and proven Standards of Quality Assurance in higher education emulated by various countries around the world.

1.4 Operational Definition of Terms in the Study

Quality Assurance – Is a systematic monitoring and evaluation of the various aspects of a project, service, or facility to ensure that standards of quality are being met (Merriam-Webster, 2018)

Indicators– Is a pointer on a dial or scale (Merriam-Webster, 2018)

Parameters– Is a limit and boundary set—usually used in plural (Merriam-Webster, 2018)

Criteria– A standard on which a judgment or decision may be based (Merriam-Webster, 2018)

Benchmark– Something that serves as a standard by which others may be measured or judged; a point of reference from which measurements may be made (Merriam-Webster, 2018)

Standard– Something set up and established by authority as a rule for the measure of quantity, weight, extent, value, or quality (Merriam-Webster, 2018)

STANDARDS 2011 – Quality Assurance Standards and guidelines set by the UAE Higher Education Authority – to be followed by all institutions of Higher Educations in the UAE

Theoretical – Relating to theory, abstract, hypothetical (Merriam-Webster, 2018)

Conceptual– Relating to, or consisting of concepts (Merriam-Webster, 2018)

Framework- A basic conceptual structure (as of ideas), a skeletal, openwork, or structural frame (Merriam-Webster, 2018)

Learning Outcomes– Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning (Kennedy, Hylan & Ryan, Western University)

Stakeholders– A person, group or organization that has interest or concern in an organization (Business Dictionary, 2018)

Accreditation- To recognize (an educational institution) as maintaining standards that qualify the graduates for admission to higher or more specialized institutions or for professional practice (Merriam-Webster, 2018)

Course File– Is a hard file or a soft file where a faculty or instructor shares / stores all relevant material pertaining to his / her course such as current and previous syllabi, teaching material used, assessments question and answer keys, high-medium-low student samples of corrected answer sheets of each assessments, qualitative analysis of class performance, assessment of learning outcome achievement, instructor review and student feedback.

Log File– This is a file existing within a course file, which records bi-semester feedback given to a faculty by the department chair on completeness and accuracy of his / her course file. This formative feedback is vital and enables the faculty to take corrective timely action on the course file.

Assessment– The wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students (Education Reform, November, 2015)

2. Review of Related Literature and Studies

2.1 Theoretical Framework of the Study - Research Review

The theoretical framework is based on the QA standards of Canada emerging from*Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance* andon the United Arab Emirates (UAE)*2011 STANDARDS* QAguidelines as reflected in their original documents and as demonstrated in the literature reviewed hereunder.

Quality means different things to different people while quality assurance means a lot of things. It means internal assessment by the institution itself and means external assessment by an

accrediting 3rd body. Confusion arises in the very definition of what "quality" means to different stakeholders within and outside the institution who have vested interests - upper management, government, employers, accrediting agencies, public, faculty, and students. It is important to arrive at a consensus on QA so that evaluation of QA becomes meaningful to all. A fresh view of quality that has become the subject of increasing attention within the past decade focuses on the nature of student experience and engagement. Michael L. Skolnik from University of Toronto, 2010 in his study of *'Quality Assurance in Higher Education as a Political Process'*, draws upon his own experiences and observations including upon the findings of others based on literature reviewed and critical analysis, comes to employ the "responsive model" of evaluation that could make quality assurance more effective in improving educational quality. The "responsive model" considers evaluation as a collaborative process that takes out issues brought forth by all stakeholders including political stakeholders. According to Skolnik, quality must be a choice - one among various options offered by various stakeholders or a consensus. This is a limitation of Skolnik's research as quality can never be a choice or a consensus. Quality can be all of the various perceptions and meanings offered by the vast number of stakeholders who are important, since quality can mean different things to different stakeholders and each meaning of quality may be important. So why limit quality to one meaning of it or try to drive a mid-path to quality. Accepting all meanings of quality enriches it value without diminishing it.

Jody Mason, 2015, in her paper-*'"Make Them Up and Ignore Them"?Learning Outcome and Literary Studies in Canada'* if not explicitly but implicitly argues against Bloom's Taxonomy. The objective of the study is to lay out a quality assurance framework of Canada and understand learning outcomes within it for "harmonizing skills and competencies at the subject or program level".Although this paper throws light on the importance on evaluating learning outcomes, Jody Mason's is a review and opinion paper based on the literature reviewed and is the author's own opinion without Bloom's Taxonomy being explicitly referred to, which is it's foremost criticism.

Michael L. Skolnik, University of Toronto, Canada, 2015, in yet anotherresearch paper *'How do quality assurance systems accommodate the difference between academic and applied higher education?'* seeks to shed some light on the possible connection between quality

assurance practices and institutional diversity by examining arrangements for quality assurance in higher education systems that consist of two distinct sectors, one having a more academic orientation and the other a more applied orientation. Thirteen national and sub-national jurisdictions' - Alberta, Australia, Austria, British Columbia, Denmark, Finland, Flanders, Florida, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, and Ontario QA documents were examined. This study employed empirical research and proceeded by examination of QA benchmarks based on documents produced by these 13 national and sub-national jurisdictions. Important outcomes of this paper concluded that: "National systems of Quality Assessments may bring with them the "risks of homogenizations (Bauer and Kogan, 1997, p. 141). A common practice in quality assurance in higher education is to start with articulation - this approach would be dysfunctional to assess the applied sector institutions with expected learning outcomes and then to assess how well the educational processes contribute to the achievement of those learning outcomes". The author has done a detailed comparative analysis of QA frameworks of Australia, Denmark, Netherlands, Finland, Canada and other countries and brought out their differences with relevance to higher education's emphasis to academic vs. applied orientations. In fact the author has done some commendable and precise critical analysis of quality assurance documents of these jurisdictions and brought out their differences very succinctly with relevance to learning outcomes, faculty qualification requirements, research and student orientations. Although the study is quite extensive covering almost half the world and most of the continents in it, yet we found that the conclusions drawn in it relating to learning outcome differences between HEI offering Academic programs vs. Applied program, is not fully conclusive when it came to parameters the paper was examining.

David William Rees ofSimon Fraser Univ. in his paper *'Evidenced Based Quality Assurance: An Alternative Paradigm for Non-Traditional Higher Education'*in Fall 2007 identified indicators to assess quality of blended learning (combining both on campus and online delivery methods of student learning) and graduate programs to determine strongest indicators of program quality. They used a sample of 3 graduate students, 3 faculty members and 3 administrators selected at random to identify quality indicators during the 1st phase of their study. Duringthe 2nd phase of their study they identified the importance of these indicators with achosen sample of 1,536 eligible graduate students, 27 eligible faculty members and 42 eligible

program administrators. Using a mixed methods approach their study incorporated elements of action research, case study and phenomenological enquiry. In the first phaseparticipatory action research methodology was employed to develop program logic model of identifying quality indicators. In the 2nd phase, participants were asked to rate each indicator on a 5-point Likert scale of 'Not at all important' to 'Very Important'. Important findings indicated that '*academic guidance is related to an effective learning environment*'. The author advised that guidance must be evaluated in relation to learning outcomes and objectives in a study program and student support services activities to be directly related to the guidance. Here quality is evaluated from 3 perspectives - of faculty involvement in classes, students' transfer of learning and clarity of program goal based on actual feedback received fromstudents themselves. Limitation of this study has been a lack of clear provision for the support and guidance.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and UNESCO launched a major initiative to develop global guidelines on quality assurance and accreditation for transnational post-secondary education. The outcomes that emerged specified that QA and accreditation regulatory bodies must cater to local needs and must customize to regional demands. It further concluded that local accrediting bodies must be mindful not to dilute their unique regional requirements of needswhile taking into consideration international good practices. This is a very important finding not just from the perspective of literature but also from the point of view of what institutions are facing from accrediting bodies in the region. There are many micro lessons to take from this paper while benchmarking to Canadian international accreditation criteria and comparing those with UAE standards. However, to be mindful of regional sensibilities is the most valuable lesson to take from this study.

Margaret Hohner & Panagiotis in the Journal of International Education in Business, Toronto in 2012 reviewed *'Students perception of Quality of a Business Program delivered in Canada and China'*. The purpose of their study was to investigate beliefs of undergraduate students studying in Canada and their counterparts in China, what was considered as effective signals of quality and their willingness to pay to improve that quality. 481 students in the transnational program were taken as a sample in the study. A survey was designed and distributed to students between 2009 and 2011 academic years. Statistical tests were conducted

to examine mean differences in the perception of quality and different signals of quality and willingness to pay to improve quality. The outcome suggested that students perception of quality of transnational higher education delivered through franchising, branch campuses, twining degrees etc., across cross borders was an important component. Students benefited from studying in such programs in terms of career outcomes. Both program and accreditation emerged as important measures of quality from a student's perspectives in Canada and China. There were some limitations of the study that included convenience sample selection and size, translation of survey, framing of survey questions and controlling for factors such as GPA, gender and other factors. Practical implication of the paper provides important information to monitor quality and places a value on pursuing accreditation. This is the first empirical study that was encountered done from a student's perspective and therefore is considered important. This study shows a student's point of view quality in education, which means a good program and a good standard of accreditation that can land him / her onto a definite career path.

In his paper *'Lessons Learned From a New QualityAssurance Process for Ontario'*Canada's University of Toronto's Theory and Policy Studies,Daniel W. Langdiscusses how over timethe province is assuring quality by addressing problems that are generic to many jurisdictions such as: level of aggregation, pooling, definition of new and continuing programs, scope of jurisdiction, role of governors, performance indicators, relationship to accreditation, programs versus credentials, benchmarking and isomorphism. Although structure of the paper is a series of "problem/solution" discussions that include topics such as aggregation, pooling, isomorphism and jurisdiction, it shows that QA in Canada was multidimensional till recently. A buffer body between 21 institutions and government conduct graduate university accreditations, while undergraduate (UG) institutional accreditations are internal and coordinated by their academic Vice Presidents. Program reviews at the UG institutionsresult in turnover of departmental or faculty leadership; however, not all universities conduct it. Government identifies performance indicators and accreditation is carried out only for meeting the minimum standards in the eyes of consumers. The paper throws light on normative and formative quality evaluations and benchmarking between universities for graduate programs at departmental levels instead of at the program level. This paper demonstrates the role of performance indicators used to evaluate undergraduate programs at the institutional level and about degree level expectations

at Universities. As per the paper's benchmarks, performance indicators that are applied at the program level include: (1) degree or credential (2) depth and breadth of knowledge (3) knowledge of methodologies (4) application of knowledge (5) communication skills (6) awareness of limits of knowledge, and (7) autonomy and professional capacity. The paper concludes that quality assurance involves a diverse assortment of practices, some local and some system-wide, some voluntary and some involuntary, some to assure quality while others to enhance quality and some normative while some formative.Although many of the problems discussed in the paper are generic, limitation encountered is that some conclusions drawn are based on experience ofjust one jurisdiction.

James Heap in his paper *'Ontario's QA Framework: A Critical Response'* in 2013 in Canada reviewed Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) to find whether it met all five criteria proposed to be a strong quality assurance system focused on student learning. He found that it had all five elements that are characteristics of a strong accountability system for a learning-focused instruction for whichfollowing are required: (1) statements of intended learning outcomes (2) institutions must have and implement an assessment plan (3) institutions must collect data on actual results (4) data should be analyzed to discover and gauge the gap between intended and actual learning outcomes and (5) a strong review system to demonstrate that the collected data and analyses are used to adjust or modify the design and/or delivery of instructional programs. As quoted by Heap "*A review of data and their analyses is a scholastic exercise if findings of the review are not discussed at the institution and program levels and results acted upon to adjust, modify or revamp programs*".Limitation of this study is that the author draws his conclusions, makes his judgments and inferences and levies criticisms based on own analysis. These are no hard evidences to support his conclusions other than the framework he quotes. There is only one perspective - the author's alone.This is the biggest limitation.

Dietmar K. Kennepohl, in his paper *'Incorporating Learning Outcomes in Transfer Credit: The Way Forward for Campus Alberta?'* published in the Canadian Journal of Higher Education in 2016 specified that learning outcomes have become an integral part of global trend in higher education reform and are employed in three interconnected areas: (1) quality assurance (2) teaching and learning and (3) transfer credit. The article touches briefly on the first two areas

but focuses discussion on employing learning outcomes in transfer credit. Drawing from his own experience the author reports findings from literature. Using Alberta as a case study the author examines and assesses the higher education system with emphasis on transfer credit, prior learning assessment, student mobility and system coordination. The methodology he uses is that of critical analysis. Both advantages and limitations of learning outcomes are presented including balancing needs of a wide group of stakeholders. Taking lessons learned from similar international initiatives and an analysis of the Alberta's context, the discussion culminates in a proposal for way forward for this educational jurisdiction, promoting and incorporating learning outcomes as an important component of a systematic and transparent method of transfer credit. The paper contends that the three areas (1) quality assurance (2) teaching and learning and (3) transfer credit employing learning outcomes, are not only related but can also be mutually supportive and instructive. The same limitation encountered in most papers is also encountered here. This is not an empirical study. This is a largely subjective study although the author has successfullyjustified learning outcomes as being quantifiableand as an objective measure and afair assessment basis for evaluating transfer credits in this paper.

Roopa Desai Trilokekar and Zainab Kizilbash, from York University, Toronto in their paper *'IMAGINE: Canada as a leader in international education. How can Canada benefit from the Australian experience?'* published in 2013 in the Canadian Journal of Higher Education, specify two major formative strands of internationalization in Canadian universities. These are developmental cooperation and international students. According to the authors, due to reduced public funding for higher education, institutions are aggressively recruiting international students to generate additional revenue. This model 'IMAGINE' emulates the Australian one. Given current Canadian higher education policy trends the paper addresses the cautionary lessons that can be drawn from the Australian case. Canadian Immigration regulations concerning international students has seen major changes in the 2000's, further supporting and aligning governmental efforts in marketing of Canadian higher education. With increasing reliance on immigration to meet growing labor-market needs, there was government policy shift towards encouragement of international student immigration. Internationalization of student recruitment impacts various aspects of international student selection, transition, performance and post-graduation plans that provide substantial input in policy, practice and pedagogy.

Thusinternationalization of education has impacted Canadian immigration policy related to student immigration in Canada since 2000 and Canada has learnt many lessons from Australia that opened its doors to international student registrations since 1950. These lessons have impacted Canadian immigration and education policy. This paper throws light on internationalization of education and how Canadian immigration policy has been impacted by Australian practices. There is not much in QA except implicit evidence of its impact on the quality and diversity of student registration.

Sabri, Hala Ahmad, 2006 in her paper *'Accreditation on higher business education in the private sector: the case of Jordan'* makes a comparison between accreditation system of UG BA Program in private universities in Jordan and standards of the QA agency (QAA) in the United Kingdom (UK). Using a descriptive study, all 16 private sector Jordanian universities were surveyed. Findings show accreditation in Jordanian private universities as being inadequate despite some progress made in determining and assuring quality of standards in business administration programs. This might mean that standards for accreditation of HEI in Jordan may not reach the same levelsas followed in the UK. Furthermore, quality of private sector university graduates is less than those of graduates of government sector. As a result,private sector graduates do not comply with market need requirements. The authors justifiedtheir findings based on the fact that Jordanian accreditation standards of HEI put more emphasis on general requirements than on specific requirements. The general requirement concentrates on quantitative requirements of academic programs like facilities, capacities, number of faculty members, textbooks, while the later concentrates on program learning outcomes and market needs. This is exactly the opposite of UK standards.

'Globalization, Governance, and the diffusion of the American model of education: Accreditation in the Middle East' is yet another paper where Neema, Noori and Pia-Kristina Anderson (2013, UAE), examined if the American-style HEI's in the gulf are governed. To focus on the role of accreditation bodies and accreditation practices, 30 extended interviews with university instructors and administrators located at four universities in the region were used in their sample. Their research methods included interviews with former and current instructors, administrators and students at the American-style universities in the Middle East andwithin the

Persian Gulf region. Outcome of their study showed that the "American-style HEI's are subject to multiple overlapping sources of authority including internal and external accrediting agencies, the state ministry of education and the governing elite. The authors' highlighted problems inherent in having external organizations with limited knowledge of local conditionsassigned with the task of QA. Several internal and external accrediting agencies affecting the education system and its quality in the Gulf region do not possess sufficient knowledge of the local Gulf culture before they propose certain standards or requirements. *"Better knowledge of local conditions might result in stronger protection for academic freedom and a system of higher education that is more responsive to local needs"- Neema et al*. Limitation of this study is that it only looks at one model of education in the Middle East. This is also one of the few empirical studies encountered, which makes it unique asit looks at HEI within the Gulf region.

Darwin D. Hendel and Darrel R. Lewis (2005) in their paper *'Quality assurance of higher education in transition countries: Accreditation, Accountability and Assessment'*, have tried to determine whether differences in transition countries prior to independence explain quality assurance mechanisms. The growth of private HEI's in such countries affect how QA is conceptualized and whether QA has been affected by opening of branch campuses in transition countries. The conclusion of their studies show that both private and public higher education sectors serve as engines of economic growth; however, deliberate public policy causes both sectors to either withdraw or become non-responsive to market needs, which is not only counterproductive but is tantamount to denying prospects for future economic growth. Moreover, it is advised that governments and public authorities can develop legal and regulatory policies to promote and shape higher education system to regulate both private and public institutions and with appropriate oversight and quality assurance, private institutions can supply services that offer societal benefits. The study proceeds through theoretical arguments. There are three important outcomes of this research. One-the private and Public Sector Higher Education play important roles in economic growth specifically in expanding markets. Second - Intentional Public Policy causes both sectors to either withdraw or become non-responsive to market needs which is as indicated by the authors as not only being counterproductive, but also tantamount to denying prospects for further economic growth. Third - Governments and Public authorities can be direct providers of higher education by developing legal and regularity policies to promote

and shape higher education system in both sectors. However, they must use public resources in a way that offers societal benefits that the private sector cannot supply. Governments and public authorities must encourage both public and private higher education sectors to deliver programs with QA that are responsive to market needs and thus encourage market growth and development. Limitation of this paper is it is too theoretical.

Douglas Blackmun in his paper '*A Critical Analysis of The INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice For Higher Education Quality Assurance Agencies*' has tried to examine the model of GGP of the INQAAHE for quality assurance of national agencies. This paper too proceeds through theoretical arguments. There are four important outcomes of this research as follows: 1. GGP are inadequate as a model for QA of national agencies and need to be revised, 2. In the revision of GGP, there is a need to add an internationally uniform agency performance standard, 3. Researchers are skeptical of claims that activities of QA are responsible for improvements in universities' performance overtime and, 4. Risk management approach ought to inform any decisions by public higher education QA agencies. The International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies of Higher Education (INQAAHE) is a voluntary association that was established in 1991 to: collect and disseminate information on theory and practice in the assessment, improvement and maintenance of quality in higher education; to facilitate the international portability of skills and qualifications; develop credible national higher education quality assurance agencies and relationships of trust between them." (Douglas, pp. 723-734). The INQAAHE published its first 10 guidelines of good practice (GGP) by HE quality assurance agencies in 2003, revised and approved in 2005 to be implemented in 2007. Despite the fact that GGP explains standards for the quality of external QA, those GGP generally do not contain standards, are difficult to link with any concept of QA, consist of characteristics without any measurable dimensions, difficulty to find clear definition of quality improvement in HE (Harvey and Williams 2006, pp. 216), and like most guidelines in INQAAHE's GGP specifically in external reviews, most guidelines "do not address in details who conducts the evaluations, the composition of the panel on whether it is an international or national review (Aelterman 2006, pp. 232). There is a need for periodic review of higher education QA including those standards that promote international portability of skills and qualifications, as standards must be sustainable and not restricted to local ones. This is especially because there are number of

foreign (expats) students who might be living with their families and studding in universities of those countries and who could go back and work in their home countries and help in economic development. So they must be equipped with necessary knowledge and skills to be able to contribute to their countries' economic development. Moreover, since it is not clear to define quality improvement in higher education, sensitivity analysis might be required to weigh pros and cons as the value of quality improvement may be less than the cost of providing it. Just as in other papers, the limitation of this paper is it is theoretical. However, although this paper is theoretical it raises very important concerns for all interested parties in QA and higher education improvements. For example, despite the fact that the INQAAHE GGP were revised many times, still there are lots of arguments that it still needs to be amended with respect to the process, standards and criteria that could be followed by higher education QA agencies.

In their paper '*Student Guidance and Attention To Diversity In The Process Of Quality Assurance In Higher Education'*published in the European Journal of Education (Vol. 49, No. 4, 2014), Camino Ferreira, Javier Vidal and Maria Jose Vieirahave tried to analyze the evaluation criteria and mechanism regarding provision, guidance and student support. They have also tried to analyze provision relating to diversity and disability used in the main QA Agencies in Europe and US. In their introduction (Ferreira et al…2014) they explain that "University evaluation aims to improve quality of higher education systems and accreditation aims to give recognition to a higher education institution or program that is valid and reliable for general public (Egido Galvez and Haug, 2006)." In the European Council's (EC) recommendation No. 561/98 of 24th September 1998 of the European Union, it recommendsestablishment of transparent quality assessments and QA systems in the field of higher education. One of the reasons for the interest in QA was the need for European member states to increase student mobility through Erasmus exchange programs and recognize the characteristics of studies abroad.The Berlin Communiqué (2003) proposed the development of set rules, procedures and guidelines for quality assurance. In 2005, the EU Group presented the proposal and it was approved in Bergen ministerial meeting in which Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) were adopted. As a study population, they have used Websites of some quality evaluation and accreditation agencies in countries such as Vienna (Austrian Accreditation Council (AAC), The Association to Advance Collegiate School of Business (AACSB), Madrid, Chicago,

Romania, Paris…etc.,. Their research methods have been both Qualitative and Content Analysis according to the criteria for provision of support and guidance. That included searching quality evaluation and accreditation guidelines on websites of the agencies and creating a database. The outcomes of their research reveal that most universities offer students' support with diversity of students being taken into account that included students with special needs, such as: academic guidance where support and guidance is mainly included in standards related to effective learning environments. Influence of guidance is evaluated in relation to learning outcomes and objectives in the study program. However, for some agencies specific standards related to student support services, which included activities directly related to guidance. As advised by authors of the study - tutoring support being offered, counseling services like offering reception, information and supporting that affect transition from secondary to higher education, and from higher education to access to employment. The US Universities have integrated more components of students support like financial aid counseling and complaint system. The criteria related to diversity are taken into account in a transversal way in most standards. However, some agencies in Europe include specific standards on diversity, gender equality and equal opportunities in their guidelines. The agencies include groups that are in special situations, like parents, disabled students, educationally disadvantaged or foreign students. The disability criteria are mainly included in the principles of the most institution's mission, and the objectives of the program such as: universal accessibility, equal opportunity, fundamental rights, gender equality and non-discrimination and accessibility for persons with disabilities. These principles are also considered in the recruitment and retention of students, faculty and staff. QA of HE will be significantly improved when standards include students' guidance and support in addition to diversity. This will have a significant positive impact on students' academic life, students' retention and even influence foreign students who will go back to their home counties and contribute in economic development. Limitations of this paper are that authors focus on mainly two criteria - provision of support and guidance and attention to diversity and disability. QA of HE will be significantly improved when standards include students' guidance and support in addition to diversity and disability. This will have a significant positive effect on students' academic life, students' retention and even influence foreign students who will go back to their home counties.

Basem Barqawi, Fatin Khraot, and Emad Abu Elrub in their paper *'The Role of Course Portfolios in Quality Assurance at Higher Education Institutions: The Experience of the Emirates College of Technology',* demonstrate the experience of Emirates College of Technology (ECT), UAE regarding course portfolio, its contents and how to improve assessments, it's benefits in the near future, and how it is affecting QA in programs offered by ECT. The authors mention several benefits of course portfolioas the basis for scientific evaluation and improvement of curriculum. These being important criteria for evaluating faculty members, a reference for assessments and teaching methodologies especially for multiple faculty members teaching the same course, an important document for all potential instructors who could teach the course, a means to develop and emphasize teamwork environment, means of exchanging expertise between faculty members in the same department, most important criteria in the process of assessing and accrediting the education programs by local and international accreditation bodies, an indication of unifying the work of higher education institution that have more than one academic branch and finallya means of measuring achievement of course learning and program learning outcomes in general. The authors adopted a case study approach in their research using ECT as a case. The outcomes reveal that after CAA in the UAE was established in 2011, ECT like other HEI in the UAE started applying QA systems. There was initially a special QA unit to improve academic services, comply with the market requirements competing to achieve the best academic performance in addition to sincerely follow up on course portfolios in the college. A portfolio base room was allocated (in the central library) in which course files with checklist of its contents for 3 semesters were made available (for the current, the previous 2 semesters). Those were made available to faculty members, local and international accreditation and assessment bodies when requested.Course Files are kept for two (2) year period as most of the local and international assessment and accreditation teams require two previous years' course files for evaluating along with the current semester course file. ECT has classified their course files into general education, college requirements and department requirements. A course code number and unified colors for each course file in every semester are used to facilitate auditing and to distinguish course files easily. Thursdays each week are assigned to follow up achievements made in each course file, as classes are not offered on Thursdays. Instructors of each course hold meetings to coordinate and follow up on the course files in addition to holding any needed training programs, workshops related to the academic, social and scientific issues.

The contents of the course file are designed to include necessary elements in a checklist formas follows:

1. *File Log*: in which all stakeholders of the course file (instructors, coordinators, chairs, internal and external assessors, assistant dean/ dean) register their access and write their notes to the course files, as this is one of the most important means to evaluate the course and an indication of serious follow up and implementations.

2. *Timetables:* of all instructors and their office hours during the week.

3. *Course Curriculum*: as one of the most important elements of the course files in which all CLOs and PLOs achievements are verified. The course file includes:

a. *General information about the course*: such as its name, code number, number of credit hours, and pre requisites.

b. *General information about the instructor*: name, office no. email address and office hours.

c. *Class days*: time and venue.

d. *Academic resources*: textbook, and references.

e. *Course learning outcomes*: the pillar stone of the course curriculum in which the number and types of CLOs expected to be achieved and impact on program learning outcome are mentioned. Those CLOs will be written by using action verbs according to Bloom's Taxonomy and based on the level of the course.

f. *Teaching methodologies*: lectures, exercises, assignments, home works, research and exams…etc.).

g. *Assessment Tools*: exams, assignments, homework, research projects and participation …etc.).

h. *Course Semester Calendar*: arranged weekly (week, subject, academic resources, CLOs to be achieved, and dates of students' assessments).

i. *CLO matrix*: matching the CLOs and related assessments.

4. *The scientific material used in teaching*: all material is unified for multiple sections and the same material is used whether those uploaded on the module or power point presentations.

5. *Exams*: copies of the exams held, answer keys, forms for assessing the exams and typical answers, forms of assessed exams by instructors, and three sample answers for three students (excellent answer, averaged answer, and low level answer sheet) are provided. The same is applicable for final exams unified for all sections.

6. *Class Assignments*: with the same procedures followed in the exams.

7. *Homework Assignments*: copies as indicated in the item 6 and 7 are provided. Tests for plagiarism are required.

8. *Projects*:provide an assessment tool with a clear rubric to be followed by all instructors.

9. *Participation*: provide an assessment tool with a clear rubric to be followed by all instructors.

10. *A comprehensive report*: in which the course coordinator and all instructors write the report at the end of the semester indicating whether the CLOs were suitable for the course and id those CLOs were covered or not. And why, whether the course curriculum were covered and why, the suitability of academic resources, the appropriateness of assessment tools and pre requisites and any suggestions for improvements.

11. *Semester Results of students*: to show the grades distributions, charts, and this is generated from the grading electronic system of the college.

12. *Cover page for all assessments (exams, assignments, and home works) that includes*: Date of assessment, time, final grade, student name and id, course name and code, semester, instructor name, duration of the assessment, CLOs to be achieved, allocating grades between questions and student grade for each section.

Finally, the study showed best practices and continuous improvements of course files through the

case of ECT that had a positive impact on quality, performance and on program learning outcomes.

2.2. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The following 10 Evaluation Criteriaof*Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance*as given under sub-section 2.2.1 were adopted by the authors of this study, and therefore form its conceptual framework as Benchmarks.

2.2.1 Benchmarks

As per Ontario Quality Assurance Standards,there are 10*Evaluation Criteria*or *Performance Indicators*thatthe authors have adopted to evaluate HEI for this study. This paper attempts to review similarities and differences between Middle East with specific reference to UAE STANDARDS 2011 based quality assurance mechanisms existing in HEIascertained against thosebenchmarks as given by Council on Quality Assurance, retrieved from*http://oucqa.ca/framework/2-1evaluation-criteria/ (Feb 2018).* The10 Evaluation Criteria retrieved are as given below:

1 Objectives of the Program
2 Admission Requirements
3 Program Structure
4 Program Content
5 Mode of Delivery
6 Assessment of Teaching an Learning
7 Human, IT, Financial Resources
8 Graduate Program Resources
9 UG Program Resources
10 Quality Indicators

2.2.2 **Parametersof Ontario Quality Assurance Standards**

As per Donna Woolcott (2014), Executive Director of Quality Assurance of the *Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance*"The Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) for review of existing undergraduate and graduate programs shall require, and may where itchooses extend the evaluation criteria"*(*Pg. 23-24). As retrieved from (Feb 2018), the sameare set out below:

1. ***"Objectives of the Program***

- *Consistency of the program* with the institution's mission and academic plans.
- *Clarity and appropriateness of the program's* requirements and associated learning outcomes in addressing the institutions own undergraduate or graduate Degree Level expectations.
- *Appropriateness of degree* nomenclature."*(Evaluation Criteria adapted from 2.1.1, retrieved from the Council of Quality Assurance,http://oucqa.ca/framework/2-1evaluation-criteria/, Feb 2018)*

2. ***"Admission Requirements***

- *Appropriateness of the program's admission requirements* for the learning outcomes established for completion of the program.
- *Sufficient explanation of alternative requirements*, if any, for admission into a graduate, second-entry or undergraduate program, such as minimum grade point average, additional languages or portfolios, along with how the program recognizes prior work or learning experience."*(Evaluation Criteria adapted from 2.1.2, retrieved from the Council of Quality Assurance,http://oucqa.ca/framework/2-1evaluation-criteria/, Feb 2018)*

3. ***"Program Structure***

- *Appropriateness of the program's structure* and regulations to meet specified program learning outcomes and degree level expectations.
- For *graduate programs, a clear rationale for program length* that ensures that the program requirements can be reasonably completed within the proposed time

period."*(Evaluation Criteria adapted from 2.1.3, retrieved from the Council of Quality Assurance,http://oucqa.ca/framework/2-1evaluation-criteria/, Feb 2018)*

4. *"Program Content*

- Ways in which the *curriculum addresses the current state* of the discipline or area of study.
- *Identification of any unique curriculum* or program innovations or creative components.
- For *research-focused graduate programs, clear indication* of the nature and suitability of the major research requirements for degree completion."*(Evaluation Criteria adapted from 2.1.4, retrieved from the Council of Quality Assurance,http://oucqa.ca/framework/2-1evaluation- criteria/, Feb 2018)*

5. *"Mode of Delivery*

- Comment on the *appropriateness of the proposed mode*(s) of delivery to meet the intended program learning outcomes and Degree Level Expectations."*(Evaluation Criteria adapted from 2.1.5, retrieved from the Council of Quality Assurance,http://oucqa.ca/framework/2-1evaluation-criteria/, Feb 2018)*

6. *"Assessment of Teaching and Learning*

- *Appropriateness of the proposed methods for the assessment* of student achievement of the intended program learning outcomes and Degree Level Expectations.
- *Completeness of plans for documenting* and demonstrating the level of performance of students, consistent with the institution's statement of its Degree Level Expectations." *(Evaluation Criteria adapted from 2.1.6, retrieved from the Council of Quality Assurance,http://oucqa.ca/framework/2-1evaluation-criteria/, Feb 2018*

7. *"Resources for all Programs*

- *Adequacy of the administrative unit's planned utilization* of existing human, physical and financial resources, and any institutional commitment to supplement those resources, to support the program.
- *Participation of a sufficient number and quality of faculty* who are competent to teach and/or supervise in the program.
- Evidence that there are *adequate resources to sustain the quality* of scholarship produced by undergraduate students as well as graduate students' scholarship and research activities, including library support, information technology support, and laboratory access." *(Evaluation Criteria adapted from 2.1.7, retrieved from the Council of Quality Assurance,http://oucqa.ca/framework/2-1evaluation-criteria/, Feb 2018)*

8. "*Resources for Graduate Programs only*

- Evidence that *faculty have the recent research* or professional/clinical expertise needed to sustain the program, promote innovation and foster an appropriate intellectual climate.
- Where *appropriate to the program*, evidence that financial assistance for students will be sufficient to ensure adequate quality and numbers of students.
- Evidence of how *supervisory loads* will be distributed, and the qualifications and appointment status of faculty who will provide instruction and supervision."*(Evaluation Criteria adapted from 2.1.8, retrieved from the Council of Quality Assurance,http://oucqa.ca/framework/2-1evaluation-criteria/, Feb 2018*)

9. "*Resources for Undergraduate Programs only*

- Evidence of and planning for adequate numbers and quality of

✓ Faculty and staff to *achieve the goals* of the program or

✓ Plans and the commitment to *provide the necessary resources* in step with the implementation of the program

✓ Planned/anticipated *class sizes*

✓ Provision of supervision of *experiential learning opportunities* (if required), and

✓ Role of *adjunct and part-time faculty*."*(Evaluation Criteria adapted from 2.1.9, retrieved from the Council of Quality Assurance,http://oucqa.ca/framework/2-1evaluation-criteria/, Feb 2018*)

10. ***"Quality Indicators***

- Outcome measures of student performance and achievement are of particular interest, but there are also important input and process measures which are known to have a strong association with quality such as:

✓ *Faculty: qualifications***,** research and scholarly record; class sizes; percentage of classes taught by permanent or non-permanent (contractual) faculty; numbers, assignments and qualifications of part- time or temporary faculty;

✓ *Students: applications* and registrations; attrition rates; time-to-completion; final-year academic achievement; graduation rates; academic awards; student in-course reports on teaching; and

✓ *Graduates: rates of graduation, employment*six months and two years after graduation, post- graduate study, "skills match" and alumni reports on program quality when available and when permitted by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). Auditors will be instructed that these items may not be available and applicable to all programs."*(Evaluation Criteria adapted from 2.1.10, retrieved from the Council of Quality Assurance,http://oucqa.ca/framework/2-1evaluation-criteria/, Feb 2018)*

Based on the above 10 Evaluation Criteria and their Parameters,whichwere adopted by the authors of this study from the Ontario Quality Assurance Standards, a conceptual frameworkof key performance indicators wasderived as shown on the next page:

***Conceptual Framework*: Key Performance Indicators of Ontario's Quality Assurance Benchmarks**						
	Evaluation Criteria*	**Parameter 1**	**Parameter 2**	**Parameter 3**	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**
1	**Objectives of the Program**	***Consistency*** with institutions mission	***Clarity*** with associated learning	***Appropriateness*** of degree nomenclature		
2	**Admission Requirements**	***Appropriateness*** of learning outcome established	***Alternativerequirements***-GPA, portfolio, prior experience etc.			
3	**Program Structure**	***Appropriateness*** to meet PLO's and degree level expectations (DLE)	***Clear rationale*** for program length and period			
4	**Program Content**	***Curriculum*** addresses the discipline and area of study	***Identification of unique*** curriculum or program innovations	***Suitability*** of research requirements		
5	**Mode of Delivery**	***Appropriateness*** to meet PLO's & DLE				
6	**Assessment of Teaching and Learning**	***Appropriateness*** for the assessment of student achievement of PLO's and DLE	***Completeness*** of performance of students consistent with DLE			
7	**Human, IT, Financial Resources**	***Adequacy*** of planned utilization of existing resources	***Participation*** of sufficient and quality number of faculty competent to teach and supervise in the program	***Adequate resources*** to sustain the quality of scholarship of UG students		
8	**Graduate Program Resources**	***Facultyhave recent research*** or professional expertise to sustain, promote innovation and intellectual growth	***Appropriate*** to the program, financial assistance for students to ensure adequate quality and number of students	***Evidence*** of how supervisory loads will be distributed, qualifications and appointment status of faculty who will provide supervision and instruction		
9	**UG Program Resources**	***Faculty and staff*** can achieve program goals	***Commitment*** to resources for implementation of plans	***Anticipated class*** sizes	***Supervision*** of experiential learning opportunities	***Role*** of adjunct and part-time faculty
10	**Quality Indicators**	***Faculty-qualifications***, research, scholarly record, part-time faculty	***Students-applications***, registrations, attrition rates, academic awards	***Graduates-graduation***, employment, skills match, alumni reports		

3. Methodology

3.1 Review Framework

The study proceeded *first*by evaluating gaps in literature reviewed over last 2 decadeswithinQA in HEI spanning regions of Canada, North America, some regions of UK, Europe and within the Middle East, against the benchmarked Evaluation Criteria of the *Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance*.Gaps in the review conducted were assessed against the *10 Evaluation Criteria.*

The study proceeded *next*by ascertaining gaps if any in UAE QA STANDARDS 2011 and comparing those against benchmarked Evaluation Criteria of the *Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance*. These were assessed against5 sets of parameters of the *10 Evaluation Criteria*as listed on the previous page.

The *initial purpose*of our research was to find out the following:

1. How our study fitted into the overall research area?
2. Ascertain how each research connected to our topic of interest?
3. Assess the *10 Evaluation Criteria* and *5 Parameters*within each criterion that the study related to.

We hoped that this might eventually lead us to gaps not addressed by the review that we had conducted.

The *secondary purpose* of our research was to:

1. Ascertain gaps if any in the STANDARDS 2011?
2. If so, to find out in which Parameter?
3. Make recommendations to plug those gaps in the best possible manner from a contextual perspective.

Both of the above helped us arrive at valid and reliable conclusions pertaining to this research.

4. Synthesis: 4.1 Evaluating **gaps in the literature reviewed by benchmarking against the10 *Evaluation Criteria* and 5 *Parameters***

	Synthesis of Literature Reviewed with the Parameters Benchmarked			1(6), 2(9), 3(8), 4(6), 5(6), 6(7), 7(4), 8(7), 9(4), 10(13)	1(1-4), 2(1-7), 3(1-6), 4(1-5), 5(1-5), 6(1-7), 7(1-3), 8(1-4), 9(1-4), 10(1-6)	1(2-2), 2(2-3), 3(2-4), 4(2-4), 5(2-N), 6(2-6), 7(2-3), 8(2-5), 9(2-2), 10(2-6)	1(3-1), 2(3-N), 3(3-N), 4(3-3), 5(3-N), 6(3-N), 7(3-3), 8(3-2), 9(3-2), 10(3-11)	1(4-N), 2(4-N), 3(4-N), 4(4-N), 5(4-N), 6(4-N), 7(4-N), 8(4-N), 9(4-2), 10(4-N)	1(5-N), 2(5-N), 3(5-N), 4(5-N), 5(5-N), 6(5-N), 7(5-N), 8(5-N), 9(5-3), 10(5-N)
Se	**Study Title**	**Author/s, Year, Study country**	**How does this Study connect to our topic of interest?**	**Evaluation Criteria***	**Parameter 1**	**Parameter 2**	**Parameter 3**	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**
1	The Impact of AACSB Business School Accreditation on Quality of Accounting Education as Measured by CPA Exam Success Rates	Morgan, John, 2011, Morgan John, Business Education Digest, 2011, Issue 18, Pg. 1-10	This study is about quality assurance of academic programs in general. Accounting program is one of many academic programs that needs periodic review and improvements towards better and **competent graduates** that is always needed to comply with all **market needs** and **employers requirements**. We could always benefit from the impact of accreditation in certain academic programs and improve those that are not yet accredited.	**Evaluation Criteria*** **4th-** Program Content; **8th-** Graduate Program Resources; **10th-** Quality Indicators	**Parameter 1**	**Parameter 2: (8)** Appropriate to the program, financial assistance for students to ensure adequant quality and number of students	**Parameter 3: (10)** Graduates-graduation, employment, skills match, alumni reports	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**
2	Does AACSB accreditation provide quality assurance and foster quality improvement for limited resource business schools whose mission are primarily teaching?	Bieker, Richard F., Nov.2014, USA	Schools whose **missions** are **teaching, research** and **community service.**	**Evaluation Criteria*** **1st-** Objectives of the Program; **6th-** Assessment of Teaching an Learning; **8th-** Graduate Program Resources	**Parameter 1: (1)** Consistency with institutions mission; **(6)** Appropriatness for the assessment of student achievement of PLO's and DLE; **(8)** Faculty have recent research or professional expertise to sustain, promote innovation and intelectual growth	**Parameter 2: (6)** Completeness of performance of students consistent with DLE	**Parameter 3**	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**

	Synthesis of Literature Reviewed with the Parameters Benchmarked			1(6), 2(9), 3(8), 4(6), 5(6), 6(7), 7(4), 8(7), 9(4), 10(13)	1(1-4), 2(1-7), 3(1-6), 4(1-5), 5(1-5), 6(1-7), 7(1-3), 8(1-4), 9(1-4), 10(1-6)	1(2-2), 2(2-3), 3(2-4), 4(2-4), 5(2-N), 6(2-6), 7(2-3), 8(2-5), 9(2-2), 10(2-6)	1(3-1), 2(3-N), 3(3-N), 4(3-3), 5(3-N), 6(3-N), 7(3-3), 8(3-2), 9(3-2), 10(3-11)	1(4-N), 2(4-N), 3(4-N), 4(4-N), 5(4-N), 6(4-N), 7(4-N), 8(4-N), 9(4-2), 10(4-N)	1(5-N), 2(5-N), 3(5-N), 4(5-N), 5(5-N), 6(5-N), 7(5-N), 8(5-N), 9(5-3), 10(5-N)
Se	**Study Title**	**Author/s, Year, Study country**	**How does this Study connect to our topic of interest?**	**Evaluation Criteria***	**Parameter 1**	**Parameter 2**	**Parameter 3**	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**
3	Accreditation on higher business education in the private sector: the case of Jordan.	Sabri, Hala Ahmad, 2006 Jordan	Puts more emphasis on the general requirements. first one concentrated on the quantitative **requirements** of academic programs like the **facilities, capacities, no. of faculty members, textbooks** and, while the latter concentrated on the **program learning outcomes** and the **market needs**	**Evaluation Criteria* (1)** Objectives of the Program, **(2)** Admission Requirements, **(7)** Human, IT, Financial Resources; **(9)** UG Program Resources	**Parameter 1: (1)** Clarity with associated learning; **(2)** Appropriateness of learning outcome established; **(7)** Adequency of planned utilization of existing resources	**Parameter 2: (7)** Participation of sufficent and quality number of faculty competent to teach and supervise in the program	**Parameter 3: (7)** Adequante resources to sustain the quality of scholarship of UG students	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**
4	Globalization, Governance, and the diffusion of the American model of education: Accreditation in the Middle East.	Neema, Noori • Pia-Kristina Anderson, 2013, UAE	**internal and external accrediting agencies affecting** the education system and its **quality**	***Evaluation Criteria* (10)** Quality Indicators	**Parameter 1: (10)** Faculty-qualifications, research, scholarly record, part-time faculty	**Parameter 2: (10)** Students-applications, registrations, attrition rates, academic awards	**Parameter 3: (10)** Graduates-graduation, employment, skills match, alumni reports	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**
5	Quality assurance of higher education in transition countries: Accreditation, Accountability and Assessment.	Darwin D. Hendel and Darrel R. Lewis, 2005	**Deliver programs** with quality assurance that are **responsive to market needs**	**Evaluation Criteria* (1)** Objectives of the Program; **(5)** Mode of Delivery; **(6)** Assessment of Teaching and Learning	**Parameter 1: (1)** Clarity with associated learning	**Parameter 2**	**Parameter 3**	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**

	Synthesis of Literature Reviewed with the Parameters Benchmarked			1(6), 2(9), 3(8), 4(6), 5(6), 6(7), 7(4), 8(7), 9(4), 10(13)	1(1-4), 2(1-7), 3(1-6), 4(1-5), 5(1-5), 6(1-7), 7(1-3), 8(1-4), 9(1-4), 10(1-6)	1(2-2), 2(2-3), 3(2-4), 4(2-4), 5(2-N), 6(2-6), 7(2-3), 8(2-5), 9(2-2), 10(2-6)	1(3-1), 2(3-N), 3(3-N), 4(3-3), 5(3-N), 6(3-N), 7(3-3), 8(3-2), 9(3-2), 10(3-11)	1(4-N), 2(4-N), 3(4-N), 4(4-N), 5(4-N), 6(4-N), 7(4-N), 8(4-N), 9(4-2), 10(4-N)	1(5-N), 2(5-N), 3(5-N), 4(5-N), 5(5-N), 6(5-N), 7(5-N), 8(5-N), 9(5-3), 10(5-N)
Se	**Study Title**	**Author/s, Year, Study country**	**How does this Study connect to our topic of interest?**	**Evaluation Criteria***	**Parameter 1**	**Parameter 2**	**Parameter 3**	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**
6	"Make Them Up and Ignore Them"? Learning Outcomes and Literary Studies in Canada	Jody Mason, 2015, Canada	This paper throws light on the importance on **evaluating learning outcomes** and connects to **Criteria 2 - paramter 1**	**Evaluation Criteria*: 2nd** - Admission Requirements	**Parameter 1: (2)** Appropriateness of learning outcome established	**Parameter 2**	**Parameter 3**	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**
7	Quality Assurance in Higher Education as a Political Process	Michael L. Skolnik, University of Toronto, Canada, 2010	The paper speaks of **internal assessment** by the institution itself, and **external verification** of assessment. It and thus connects to **Criteria 3, 4, 3 & 10 - all parameters 1, 2 & 3**	**Evaluation Criteria*: 3rd** - Appropriateness to meet PLO's and degree level expectations (DLE); **4th** - Curriculum addresses the discipline and area of study; **8th** - Faculty have recent research or professional expertise to sustain, promote innovation and intelectual growth; **10th** - Quality indicators	**Parameter 1: (3)** Appropriateness to meet PLO's and degree level expectations (DLE); **(4)** Curriculum addresses the discipline and area of study; **(8)** Faculty have recent research or professional expertise to sustain, promote innovation and intelectual growth; **(10)** Faculty-qualifications, research, scholarly record, part-time faculty	**Parameter 2: (4)** Identification of unique curriculum or program innovations; **(8)** Appropriate to the program, financial assistance for students to ensure adequant quality and number of students; **(10)** Students-applications, registrations, attrition rates, academic awards	**Parameter 3: (4)** Suitability of research requirements; **(10)** Graduates-graduation, employment, skills match, alumni reports	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**

	Synthesis of Literature Reviewed with the Parameters Benchmarked			1(6), 2(9), 3(8), 4(6), 5(6), 6(7), 7(4), 8(7), 9(4), 10(13)	1(1-4), 2(1-7), 3(1-6), 4(1-5), 5(1-5), 6(1-7), 7(1-3), 8(1-4), 9(1-4), 10(1-6)	1(2-2), 2(2-3), 3(2-4), 4(2-4), 5(2-N), 6(2-6), 7(2-3), 8(2-5), 9(2-2), 10(2-6)	1(3-1), 2(3-N), 3(3-N), 4(3-3), 5(3-N), 6(3-N), 7(3-3), 8(3-2), 9(3-2), 10(3-11)	1(4-N), 2(4-N), 3(4-N), 4(4-N), 5(4-N), 6(4-N), 7(4-N), 8(4-N), 9(4-2), 10(4-N)	1(5-N), 2(5-N), 3(5-N), 4(5-N), 5(5-N), 6(5-N), 7(5-N), 8(5-N), 9(5-3), 10(5-N)
Se	**Study Title**	**Author/s, Year, Study country**	**How does this Study connect to our topic of interest?**	**Evaluation Criteria***	**Parameter 1**	**Parameter 2**	**Parameter 3**	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**
8	How do quality assurance systems accommodate the difference between academic and applied higher education?	Michael L. Skolnik, University of Toronto, Canada, 2015	Many of those aspects related to Quality Assurance mechanisms as they must apply to Higher Education in the field of Applied Education Sectors such as Vocational studies or polytechniques, or even institutions of Higher Education **offering degree courses with a view of giving employability skills for their students** rather than merely enhacing their knowledge or synthesis skills	***Evaluation Criteria*** **10th**-Quality Indicators	**Parameter 1**	**Parameter 2**	**Parameter 3:** (10) Graduates-graduation, employment, skills match, alumni reports	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**
9	A critical analysis of the INQAAHE guidelines of good practice for higher education quality assurance agencies.	Douglas Blackmun	Although this paper is theoretical but it raises very important concerns for all interested parties in quality assurance and higher education improvements. For example, despite the fact that the INQAAHE GGP were revised many times, but still there are lots of arguments that it still needs to be amended with respect to the **process, standards**, and **criteria** that could be followed by higher education quality assurance agencies.	***Evaluation Criteria*** **2nd**-Admission Requirements; **3rd**-Program Structure; **4th**-Program Content; **5th**-Mode of Delivery; **6th**-Assessment of Teaching an Learning; **10th**-Quality Indicators	Parameter 1: **(2)** Appropriateness of learning outcome established; **(3)** Appropriateness to meet PLO's and degree level expectations (DLE); **(4)** Curriculum addresses the discipline and area of study; **(5)** Appropriatness to meet PLO's and DLE; **(6)** Appropriatness for the assessment of student achievement of PLO's and DLE; **(10)** Faculty-qualifications, research, scholarly record, part-time faculty	**Parameter 2: (3)** Clear rationale for program length and period; **(4)** Identification of unique curriculum or program innovations: **(6)** Completeness of performance of students consistent with DLE; **(10)** Students-applications, registrations, attrition rates, academic awards	**Parameter 3:** (10) Graduates-graduation, employment, skills match, alumni reports	**Parameter 4:**	**Parameter 5:**

	Synthesis of Literature Reviewed with the Parameters Benchmarked			1(6), 2(9), 3(8), 4(6), 5(6), 6(7), 7(4), 8(7), 9(4), 10(13)	1(1-4), 2(1-7), 3(1-6), 4(1-5), 5(1-5), 6(1-7), 7(1-3), 8(1-4), 9(1-4), 10(1-6)	1(2-2), 2(2-3), 3(2-4), 4(2-4), 5(2-N), 6(2-6), 7(2-3), 8(2-5), 9(2-2), 10(2-6)	1(3-1), 2(3-N), 3(3-N), 4(3-3), 5(3-N), 6(3-N), 7(3-3), 8(3-2), 9(3-2), 10(3-11)	1(4-N), 2(4-N), 3(4-N), 4(4-N), 5(4-N), 6(4-N), 7(4-N), 8(4-N), 9(4-2), 10(4-N)	1(5-N), 2(5-N), 3(5-N), 4(5-N), 5(5-N), 6(5-N), 7(5-N), 8(5-N), 9(5-3), 10(5-N)
Se	**Study Title**	**Author/s, Year, Study country**	**How does this study connect to our topic of interest?**	**Evaluation Criteria***	**Parameter 1**	**Parameter 2**	**Parameter 3**	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**
10	Student Guidance and attention to Diversity in the Process of Quality Assurance in Higher Education	Camino Ferreira, Javier Vidal and Maria Jose Vieira, European Journal of Education, Vol. 49, No. 4, 2014	Influence of guidance is evaluated in relation to **learning outcomes and objectives** in the study **program. Specific standards** related to **student support services**	***Evaluation Criteria* (2)** Admission Requirements; **(3)** Program Structure; **(4)** Program Content; **(5)** Mode of Delivery; **(6)** Assessment of Teaching an Learning; **(7)** Human, IT, Financial Resources; **(8)** Graduate Program Resources; **(9)** UG Program Resources; **(10)** Quality Indicators	**Parameter 1: (2)** Appropriateness of learning outcome established; **(3)** Appropriateness to meet PLO's and degree level expectations (DLE); **(4)** Curriculum addresses the discipline and area of study; **(5)** Appropriatness to meet PLO's and DLE; **(6)** Appropriatness for the assessment of student achievement of PLO's and DLE; **(7)** Adequency of planned utilization of existing resources; **(8)** Faculty have recent research or professional expertise to sustain, promote innovation and intelectual growth; **(9)** Faculty and Staff can achieve prog.goals; **(10)** Faculty-qualifications,	**Parameter 2: (2)** Alternative requirements-GPA, portfolio, prior experiece etc.; **(3)** Clear rationale for program length and period; **(4)** Identification of unique curriculum or program innovations: **(6)** Completeness of performance of students consistent with DLE; **(7)** Participation of sufficent and quality number of faculty competent to teach and supervise in the program; **(8)** Appropriate for the program, financial assistance for	**Parameter 3: (4)** Suitability of research requirements; **(7)** Adequante resources to sustain the quality of scholarship of UG students; **(8)** Evidence of how supervisory loads will be distributed, qualifications and appointment status of faculty who will provide supervision and instruction; **(9)** Anticipated class sizes; **(10)** Graduates-	**Parameter 4: (9)** Supervision of experiential learning opportunities	**Parameter 5: (9)** Role of adjunct and part-time faculty
11	Evidenced Based Quality Assurance: An Alternative Paradigm for Non-Traditional Higher Education	David William Rees, Simon Fraser Univ, Fall 2007	**The Study fits into 5th, 6th, 8th, 9th and 10th criterion of our framework. It meets the 10th Performance Indicator criteria-'Quality Indicators', and meets parameter 3; also meets 9th criteria, parameter 1 and 5; meets criteria 6th, parametr 1 and 2; meets criteria 5th, parameter 1 and meets criteria 3rd-parameter 1**	**Evaluation Criteria* : (3)** Program Structure; **(5)** Appropriatness to meet PLO's and DLE; **(6)** Appropriatness for the assessment of student achievement of PLO's and DLE; **(7)** Human, IT, Financial Resources; **(8)** Graduate Program Resources; **(9)** UG Program Resources; **(10)** Faculty-qualifications, research, scholarly record, part-time faculty	**Parameter 1: (3)** Appropriateness to meet PLO's and degree level expectations (DLE); **(5)** Appropriatness to meet PLO's and DLE; **(6)** Appropriatness for the assessment of student; **(9)** Faculty and Staff can achieve prog.goals	**Parameter 2: (6)** Completeness of performance of students consistent with DLE	**Parameter 3:** (10) Graduates-graduation, employment, skills match, alumni reports	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5: (9)** Role of adjunct and part-time faculty

	Synthesis of Literature Reviewed with the Parameters Benchmarked			1(6), 2(9), 3(8), 4(6), 5(6), 6(7), 7(4), 8(7), 9(4), 10(13)	1(1-4), 2(1-7), 3(1-6), 4(1-5), 5(1-5), 6(1-7), 7(1-3), 8(1-4), 9(1-4), 10(1-6)	1(2-2), 2(2-3), 3(2-4), 4(2-4), 5(2-N), 6(2-6), 7(2-3), 8(2-5), 9(2-2), 10(2-6	1(3-1), 2(3-N), 3(3-N), 4(3-3), 5(3-N), 6(3-N), 7(3-3), 8(3-2), 9(3-2), 10(3-11)	1(4-N), 2(4-N), 3(4-N), 4(4-N), 5(4-N), 6(4-N), 7(4-N), 8(4-N), 9(4-2), 10(4-N)	1(5-N), 2(5-N), 3(5-N), 4(5-N), 5(5-N), 6(5-N), 7(5-N), 8(5-N), 9(5-3), 10(5-N)
Se	**Study Title**	**Author/s, Year, Study country**	**How does this study connect to our topic of interest?**	**Evaluation Criteria***	**Parameter 1**	**Parameter 2**	**Parameter 3**	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**
12	OECD-UNESCO consortium to establish education delivery guidelines	CAUT Bulletin, Toronto	This study perhaps may become the very **backbone on which our entire framework may lean on.** Because this study teaches us to keep our framework flexible and not too regid and to view our framework within the muti-complexities that exist within the diffferent regions and that one international benchmark or best parctice may not work very well in another region, and must be taken with a little flexibility. This is a major part of the learning from this study for me.	**Evaluation Criteria* 1st-** Objectives of the Program; **2nd-** Admission Requirements; **3rd-** Program Structure; **4th-** Program Content; **5th-** Mode of Delivery; **6th-** Assessment of Teaching an Learning; **7th-** Human, IT, Financial Resources; **8th-** Graduate Program Resources; **9th-** UG Program Resources; **10th- Quality Indicators**	**Parameter 1: (1)** Consistency with institutions mission; **(2)** Appropriateness of learning outcome established; **(3)** Appropriateness to meet PLO's and degree level expectations (DLE); **(4)** Curriculum addresses the discipline and area of study; **(5)** Appropriatness to meet PLO's and DLE; **(6)** Appropriatness for the assessment of student achievement of PLO's and DLE; **(7)** Adequency of planned utilization of existing resources; **(8)** Faculty have recent research or professional expertise to sustain, promote innovation and intelectual growth; **(9)** Faculty and staff can achieve prog. goals; **(10)**	**Parameter 2: (1)** Clarity with associated learning; **(2)** Alternative requirements- GPA, portfolio, prior experiece etc.; **(3)** Clear rationale for program length and period; **(4)** Identification of unique curriculum or program innovations: **(6)** Completeness of performance of students consistent with DLE; **(7)** Participation of sufficent and quality number of faculty competent to teach and supervise in the program; **(8)** Appropriate to the program, financial	**Parameter 3: (1)** Appropriateness of degree nomenclature; **(4)** Suitability of research requirements; **(7)** Adequante resources to sustain the quality of scholarship of UG students; **(8)** Evidence of how supervisory loads will be distributed, qualifications and appointment status of faculty who will provide supervision and instruction; **(9)**	**Parameter 4: (9)** Supervision of experiential learning opportunities	**Parameter 5: (9)** Role of adjunct and part-time faculty
13	Students perception of Quality of a Business Program delivered in Canada and China	Journal of International Education in Business, Margaret Hohner & Panagiotis, 2012, Toronto	**The Student connects to Evaluation Criteria 8 Graduate program, parameter 2 is appropriate to the program.** It also connects to **Criteria 10 Quality Indicators and paramter 3- graduate employability skills.**	**Evaluation Criteria*** : **8th**-Graduate Program Resources; **10th**- Quality Indicators	**Parameter 1**	**Parameter 2: (8)** Appropriate to the program, financial assistance for students to ensure adequant quality and number of students	**Parameter 3: (10)** Graduates- graduation, employment, skills match, alumni reports	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**

	Synthesis of Literature Reviewed with the Parameters Benchmarked			1(6), 2(9), 3(8), 4(6), 5(6), 6(7), 7(4), 8(7), 9(4), 10(13)	1(1-4), 2(1-7), 3(1-6), 4(1-5), 5(1-5), 6(1-7), 7(1-3), 8(1-4), 9(1-4), 10(1-6)	1(2-2), 2(2-3), 3(2-4), 4(2-4), 5(2-N), 6(2-6), 7(2-3), 8(2-5), 9(2-2), 10(2-6)	1(3-1), 2(3-N), 3(3-N), 4(3-3), 5(3-N), 6(3-N), 7(3-3), 8(3-2), 9(3-2), 10(3-11)	1(4-N), 2(4-N), 3(4-N), 4(4-N), 5(4-N), 6(4-N), 7(4-N), 8(4-N), 9(4-2), 10(4-N)	1(5-N), 2(5-N), 3(5-N), 4(5-N), 5(5-N), 6(5-N), 7(5-N), 8(5-N), 9(5-3), 10(5-N)
Se	**Study Title**	**Author/s, Year, Study country**	**How does this study connect to our topic of interest?**	**Evaluation Criteria***	**Parameter 1**	**Parameter 2**	**Parameter 3**	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**
14	Lessons learned from a new quality assurance process for Ontario	Daniel W. Lang Theory and Policy Studies, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada	It connects to the **10th** parameter of the study **Quality** indicator	**Evaluation Criteria*: 10th** **Quality** Indicators	**Parameter 1**	**Parameter 2**	**Parameter 3:** (10) Graduates-graduation, employment, skills match, alumni reports	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**
15	Ontario's QA Framework: A Critical Response	James Heap, 2013, Canada	it aligns with (1)) **Criteria 1** of our study **Quality** Indicators, sub-criteria: **Faculty-qualifications, research, scholarly record, part-time faculty**; (2)) Criteria **6)** **Asessment of Teaching and Learning,** Sub-criteria: **Appropriatness for the assessment of student achievement of PLO's and DLE & Completeness of performance of students consistent with DLE**; (3)) Criteria **5)** **Model of Delivery**, Sub-criteria: **Appropriatness to meet PLO's and DLE**; (4)) Criteria **4)** **Program Content,** sub-criteria: **Curriculum addresses the discipline and area of study**; (5)) Criteria **3)** **Program Structure,** Sub-criteria: **Appropriateness to meet PLO's and degree level expectations** (DLE); (6)) Criteria **2)** **Admission Requirement**: Sub-criteria: Appropriateness of learning outcome established; (7)) **Criteria 1)** **Objectives of the Program** Sub-criteria: **Clarifty with Associated Learning.**	**Evaluation Criteria*: 1st** Objectives of the Program; **2nd** Admission Requirements; **3rd**-Program Structure; **4th** Program Content; **5th**-Mode of Delivery; **6th** Assessment of Teaching an Learning; **10th** Quality Indicators	**Parameter 1: (2)** Appropriateness of learning outcome established; **(3)** Appropriateness to meet PLO's and degree level expectations (DLE); **(4)** Curriculum addresses the discipline and area of study; **(5)** Appropriatness to meet PLO's and DLE; **(6)** Appropriatness for the assessment of student achievement of PLO's and DLE; **(10)** Faculty-qualifications, research, scholarly record, part-time faculty	**Parameter 2: (1)** Clarity with associated learning; **(6)** Completeness of performance of students consistent with DLE	**Parameter 3**	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**

	Synthesis of Literature Reviewed with the Parameters Benchmarked			1(6), 2(9), 3(8), 4(6), 5(6), 6(7), 7(4), 8(7), 9(4), 10(13)	1(1-4), 2(1-7), 3(1-6), 4(1-5), 5(1-5), 6(1-7), 7(1-3), 8(1-4), 9(1-4), 10(1-6)	1(2-2), 2(2-3), 3(2-4), 4(2-4), 5(2-N), 6(2-6), 7(2-3), 8(2-5), 9(2-2), 10(2-6)	1(3-1), 2(3-N), 3(3-N), 4(3-3), 5(3-N), 6(3-N), 7(3-3), 8(3-2), 9(3-2), 10(3-11)	1(4-N), 2(4-N), 3(4-N), 4(4-N), 5(4-N), 6(4-N), 7(4-N), 8(4-N), 9(4-2), 10(4-N)	1(5-N), 2(5-N), 3(5-N), 4(5-N), 5(5-N), 6(5-N), 7(5-N), 8(5-N), 9(5-3), 10(5-N)
Se	**Study Title**	**Author/s, Year, Study country**	**How does this Study connect to our topic of interest?**	**Evaluation Criteria***	**Parameter 1**	**Parameter 2**	**Parameter 3**	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**
16	Incorporating Learning Outcomes in Transfer Credit: The Way Forward for Campus Alberta?	Dietmar K. Kennepohl, 2016, Canadian Journal of Higher Education	Meets **criteria 2 - Admission Requirements** and **sub-criteria 1 - learning outcome** and **sub-criteria 2 - prior experience**; Meets **criteria 3 - Program Structure** and sub-criterai, **length of the program in terms of credits**	**Evaluation Criteria*: 1st** - Objectives of the Program; **2nd** - Admission Requirements; **3rd** - Program Structure	**Parameter 1: (2)** Appropriateness of learning outcome established	**Parameter 2: (2)** Alternative requirements - GPA, portfolio, prior experience etc; **(3)** Clear rationale for program length and period	**Parameter 3**	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**
17	IMAGINE: Canada as a leader in international education. How can Canada benefit from the Australian experience?	Roopa Desai Trilokekar and Zainab Kizilbash, 2013, York University, Canadian Journal of Higher Education	Meets **criteria 2 - Admission requirements** in a minor way and **sub-criteria 2 - prior experience**. Also meets **criteria 10 - Quality Indicators** and its **sub-criteria 2 - registrations**, in this case international student registrations	**Evaluation Criteria*: 2nd** - Admission Requirements; **10th** - Quality Indicators	**Parameter 1**	**Parameter 2: (2)** Alternative requirements - GPA, portfolio, prior experience etc.; **(10)** Students-applications, registrations, attrition rates, academic awards	**Parameter 3**	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**
18	The Role of Course Portfolios in Quality Assurance at Higher Education Institutions: The Experience of the Emirates College of Technology	Basem Barqawi, Fatin Khraot, and Emad Abu Elrub.	This as a result will **produce graduates with adequate knolwdge, skills and competence that fit the market needs** and therefore economic and socail developent as this will **help grdauates to find jobs opportunities easily**, improve their living standards and contribute to economic development as well.	***Evaluation Criteria* 10th** - Quality Indicators	**Parameter 1**	**Parameter 2**	**Parameter 3:** (10) Graduates-graduation, employment, skills match, alumni reports	**Parameter 4**	**Parameter 5**

Under Synthesis 4.1the Evaluation Criteria* shown,shows the number of times each evaluation criteria isgiven importance in all the articles reviewed for this paper. For example, 1(6) means that the 1st Evaluation Criteria (EC) entitled "*Objectives of the Program*" was found 6 times in the 18 articles reviewed.

Thus, Synthesis 4.1shows the number of times each***Evaluation Criteria*** (EC) (1 to 10) were given importance in the literature reviewed, as shown in parenthesis / brackets () below:

1(6), 2(9), 3(8),
4(6), 5(6), 6(7),
7(4), 8(7), 9(4),
10(13)

It was also observed that EC no.10 entitled "*Quality Indicators*" was mentioned 13 times in 18 articles - the highest number of times as reviewed for the purpose of this study.This indicates importance of maintaining high quality in education while continuously monitoring / evaluating for continuous improvements.

Synthesis 4.1shows the number of times ***Parameter 1*** (P-1) (1 to 10) was given importance in the literature reviewed as shown in parenthesis / brackets () below. For example, 1(1-4) means that EC no. 1 entitled: "*Objectives of the Program*" and P-1 "*Consistency with Institutions Missions*" is repeated 4 times.

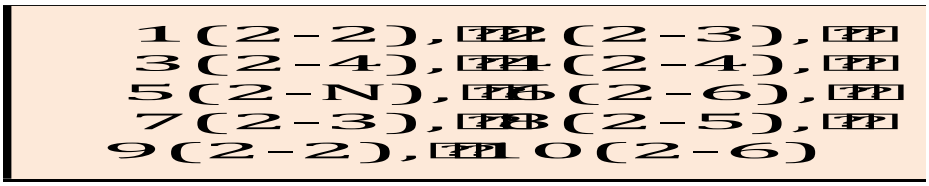
1(1-4), 2(1-7), 3(1-6),
4(1-5), 5(1-5), 6(1-7),
7(1-3), 8(1-4), 9(1-4),
10(1-6)

It was also observed that P-1 for both EC no.2 and 6 received high importance as it was repeated 7 times in papers reviewed in this study.

2 (1-7) indicates for EC no.2 entitled "*Admission Requirements*" and P-1 entitled "*Appropriateness of Learning Outcomes Established*", the correlation between admission requirements and appropriateness of learning outcomes.

Synthesis 4.1also shows that number of times *Parameter 2* (P-2) (1 to 9) was given importance in the literature reviewed as shown in parenthesis / brackets () below:

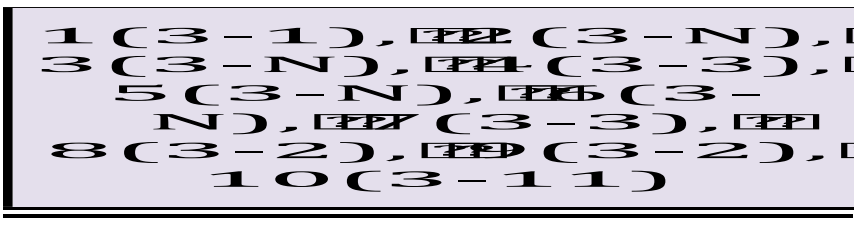
It was observed that parameter 2 for both EC no.6 and 10 received high importance as it was repeated 6 times in papers reviewed for this study.



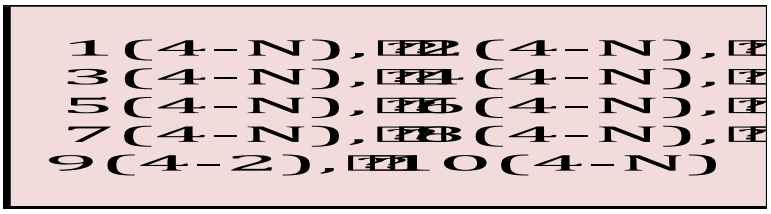
In 6 (2-6) the relationship is shown between EC no.6 entitled "*Assessment of Teaching and Learning*" and P-2 entitled "*Completeness of Performance of Students Consistent with DLE*". This is in addition to 10 (2-6), which shows the relationship between EC no. 10 entitled "*Quality Indicators*" andP-2 entitled "*Students-applications, registrations, attrition rates, academic awards.*

This is supported by findingsfor EC no. 10, Parameter 3 (P-3) entitled "*Graduates-Graduation, Employment, Skills Match, Alumni Reports*" that was repeated 11 times.

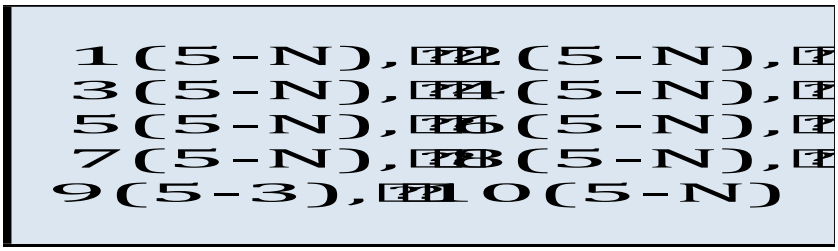
Synthesis 4.1shows that number of times ***Parameter 3*** (P-3) (1 to 6) was given importance in the literature reviewed as shown in parenthesis / brackets () below:



Synthesis 4.1showed that number of times ***Parameter 4*** (P-1) (1) was given importance in the literature reviewed as shown in parenthesis / brackets () below:



Synthesis 4.1showed that number of times***Parameter 5*** (P-5) (1) was given importance in the literature reviewed as shown in parenthesis / brackets ( ) below:



4.2 Gaps ascertained in UAE QA STANDARDS 2011 benchmarked against 10 Evaluation Criteria and 5 Parameters

Are Institutions in the UAE that are using CAA Standards, required to evaluate any new graduate or undergraduate programs against the following set criteria? If not, what are the gaps?						
	Evaluation Criteria*	Parameter 1	Parameter 2	Parameter 3	Parameter 4	Parameter 5
1	Objectives of the Program	Consistency with institutions mission- In Standard no. 3, entitled "The Educational Program", the CAA 2011 Standards clearly instructed academic institutions to make sure that the offered academic programs and courses are consistent with its mission. Those must be periodically reviewed and improved to make sure that students meet the intended outcomes and the programs comply with UAE Qualifications Framework. Page no. 4. (http://www.caa.ae).	Clarity with associated learning- The CAA Standards emphasizes the importance of assessing academic programs offered by any academic institution its contents and level, and its related goals and outcomes. The outcomes must be derived from the goals and it should be measured and consistent with UAE National Qualification Framework. (pg.	Item no. 3.1.2, in 2011 Standards, specifically under Standard no. 3 entitled "The Educational Programs", required that the titles of programs should be stated in standard academic terms "that reflect the international norms" which might indicated that there are no national norms available in determining the degree nomenclature in UAE. (See UAE NQFW????).		
2	Admission Requirements	In UAE 2011 Standards, Item 5.2.4 dictates that the academic institution is the one in charge of determining and announcing admission requirements related to each program in the undergraduate and graduate programs and in compliance with the requirements" specified in Stipulation 10, "graduate admission" that any institution must adhered to.	Alternative requirements- GPA, portfolio, prior experiece etc.			
3	Program Structure	In Stipulation F "Catalog", an academic institution must clarify "degree and program completion requirements, including learning outcomes at the appropriate level, and how these learning outcomes are aligned with the UAE Qualifications Framework". Pg.	Clear definitions on the minimum and maximum periods of enrollment for the completion of a qualification; (CAA Standards 2011, Stipulation 4) Completion Requirements Policy, Item no. 7, Pg. 54) The minimum number of credit hours/credit units required for the completion of a qualification must be no less than the following: 1. Associate degree (Diploma) or its equivalent – 60 semester hours or equivalent; 2. Baccalaureate Degree or its equivalent – 120 semester hours or equivalent; 3. Postgraduate Diploma – 24 semester hours or equivalent; 4. Master's Degree or its equivalent – 30 semester hours including thesis requirements (if any), or equivalent; 5. Doctoral Degree or its equivalent – 42 semester hours including dissertation requirements, or equivalent, with at least 24 of those hours being "taught" classes rather than dissertation credits." Pg 54, 2011 CAA Standards			

	Evaluation Criteria*	Parameter 1	Parameter 2	Parameter 3	Parameter 4	Parameter 5
4	**Program Content**	"The curriculum of each academic program: 3.2.1 comprises a progression and mix of courses (such as major, concentration, general education, and electives; introductory and advanced with prerequisites) that meets international norms in terms of content, coverage, level, and practice; 3.2.2 requires a number of credit hours (or equivalent) that is consistent with international norms in the discipline and for the level of the qualification awarded; 3.2.3 requires for completion a minimum cumulative grade point average (or equivalent) and other requirements as specified in Stipulation 4: Completion Requirements; 3.2.4 if allowing credit earned through courses defined as "independent study", limits the grant of such credit to 6 semester hours for undergraduate programs below the bachelor's degree; 9 semester hours for a bachelor's degree; 3.2.5 relates any professional training to current practice, relevant licensing requirements, and generally accepted international norms; 3.2.6 is clearly described and published in the Catalog and other relevant publications, including the institution's website". (2011 CAA Standards, 3.2 The Curricula, Page no. 21) The CAA Standards 2011, under course Syllabi, requires that "for each course offered, an institution must provide a syllabus, which is a comprehensive document containing sufficient information to ensure many things among them is what is indicated in item no. 3.3.7 students who take the course understand what they need to have achieved in order to take the course, what will be expected of them during the course, and what they will have achieved having taken the course;", Course Syllabi, page 55	In its introductory paragraph the 2011 CAA Standards clearly encouraged innovation and creativity in educational strategies while respecting the diversity of educational provision (pg.1). Moreovere, in the same satnadards under item no.10 entitled "researchn and scholarly activities", which says that "In keeping with its mission, the institution supports research and scholarly activities directed towards the creation, integration, and application of knowledge. In line with a research strategy, the institution's physical, fiscal, and human resources, its organization, services, policies, and programs all reflect its commitment to research, scholarship, and creative activity. (2011 CAA Standards Pg. 39).	Stipulation 4 Page 54 (but there is not clear statements about research-focused programs???). Completion Requirements Policy An institution's policy on the completion requirements for academic programs must include the following: 1. clear statements on required cumulative grade point average for graduation. At a minimum, institutions must require the following grade point average: a. Undergraduate degrees/qualifications: 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, or equivalent; b. Graduate degrees/qualifications: 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, or equivalent; 2. clear definitions on the minimum and maximum periods of enrollment for the completion of a qualification; 3. clear statements on the required cumulative grade point average to maintain good academic standing. At a minimum, institutions must require the following grade point average: a. Undergraduate programs: 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, or equivalent; b. Graduate programs: 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, or equivalent. The minimum number of credit hours/credit units required for the completion of a qualification must be no less than the following: 1. Associate degree (Diploma) or its equivalent – 60 semester hours or equivalent; 2. Baccalaureate Degree or its equivalent – 120 semester hours or equivalent; 3. Postgraduate Diploma – 24 semester hours or equivalent; 4. Master's Degree or its equivalent – 30 semester hours including thesis requirements (if any), or equivalent; 5. Doctoral Degree or its equivalent – 42 semester hours including dissertation requirements, or equivalent, with at least 24 of those hours being "taught" classes rather than dissertation credits.		
5	**Mode of Delivery**	Standard no. entitled "3.7 The Educational Program" specifically under item 3.8 "Course Delivery" "The Institution: 3.8.1 ensures that the delivery of each course is consistent with its detailed syllabus; 3.8.2 ensures that the academic assessment of students is fair, accurate, aligned with learning outcomes and program goals, and is undertaken at an appropriate level; 3.8.3 maintains updated files for the delivery of each course, which include the information specified in Stipulation 7: Course Files.".				

	Evaluation Criteria*	Parameter 1	Parameter 2	Parameter 3	Parameter 4	Parameter 5
6	**Assessment of Teaching and Learning**	"Stipulation 7 Course Files The Commission requires that institutions maintain updated files for each course of instruction. These must contain sufficient information on each presentation of the course so that the faculty or other persons who assess program effectiveness can determine whether the course is meeting its learning outcomes, and whether changes to the course are appropriate. Course files must include the following information, which may be in electronic form or hard copy: 1. Syllabi for the current and previous offerings of the course; 2. Copies of all instructor teaching materials; 3. copies of all assessment instruments; 4. Instructor worked answers and marking schemes for all assessment instruments; 5. examples from across the range of student performance of graded responses to all assessment instruments; 6. a comprehensive instructor review of the presentation of the course, covering: a. appropriateness of the course learning outcomes; b. extent to which the syllabus was covered; c. extent to which learning outcomes were met (with evidence); d. appropriateness of textbooks and other learning resources; e. appropriateness of assessment instruments in relation to learning outcomes; f. appropriateness of the balance of assessment; g. appropriateness of prerequisites; h. general comments on any problems encountered with the course; "page 57"	"Stipulation 7 Course Files The Commission requires that institutions maintain updated files for each course of instruction. These must contain sufficient information on each presentation of the course so that the faculty or other persons who assess program effectiveness can determine whether the course is meeting its learning outcomes, and whether changes to the course are appropriate. Course files must include the following information, which may be in electronic form or hard copy: 7. quantitative analysis of student performance during the course presentation (e.g., grade distributions); 8. summary of student feedback on the evaluation of the course." (page 57			
7	**Human, IT, Financial Resources**	6. Learning Resources The institution provides learning resources and services for students and faculty members that adequately support teaching and learning and, as applicable, research, in ways that are consistent with the institution's mission and goals. Those learning resources typically include the library, technology and laboratories (both general purpose and specialized) as appropriate. Library, information resources, other technological support, and the laboratories are sufficient in quality, depth, diversity and currency in order to support the institution's curricular offerings at the appropriate level for the programs offered, and they meet the needs of the faculty, students, and academic support personnel, regardless of where they are located. (Page 28). Moreover, In Stipulation 7, Course Files, the standards 1. a comprehensive instructor review of the presentation of the course, covering many items and one of them is "Appropriateness of textbooks and other learning resources;" (page 57).	4. Faculty and Professional Staff The institution demonstrates that it has an appropriately qualified faculty and administrative and technical staff of a sufficient number to meet all requirements of its programs, services, and activities and to achieve its mission. All faculty members and professional staff hold appropriate credentials; their preparation and qualifications are suited to the field and the level of their instructional assignments or field of activity. The institution has orderly, transparent processes and policies for recruiting, developing, evaluating, promoting, and retaining members of the professional staff and faculty members, who exemplify diverse educational and cultural backgrounds. 2011 CAA Standard page no.1	"4.8 Professional Development. The institution: 4.8.1 provides faculty development activities that support teaching, research, and scholarship; these activities are regularly assessed to ensure they are appropriate and effective; 4.8.2 provides appropriate support services and professional development and training programs for faculty members in a variety of instructional strategies and technologies in order to foster active student learning; 4.8.3 provides adequate training and support for faculty members in using software related to meeting educational goals; 4.8.4 demonstrates, as relevant to its mission, that faculty members receive adequate opportunities and resources for research and scholarship; for example, publishing or presenting research papers; organizing and participating in national, regional, and international conferences, workshops, seminars, or exhibitions; leaves for sabbaticals and training;" (CAA 2011 Standrads, Page 1). Under item 5.8 Student Services., the 2011 CAA Stanbdards say: 5.8.4 If the institution offers financial aid, all awards, including scholarships, are coordinated and awarded according to published criteria; all funds for financial aid programs are audited in compliance with UAE law". (CAA 2011		

	Evaluation Criteria*	Parameter 1	Parameter 2	Parameter 3	Parameter 4	Parameter 5
8	Graduate Program Resources	**Faculty have recent research or professional expertise to sustain, promote innovation and intellectual growth**	5.8 Student Services. Page 25 5.8.4 If the institution offers financial aid, all awards, including scholarships, are coordinated and awarded according to published criteria; all funds for financial aid programs are audited in compliance with UAE law.	**Evidence of how supervisory loads will be distributed, qualifications and appointment status of faculty who will provide supervision and instruction**		
9	UG Program Resources	In Standard no. of the 2011 UAE CAA Standards, Page no. 25 under the title of "4. Faculty and Professional Staff", "The institution demonstrates that it has an appropriately qualified faculty and administrative and technical staff of a sufficient number to meet all requirements of its programs, services, and activities and to achieve its mission. All faculty members and professional staff hold appropriate credentials; their preparation and qualifications are suited to the field and the level of their instructional assignments or field of activity. The institution has orderly, transparent processes and policies for recruiting, developing, evaluating, promoting, and retaining members of the professional staff and faculty members, who exemplify diverse educational and cultural backgrounds.	The CAA standards required the availability of resources for any higher education institution to be able to support its academic programs. This is specified in Satanrds no. 6 and 7 in which it could be clearly observed that the standards require the availability of both Learning Resources (Libraray, Technology and Laboratories) and Physciall resouces (Suffecient no. of classrooms, other specialized pgysciall resources, safety, technological resources, and fiscal resources).	Anticipated class sizes, under Standard no. 3 entitled "The Educational Program", item no. 3.9 in the CAA Standards dectates that: "The institution: 3.9.1 has guidelines in place for determining appropriate class size to ensure effective teaching and learning in its different disciplines fields and levels of courses; 3.9.2 can demonstrate, through appropriate approved policies and practices, based on a sound pedagogical rationale, that class size is carefully considered in the design and delivery of all its courses." Page 24	Supervision of experiential learning opportunities, In Stipulation 6 entitled "Internships", "An institution that incorporates internships, practicums, cooperative placements, and similar experiential learning experiences into some or all of its curricula must: 1. have a designated office or an individual who is specifically given responsibility for internships and other forms of experiential learning. The office may be central for the entire institution or it may be departmentally or programmatically centered; 2. publish an Internship Manual that brings together institutional policies and procedures relating to internships and other experiential learning; ect. and in item no. 15 under the same satndard "15. ensure that the internship or experiential learning program as a whole is regularly evaluated, in terms of both student experiences and employer satisfaction, and that the results of these evaluations are used to improve the program."	**Role of adjunct and part-time faculty**
10	Quality Indicators	**Faculty-qualifications, research, scholarly record, part-time faculty**	**Students-applications, registrations, attrition rates, academic awards**	3. Graduates: rates of graduation, employment six months and two years after graduation, post-graduate study, "skills match" and alumni reports on program quality when available and when permitted by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). Auditors will be instructed that these items may not be available and applicable to all programs. Graduates-graduation, employment, skills match, alumni reports. Under Stnadard no. 3 entitled "The Educational Program", item 3.1.1 says "The institution thoroughly assesses the need for any new program, determining the potential employment market, competition in the sector, prospective student interest, resource requirements, and financial implications". Moreovere, in Standard no. 5 "Students", item 5.8 "Student Services" and sub-item 5.8.3 "To assist students in career planning and appropriate employment, career development services—career testing, information, and counseling, interviewing and other employment skills, job placement, and follow-up activities—are available to students beginning with their first enrollment; specific policies govern the career services available to students, alumni, and employers" and "5.9.3 Advisors are properly prepared to advise students regarding career development, current employment opportunities, the curriculum, and, if relevant, to mentor graduate students".		

Synthesis 4.2show *Evaluation Criteria* (EC)and *Parameter* (P) benchmarked against STANDARDS 2011. Red areasindicate *gaps* existing in theUAESTANDARDS.

5. Analysis:

Analysis of Table 1A based on 4.1 showing PRESENCE in Literature Reviewed

Table 1	18-Tot.Papers	6-Total EC*	6-Total EC*	6-Total EC*		
	*Evaluation Criteria**	EC	P-1	P-2	P-3	P-4	P-5
1	Objectives of the Program	6 / 18 (33%)	4 / 6 (67%)	2 / 6 (33%)	1 / 6 (16%)		
2	Admission Requirements	9 / 18 (50%)	7 / 9 (78%)	3 / 9 (43%)			
3	Program Structure	8 / 18 (44%)	6 / 8 (75%)	4 / 8 (50%)			
4	Program Content	6 / 18 (33%)	5 / 6 (83%)	4 / 6 (67%)	3 / 6 (50%)		
5	Mode of Delivery	6 / 18 (33%)	5 / 6 (83%)				
6	Assessment of Teaching an Learning	7 / 18 (39%)	7 / 7 (100%)	6 / 7 (86%)			
7	Human, IT, Financial Resources	4 / 18 (22%)	3 / 4 (75%)	3 / 4 (75%)	3 / 4 (75%)		
8	Graduate Program Resources	7 / 18 (39%)	4 / 7 (57%)	5 / 7 (71%)	3 / 7 (43%)		
9	UG Program Resources	4 / 18 (22%)	4 / 4 (100%)	2 / 4 (50%)	2 / 4 (50%)	2 / 4 (50%)	3 / 4 (75%)
10	Quality Indicators	13 / 18 (72%)	6 / 13 (46%)	6 / 13 (46%)	11 / 13 (85%)		

Analysis of Table 1B based on 4.1 GAPS of Literature Reviewed

Table 1B Gaps	18-Tot.Papers	6-Total EC*	6-Total EC*	6-Total EC*		
	*Evaluation Criteria**	EC	P-1	P-2	P-3	P-4	P-5
1	Objectives of the Program	6 / 18 (67%)	4 / 6 (31%)	2 / 6 (67%)	1 / 6 (84%)		
2	Admission Requirements	9 / 18 (50%)	7 / 9 (21%)	3 / 9 (57%)			
3	Program Structure	8 / 18 (56%)	6 / 8 (25%)	4 / 8 (50%)			
4	Program Content	6 / 18 (67%)	5 / 6 (17%)	4 / 6 (43%)	3 / 6 (50%)		
5	Mode of Delivery	6 / 18 (67%)	5 / 6 (17%)				
6	Assessment of Teaching an Learning	7 / 18 (61%)	7 / 7 (0%)	6 / 7 (14%)			
7	Human, IT, Financial Resources	4 / 18 (78%)	3 / 4 (25%)	3 / 4 (25%)	3 / 4 (25%)		
8	Graduate Program Resources	7 / 18 (61%)	4 / 7 (43%)	5 / 7 (29%)	3 / 7 (67%)		
9	UG Program Resources	4 / 18 (78%)	4 / 4 (0%)	2 / 4 (50%)	2 / 4 (50%)	2 / 4 (50%)	3 / 4 (25%)
10	Quality Indicators	13 / 18 (21%)	6 / 13 (54%)	6 / 13 (54%)	11 / 13 (15%)		

Table 1A shows the % of EC and Parameters present in the literature reviewed based on synopsis analyzed in section 4.1. While, Table 1B shows the % of gaps that existed (100%-Strength %). For the purposes of our study, the following werestandardized based on normal curve:

- A gap of 51% and above was considered as a *strong gap*(was *indicated* in color red).
- A gap from 30% - 50% was considered as a *moderate*gap (was *indicated* in color blue).
- A gap from 29 % and below was not considered a gap (was *indicated* in color black).

It was thus observed that in all 10 EC a gap existed in at least one parameter when reviewed against literature and the gap ranged from*moderate*(*indicated* by color blue) to very *strong*(*indicated* by color red)as seen in Table 1A above.

For EC no.1, it was noticed that with respect to "*Objectives of the Program*" a gap *strongly* existed in P-2*(100-33%)* entitled "*Clarity with Associated Learning*" (*67%)*and P-3 *(100-16%)* entitled "*Appropriateness of Degree Nomenclature*"*(84%)*, while a gap *moderately* existed with P-1 *(100-67%)* entitled "*Consistency with Institute's Mission*" (*33%).* This showed that there is scope for program learning objectives to be made clearer by Higher Education Institutions (HEI), as otherwise this may adversely impact program objectives and the associated learning may not easily be measured (P-2).Furthermore, research indicated that programs objectives must more clearly align to appropriate degree nomenclature (P-3), while remaining consistent with the institute's mission (P-1). This result is consistent with Rees and Simon's advice based on their (2007) study with relevance to academic guidance being related to learning outcomes and objectives in the program for which clarity of program goal must be based on actual feedback from impacted stockholders.

Analysis of Table 1Cbased on 4.2 GAPS in UAE STANDARDS 2011

	*Evaluation Criteria**	EC	P-1	P-2	P-3	P-4	P-5
1	Objectives of the Program	✔	✔	✔	✔		
2	Admission Requirements	✔	✔	Alternate Require.			
3	Program Structure	✔	✔	✔			
4	Program Content	✔	✔	✔	✔		
5	Mode of Delivery	✔	✔				
6	Assessment of Teaching an Learning	✔	✔	✔			
7	Human, IT, Financial Resources	✔	✔	✔	✔		
8	Graduate Program Resources	✔	Faculty Res. Innovation	✔	Faculty Load Distrib.Evid.		
9	UG Program Resources	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	Role of Adju./P.T Fac.
10	Quality Indicators	✔	Scholarly Rec./PT Fac	Attrition/ Std.Reg.	✔		

For EC No.2 - admission requirements, a*strong*gapexisted in P-2*(100-43%)* entitled "*Alternative requirements- GPA, portfolio, prior experience etc.*," in both Table 1B(*57%)*and Table 1C. This means there is great scope for recognition of alternate criteria for admission such as prior learning to be considered by bothHEI as well as the Ministry of Higher Education UAE in the STANDARDS, which must have a clear policy for evaluation of alternative requirements such as prior experience. Although research shows most HEIs and STANDARDS have Admission Requirements that ensure students come with appropriate learning outcomes as required.

For EC no. 3as shownin Table 1A and 1Ba *strong* gap *(100-44%)* was seen to exist in the "*Program Structure*"(*56%)*and a *moderate* gap in its relationto P-2 *(100-50%)* entitled "*Clear Rationale for Program Length and Period*"(*50%).* This shows that Program Structure must incorporate a timeline and duration for the program based on a clear rationale, even when it appropriately meets required program level outcomes (PLO) and degree level expectations (DLE). This supportsgaps seen in EC no.1.This result encourages one to emulate the Canadian experience indicated in the study on program reviews conducted byDaniel W. Lang of the University of Toronto's Theory and Policy Studies, although not all universities have conducted that, of having a buffer body between 21 institutions and the government. The program length and duration could be reviewed as well.

In EC no.4 - "*Program Content*"*(100-33%)* an overall *strong*gap *(67%)*existed and also a *moderate* gap in its relation to two parameters, P-2*(100-67%)* entitled"*Identification of Unique Curriculum or Program Innovations*"*(33%)*and P-3 *(100-50%)* entitled "*Suitability of Research Requirements*"*(50%).*This shows further scope for HEIto incorporate innovative content in their programs and curricula, even while the curriculum addresses discipline and area of study.This supports the conclusion of Basem Barqawi, Fatin Khraot, and Emad Abu Elrub about course portfolio being a basis of scientific evaluation and improvement of curriculum as well as for evaluating faculty members.

In EC no.5 - "*Mode of Delivery*" *(100-33%)*an overall *strong* gap *(67%)* existed. This shows a need for institutions to focus on the overall mode of delivery to meet intended learning outcomes, even when delivery appropriately meets both PLO's and DLE.

EC no.6 entitled "*Assessment of Teaching and Learning*"*(100-39%),* there is a overall*strong* gap*(61%)* that indicatesthat institutions may be lacking in accurate studentassessment despite appropriate assessment of PLO's with DLE and performance of students being consistent with DLE. This may be linked to EC no.5 and EC No. 2. This shows importance of achieving PLO's and DLE and role of admissionsto establishappropriate learning outcomes and their impact on studentgraduating after carefully assessing them through the appropriate assessments. This supports the analysis of James Heap (2013) who reviewed Ontario's QA Framework within the Canadian environment as he found that the five elements that are defining characteristics of a strong accountability system for learning-focused instruction, the following are required - (1) statements of intended learning outcomes, (2) institutions must have and implement an assessment plan, (3) institutions must collect data on actual results, (4) data should be analyzed to discover and gauge the gap between intended and actual learning outcomes, and (5) a strong review system must demonstrate that the collected data and analyses are used to adjust or modify the design and/or delivery of instructional programs.

In EC no.7 –"*Human, IT, Financial Resources*"*(100-22%),* an overall *strong* gap *(78%)*was found as being one of the highest so far. This shows all human, capital and financial resources

are required to run programs and maintain the quality as mandated in HEI. Without planned utilization of existing resources, including faculty to teach and supervise in the program and adequate resources to sustain the scholarship of the students, no HEI can adequately fulfill its mission.This might necessitate the need for support from Governments and public authorities to encourage both public and private higher education sectors to deliver programs with QA that is responsive to market needs and thus encourage market growth and development. Darwin D. Hendel and Darrel R. Lewis also advised thisin their (2005) study.

In EC no.8 – "*Graduate Program Resources*" *(100-39%)strong*gaps were found in both Tables 1A / 1B*(61%)*and 1C. *Strong* gap existed in Table 1A and 1B in the alignment of EC no. 8 with P3*(100-43%) –* "*Evidence of how Supervisory Loads will be Distributed*" *(67%)*and a *moderate* gap with P1*(100-57%) –* "*Faculty have Recent Research Experience*" *(43%)*. Gaps were seen in Table 1C in the same areas of P-1 and P-3. This indicates that inadequate graduate resources such as insufficient supervisors, or unqualified faculty without current and applied research expertise could seriously hamper innovation and intellectual growth in HEI. This also impacts EC no. 4 that speaks of innovation in curriculum and program content despite institutions meeting financial assistance needs of students.

In EC no.9 – "*UG Program Resources*"*(100-22%)* one of the *strongest* overallgaps *(78%)* in this study was found in Table 1A and 1B, while a*moderate* gap was found in it's relation toP-2 *(100-50%) – "Commitment to Resources for Implementation of Plans" (50%)*, P-3 *(100-50%) – "Anticipated Class Sizes" (50%)* and P-4*(100-50%) – " Supervision of Experiential Learning Opportunities" (50%)*. This indicates that full time and adjunct faculty and staff by themselves cannot achieve program goals without support of adequate management commitment to resources for implementation of plans, adherence to required class sizes and adequate supervision of applied and experiential learning opportunities and facilitation of that environment for students. A gap was seen in Table 1C in P-5 – Role of Adjunct and Part-Time Faculty in STANDARDS. This shows scope for specifying a clear role for faculty where they teach in part-time or adjunct capacity.

EC no.9 "*UG Program Resources*" might negatively affect the quality of education in certain Middle East countries like Jordan in which the accreditation body puts more emphasis on such

resources more than the quality of education for private universities as indicated by Sabri, Hala Ahmad, 2006 in their paper '*Accreditation on higher business education in the private sector: the case of Jordan'*as the finding show that the arrangements of accreditation in Jordanian private universities are still inadequate despite some progress in determining and assuring quality of standards in Business administration programs.

In EC no.10 entitled "*Quality Indicators'*, a*strong* gap was found in related to P1 *(100-46%)*entitled "*Faculty-qualifications, Research Scholarly Record*" *(54%)*and P2 *(100-46%)*entitled – "*Students-Applications, Registrations, Attrition Rates, Academic Awards*"*(54%).* This indicates that faculty qualifications and scholarly record, as well as quality of student applications and awardscan indicategraduate employment and have impact on alumni performance. This indicatesimportance of hiring qualified faculty members who will have a positive important impact on the quality of education as they will be qualified enough to achieve and measure the teaching and learning outcome in a very professional manner.

The relationship between EC no. 10 entitled "*Quality Indicators*" and P-2 entitled "*Students-applications, registrations, attrition rates, academic awards*" supports the findings of Michael L. Skolnik, University of Toronto, 2010 study of "responsive model" of evaluation that could make quality assurance more effective in improving educational quality and not limiting it to one meaning but accepting all meanings of quality enriches it value without diminishing it. This initiative helped develop global guidelines on quality assurance and accreditation for transnational post-secondary education and urged QA and Accreditation Regulatory bodies to customize to regional demands. This also goes along with Neema, Noori and Pia-Kristina Anderson (2013, UAE) findings as they found that better knowledge of local conditions might result in stronger protections for academic freedom and a system of higher education that is more responsive to local needs". Several internal and external accrediting agencies affecting the education system and its quality in the Gulf region and the external ones do not possess sufficient knowledge of the local Gulf culture before they propose certain standards or requirements. This is more appreciated by students and encourages them to pay more for a better quality as indicated by Margaret Hohner & Panagiotis in 2012 study in which both program and accreditation emerged as important measures of quality from a student's perspectives in Canada and China. In

fact one of the most important findings of Margaret Hohner & Panagiotis is the student's point of view quality in education means a good program and a good standard of accreditation that can land him / her into a definite career path. This is again supported by the conclusion of Daniel W. Lang in his paper - 'Lessons Learned From a New QualityAssurance Process for Ontario' that quality assurance involves a diverse assortment of practices - some local and some system-wide; some voluntary and some involuntary; some sought to assure quality, while other sought to enhance quality and some normative; while some formative.

6. Findings of the Study

1. There is scope for *Program Learning Objectives* to be made clearer by Higher Education Institutions (HEI), as otherwise this may adversely impact program objectives and the associated learning may not easily be measured.

2. There is a scope for recognition of alternate criteria for admission such as *Prior Learning* to be considered by both HEI as well as the Ministry of Higher Education, UAE that compiles the STANDARDS, which must have a clear policy for evaluation of alternative requirements such as prior experience.

3. *Program Structure* must incorporate timeline and duration based on a clear rationale, even when it appropriately meets required program level outcomes and degree level expectations.

4. There is further scope in HEI's to incorporate *innovative content* in their programs and curricula, even while the curriculum addresses the discipline and area of study.

5. There is a need for HEI's to focus on the *overall mode of delivery* to meet the intended learning outcomes, even when the delivery appropriately meets both PLO's and DLE.

6. Institutions may be still lacking in *accurate student assessment* despite appropriate assessment of PLO's with DLE and performance of students being consistent with DLE.

7. *Human, capital and financial resources are required sufficiently* to run programs and maintain the quality as mandated in HEI.This is equally true in *private universities* that are profit oriented and not subsidized by government, whereany lack in these resources due to insufficient budget for these resources or reduction in operating expenses to increase profits or diversion of funds to coverprivate obligations may dangerously jeopardize the very running of these institutions.

8. Inadequate graduate resources such as insufficient supervisors, or unqualified faculty and faculty without current and *applied research expertise*, could seriously hamper innovation and intellectual growth in HEI.

9. Full time and adjunct faculty and staff by themselves cannot achieve program goals without *support of adequate management commitment* to resources for implementation of plans, adherence to required class sizes and adequate supervision of applied and experiential learning opportunities and facilitation of that environment for students.

10. *Faculty qualifications and scholarly record*, as well as quality of student applications and awards can indicate graduate employment and have impact on alumni performance. importance hiring qualified faculty members who will have a positive important impact on the quality of education as they will be qualified enough to achieve and measure the teaching and learning outcome in a very professional manner.

7. Policy Recommendations

Based on the gaps uncovered, our policy recommendations are for 2 sectors – one for HEI and one for the UAE Government and other Governments in the Middle East Region.

7.1 Policy Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions in the Middle East:

1. Program objectives need to have greater clarity with the associated learning.

2. Degree nomenclature and coding has to be planned and done appropriately for both undergraduate and graduate programs to align with program objectives.

3. Program objectives must be consistent with the institutions mission.

4. Admission criteria must also review and consider alternate GPA requirements, student portfolio and prior experience as recognized internationally, in order to remain globally competitive.

5. The program structure must incorporate a clear rationale for program length and period.

6. The program content and curriculum must meet the emerging needs of the learner and the market and must be unique and innovative.

7. The program content must incorporate co-research options suitable for students and faculty together.

8. Graduate programs must recruit faculty who have recent research expertise in order to be able to sustain innovative research and for the program to remain competitive.

9. There must be clear supervisory evidence in graduate programs of how faculty loads will be distributed based on faculty qualifications and appointment status of faculty (full time and part-time).

10. For undergraduate programs, class sizes must be as anticipated.

11. Experiential learning opportunities must be given to students at the undergraduate program level.

12. Role of adjunct and part-time faculty must be clear from the undergraduate program level.

13. Faculty qualifications, research and scholarly record of faculty both full time and part-time must be counted towards institutional quality indicator.

14. Quality and number of student applications received, registrations made, attrition rate of students, student awards etc., must be counted towards institutional quality indicators.

7.2 **Policy Recommendations for Government of UAE and Other Governments in the Middle East on incorporating the following in their Quality Assurance STANDARDS**:

1. Alternate GPA requirements, student portfolio and prior experience must be made mandatory as admission criteria, in order to remain globally aligned.

2. It must be made mandatory in graduate programs to recruit only such faculty who have recent research expertise for sustaining innovative research and for the programs to remain competitive.

3. There must be clear stipulations to demonstrate evidence of the basis of supervisory allocation of faculty loads and distribution in graduate programs, which are based on faculty qualifications and appointment status of faculty (full time and part-time).

4. Role of adjunct and part-time faculty must be required to be made clear at the undergraduate program level by the STANDARDS.

5. Faculty qualifications, research and scholarly record of faculty both full time and part-time must be counted as a institutional quality indicator.

6. Quality and number of student applications received, registrations made, attrition rate of students, student awards etc., must be counted as institutional quality indicators.

8. Limitations

The limitations in our study have been as follows:

1. The number of papers covered under the literature that was reviewed were limited
2. The papers were mainly related to Canada, North America and Middle East HEI
3. Papers were chosen from Canada since the criteria benchmarked on Quality Assurance was from Ontario, so more studies related to Canada were chosen
4. There were limited studies available in English on QA in the Middle East particularly covering HE in the UAE

9. Conclusion

Despite these limitations, we believe our paper fulfills a very important gap that is exiting in the literature particularly in the Middle East and specifically in the UAE. Our research reveals gaps existing in STANDARDS 2011, at a critical time when the Ministry of Higher Education is revamping the same to bring out STANDARDS 2018. We believe our yearlong research can add value to the new STANDARDS by throwing vital light on current existing gaps within a globally and internationally recognized standardized system of QA– the Ontario system and best practices.

10. Future Research

Our current research has opened up lot of future avenues of similar research where we hope to benchmark our best practice research with other countries' QAFrameworks such as the UK (QAA), Europe (Bologna Process), USA (AACSB), and India (NAAC) to name a few.

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