BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

END OF PROBATION REVIEW
(Independent Higher Education)

INSTITUTION: Qatar University, College of Law

ADDRESS: Al Tarfa
Doha 2713
Qatar

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Dr Tala Abdulla Al-Emadi

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Probation accreditation

DATE OF INSPECTION: 13–14 September 2023

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 22 February 2024

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

Qatar University, College of Law (the College/Institution) is part of Qatar University (the University). The University was founded in 1977 and is a publicly funded, quasi-governmental body. The University is made up of 11 colleges, including those of arts and science, business and economics, education, health, Islamic studies and law. British Accreditation Council (BAC) accreditation applies only to the College of Law.

The Institution has its origins in establishing the University's Department of Legal Education in 1993. The department was part of the College of Sharia and Islamic Studies until 2006, when it became a separate entity as the College of Law.

The Institution offers an undergraduate degree in law and postgraduate courses in public and private law and legal studies.

The University campus covers approximately eight square kilometres in the north of the capital city, Doha, where the College occupies its own dedicated building.

The College is the only institution providing legal education in Qatar. It aspires to be the premier college of law in the region, in relation to the quality of its academic programmes, the achievements of its staff and graduates, and its service to the local and international community.

The Institution is a semi-autonomous unit within the University's overall management and governance structure. At College level, the Dean provides overall oversight. The Dean is assisted by three Associate Deans who have responsibility for academic affairs, research and graduate studies, and student affairs.

Since the previous inspection, there has been a change in the College of Law senior leadership. A new Dean was appointed in June 2022. The Dean appointed a new leadership team of Associate Deans, who took up their positions in January 2023. In addition, the Institution moved into its new, purpose-built premises in August 2021.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Institution offers an undergraduate Bachelor of Laws (LLB) programme, a Graduate Certificate in Legal Studies, a Master of Laws (LLM) in Private Law and an LLM in Public Law. The Institution also provides a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Law programme.

All courses are delivered in person. Most courses are taught in Arabic, with a small minority of modules on the LLB programme taught in English.

At the time of the inspection, 1,637 students were enrolled. The Institution has a current capacity of around 3,000 students. All students are full time. The vast majority of students are on the LLB programme.

The vast majority of students are from Qatar, and the majority of all students are female. Non-Qatari students are drawn mainly from other Arab countries. All students are aged 18 or over.

Enrolment takes place annually each August. Admission procedures are handled centrally by Qatar University Admission and Registration Office. Students must meet published entry requirements, for example a high-school award with a minimum average mark of 70 per cent.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was undertaken over two days by one inspector. Meetings were held with the Dean, Associate Deans, the Head of the Legal Skills Department and other senior managers. Meetings were held with a group of students and with academic and administrative staff. The inspector observed lessons and undertook a tour of the premises and residential accommodation. A wide range of documentation was provided electronically for scrutiny. The Institution co-operated well with the inspection process before, during and after the inspection.

4.   Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	22–23 May 2016
Interim	15 October 2017
Re-accreditation	18, 20–21 & 24 May 2021

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

Since the previous inspection, there has been a change in the College of Law senior leadership. A highly qualified and experienced Dean was appointed in June 2022. The Dean appointed a new leadership team of Associate Deans, who took up their positions in January 2023. The members of the senior leadership team are suitably experienced and highly qualified academics who provide clear and effective direction and strategic leadership.

The Institution moved into its new, purpose-built premises in August 2021. Students benefit from modern, high-quality facilities and resources, including well-equipped classrooms and seminar rooms, a professional, full-size moot court, large lecture theatres, and a range of social and quiet study spaces. The premises provide an outstanding learning environment for students and staff.

Since the previous inspection, the Institution has expanded the number of law clinics it provides. Working in partnership with a local law firm, clinics provide students with experiential learning opportunities, providing members of the public with pro-bono legal advice in areas such as employment law and human trafficking. The clinics provide students with valuable opportunities to practise and apply their developing legal skills in real-world contexts.

2. Response to action points in last report

1.5 The Institution must implement an explicit procedure for risk management.

This action has been met. The Institution adopts and implements the University's detailed risk management process. This includes an explicit risk management procedure to systematically identify, analyse and evaluate relevant risks and the actions that may be needed to mitigate these.

1.6 Senior managers must regularly review risk assessments to inform action-planning where relevant.

This action has been met. Leaders and senior managers regularly review the outcomes of risk assessments through the College Council process to inform action-planning and to manage and mitigate risks where relevant. Meeting records clearly identify the actions taken to reduce or remove the identified risks to acceptable levels, and action plans are appropriately updated to reflect evaluation of measures taken.

5.12 Managers must implement effective procedures for external moderation at the post-assessment stage.

This action has not yet been fully met. Since the previous inspection, the Institution has strengthened its pre-assessment internal moderation processes to ensure that course assessments are fit for purpose. Internal colleagues, who do not teach on the course, formally review planned assessments to ensure that these are appropriate and fully aligned with the course learning outcomes. External reviewers are in place to moderate postgraduate students' theses on the LLM and Doctoral programmes. However, external moderation arrangements are not yet in place for undergraduate student assessments on the LLB programme.

14.4 The Institution must publish a specific policy detailing how discrimination is avoided and prevented.

This action has been met. College leaders have devised a formal, written anti-discrimination policy, which leaders of the University formally ratified in August 2022. The policy clearly outlines the Institution's commitment to maintaining an educational and practical environment that is free of all forms of discrimination.

14.8 The Institution must implement appropriate measures to mitigate the risks from radicalisation and extremism.

This action has not yet been fully met. The Institution has prepared a draft policy that sets out its commitment to condemning all forms of radicalisation and extremism. The draft policy includes a detailed prevention strategy and action to mitigate the risks from radicalisation and extremism.

At the time of the inspection, the policy was in the process of being formally approved and ratified at University level. Leaders and managers have completed an assessment of potential risk areas and introduced a range of measures to mitigate these. For example, students' literature and posters must be reviewed and authorised before wider dissemination, and external guest speakers must be approved in advance.

Senior leaders have completed awareness training, and students' understanding of the causes and consequences of extremism and training on anti-terrorism policies are developed through the human rights and international law curriculum. However, formal training for all staff has not yet been completed.

15.6 The complaints policy must permit students to refer their complaints to an external adjudicator.

The action has been met. The College of Law adapts the University's student complaint policy and the student code of conduct for dealing with students' formal complaints. College of Law students may appeal the outcome of their complaint to the University's Vice President for Student Affairs. External adjudication is available through formal legal challenge or through the BAC.

15.7 The complaints policy must reference students' right to submit a complaint to the BAC.

The action has been met. The Institution has updated its information to students to make them aware of their right to submit a complaint to the BAC. The website has been updated to include a link to BAC's student complaints policy.

27.1 Quality assurance policies and procedures must be clearly documented and disseminated at the Institution level.

The action has been met. The Institution adopts the University's range of detailed quality assurance policies, which are managed and implemented by the academic planning and quality assurance office. Policies and procedures are disseminated by leaders at the institutional level and made available on central administration systems. For example, the curriculum enhancement policy aims to ensure continuous improvement of the quality of academic programmes.

The faculty performance review and development policy provides comprehensive guidance on evaluating faculty members' performance. The academic programme review policy outlines the procedures for the periodic review of all academic programmes offered within Qatar University, including those provided by the College of Law.

27.3 & 27.4 Managers must embed regular and systematic performance reviews against clearly specified and appropriate performance indicators.

The action has been met. The Institution has established its own quality committee to ensure systematic performance reviews are fully embedded. The College of Law academic affairs office has completed a written evaluation of academic programmes to identify key strengths and areas for development. The written report analyses performance against clearly specified and appropriate performance indicators, such as student numbers and those completing and retained on the programme.

Reviews also include a detailed student-grade inflation or deflation analysis over time. The outcomes are reviewed and discussed by the College Council to identify and monitor the completion of any required outcomes.

27.7, 27.8 & 27.9 Course and programme leaders must produce formal performance reports for all courses that include an analysis of year-on-year results relating to student outcomes, achievement levels, completion rates and progression to further study or employment.

The action has been met. Course and programme leaders are in place for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Leaders meet regularly with course teams to review statistical performance indicators and to obtain qualitative academic feedback. Leaders produce formal evaluation reports that consider student outcomes, achievement levels and completion rates.

Reports also identify a summary of key achievements and future objectives. Statistical comparisons of performance data across previous academic years are completed to examine trends over time. Progression rates between the Institution's undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are collected, evaluated and reported. Analysis of student progression rates to further study or employment outside the Institution is not always related to each specific programme, however.

28.2 Managers must ensure that annual programme reports for all courses identify further areas requiring enhancement.

The action has been met. The academic planning and quality assurance office completes an annual assessment report covering all law programmes. The detailed report includes a comprehensive statistical analysis that informs the identification of a range of appropriate improvement actions. Actions are formally recorded, with clear lines of responsibility and realistic timelines, to further enhance the quality of provision.

28.3 Senior leaders must implement and review formal quality improvement action plans for all courses.

The action has been met. Leaders systematically monitor and review formal quality improvement action plans to ensure these are completed in line with planned timescales. For example, the annual assessment report reviews and updates the status of improvement actions adopted during the last academic year. This systematic approach ensures that actions are monitored effectively for completion and impact.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in the last report

It is recommended that the Institution's website includes more comprehensive information for applicants, including descriptions of all courses and available electives, as well as detailed assessment and progression information.

The recommendation has been met. The website now includes detailed descriptions of each course for the undergraduate LLB programme, as well as guidance on progression to higher level programmes. The website also includes a link to the study plan outline for each of the postgraduate courses, including the title of each module, a list of the available electives and details of the final thesis assessment.

Managers should consider implementing additional mechanisms for teaching staff to share best practice in using a range of engaging teaching methods.

The recommendation has been met. Lecturers take the lead on delivering teaching practice seminars to share best practice in the use of engaging pedagogical techniques with academic colleagues within the Institution. In addition, teaching staff benefit from various opportunities and professional development events provided by the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at University level. This helps teaching staff to share best practice across the different colleges of the University.

The Institution should expand and extend the current discrimination statement, developing a clear policy to further prevent and protect against discrimination.

The recommendation has been met. A formal, written anti-discrimination policy was fully implemented in August 2022. The policy outlines the Institution's commitment to maintaining an educational and practical environment free of all forms of discrimination.

Managers should consider enhancing existing programme action plans to include more specific success criteria and clear milestones for monitoring progress and completion by named individuals.

The recommendation has been met. The annual assessment report covering all programmes includes specific success criteria and clear milestones for monitoring progress and completion by named individuals. In addition, the College committee produces detailed minutes, which include specific action plans and timescales. This helps managers to monitor progress and completion by named individuals.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1   Governance, Strategy and Financial Management (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met

Comments

The Institution is effectively and responsibly governed. It has a clear organisational and governance structure. The Dean, supported by a team of experienced academic leaders, provides very effective leadership of education to ensure that the aims of the Institution are met. The College committee provides effective decision-making on academic matters, effectively protecting the integrity of academic freedom.

Senior leaders at the Institution work collaboratively with managers at the University to ensure policies are disseminated and implemented effectively. For example, the College has fully embraced and embedded the University's new education excellence framework to further develop a more student-centred curriculum.

Clear and effective channels of communication are in place to ensure all stakeholders are kept informed and updated. For example, the outcomes of regular academic and leadership meetings are professionally and systematically recorded and shared.

In partnership with the University's academic planning and quality assurance office, senior leaders conduct regular and systematic reviews of their performance, which is measured against appropriate strategic targets. This helps the Institution to identify areas for further enhancement.

The Institution's financial matters are conducted professionally, transparently and with appropriate probity.

4.2   General and Academic Management and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:	☐ Met	☒ Partially Met	☐ Not Met

Comments

The Institution is effectively managed. The management structure is clearly defined, documented and understood by all relevant stakeholder groups, including students, managers, and academic and administrative staff. Managers at all levels have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, which they implement effectively to ensure that the high quality of education is maintained and enhanced.

A suitable range of committees deal effectively with academic and student affairs. Committee meetings are held regularly and have clear and appropriate terms of reference. Committee meetings are accurately recorded, with clear action-planning arrangements in place.

The Institution works in close partnership with the University to ensure that the information it provides is accurate and fit for purpose.

The Institution is administered effectively. Administrators provide timely and professional support to managers. They ensure that policies, procedures and systems are well documented and disseminated effectively across the Institution. Students confirm that their classes are timetabled appropriately, and that academic records and transcripts are accessible to them in a timely manner. Inspection findings confirm this view.

The Institution has clear and robust pre-assessment internal moderation processes in place to ensure that course assessments are fit for purpose. External reviewers are in place to moderate postgraduate students' theses on the LLM and Doctoral programmes.

5.12 The Institution does not currently have effective procedures for external moderation of the undergraduate programme at the post-assessment stage.

The Institution employs and supports well-qualified and experienced staff who have clear job descriptions. Effective induction procedures are in place to ensure staff understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying these out.

The Institution has clear and robust performance management systems in place to identify and support the development needs of staff. Lecturers benefit from access to the University's Centre for Teaching and Learning Excellence, which provides effective training and guidance on teaching and assessment methods. This helps staff to further develop their professional practice.

Academic management is effective. The Institution implements clear and effective procedures for the proposal, design and validation of programmes of study. Since the previous inspection, course syllabi have been reviewed and updated to promote student-centred learning further. For example, programme learning outcomes clearly focus on developing students' employability skills and digital literacy through an experiential, entrepreneurial and research-informed curriculum.

The Institution has effective arrangements in place to recruit and enrol suitable students. Clear and appropriate entry requirements and robust initial assessment arrangements ensure that students have the capability to complete the programmes on which they are enrolled.

Academic staff are well supported to undertake research and scholarly activity. For example, the Institution has its own professional publishing facility through which lecturers are well supported to produce and publish their research. This informs and supports their teaching. Lecturers confirm that they are encouraged to deliver teaching practice seminars to share best practice in teaching and assessment methods with their academic peers. Inspection findings confirm this view.

The Institution's publicity materials provide an accurate and up-to-date description of the curriculum, along with the premises and facilities offered. This helps prospective students to make informed decisions about their studies.

4.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met
Comments

Academic staff are effective in facilitating high-quality, experiential learning. Lecturers are highly qualified and experienced subject experts. They plan and deliver engaging courses that enable students to develop the knowledge, understanding and practical skills they need to be successful in their final assessments.

Lecturers make effective use of a range of engaging and interactive teaching methods. For example, students are encouraged to participate in debates, problem-based learning and legal research. A range of law clinics, labs and moot court sessions are highly effective in supporting students to develop independent learning skills and to apply theory to practice.

Students benefit from guest speakers and special course topics that help them to develop more specialist knowledge and skills. Examples include the legal systems of the nations that comprise the Gulf Cooperation Council, human trafficking, sports law, taxation and procurement contracts.

Students benefit from access to an impressive range of learning and study materials that are appropriate to the level of study, including the impressive University library, the virtual law library and Qatar's national library. Lecturers often use practical and accessible learning technologies to engage and challenge students outside the classroom.

Course assessment strategies are clear, fair and effective. Mid-term and final assessments are fully aligned with the intended learning outcomes of each course, as well as with the University's education excellence framework themes, where applicable. This helps to ensure that students are well supported to develop their subject knowledge and skills, as well as their wider employability skills.

Students benefit from constructive feedback that helps them to understand how to improve further.

| 4.4 | Student Support, Guidance and Progression (spot check) |

The standards are judged to be: ☐ Met   ☒ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met
Comments

Students receive appropriate pastoral support that meets their needs and circumstances. Students also benefit from counselling and personal support provided through the University's central services. Students confirm that they are well supported, both academically and pastorally. Inspection findings confirm this view.

14.8 The Institution has not yet implemented all the necessary arrangements to protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

The Institution has put limited measures in place to protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. A draft policy includes a detailed prevention strategy, although this has yet to be ratified and fully implemented. Senior leaders have completed relevant awareness training. However, formal training for all staff has not yet been completed.

Students have access to appropriate academic support and guidance. As well as support from lecturers, students benefit from high levels of personalised support from teaching assistants. Assistants provide course-specific advice and guidance, which helps students to clarify misconceptions and overcome barriers to learning.

Student attendance is measured and recorded regularly. Attendance data is centrally recorded and monitored, and staff take appropriate action to tackle low attendance when required. Students have a secure understanding of the Institution's attendance policy.

A tour of the residential accommodation confirms that it is fit for purpose, well maintained and appropriately supervised. Accommodation meets the needs of students.

Students benefit from opportunities to participate in relevant extramural activities, such as regular regional moot court competitions, debating societies and trips to working courts. These activities support the development of students' practical law skills and help to prepare them for the world of work.

| 4.5 | Premises, Facilities and Learning Resources (spot check) |

The standards are judged to be: ☒ Met   ☐ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met
Comments

Staff and students benefit from exceptional premises. The dedicated College of Law building provides outstanding learning facilities that support learning very well. The premises provide a very safe and secure learning environment. The premises are very well maintained, with an excellent standard of decoration and cleanliness.

Students benefit from large, modern, well-equipped and furnished classrooms and lecture theatres. The professional, full-sized moot court provides an outstanding real-world environment for students to practise and consolidate their applied legal skills.

Academic staff have access to an excellent range of offices and spaces for preparing lessons, marking work and consultations with students. Students and staff have access to secure storage for their personal possessions.

The impressive University library is modern and well stocked. It provides a fit-for-purpose learning resource and supports students' independent learning and research. The library is adequately staffed with appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

The Institution's Information Technology (IT) resources are modern, reliable and well managed. Students benefit from a range of effective online resources that support their learning, including comprehensive research databases and a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

| 4.6 | Quality Management, Assurance and Enhancement (spot check) |

The standards are judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

The Institution has effective arrangements in place to regularly collect, record and respond to student feedback. Student representatives meet regularly to provide course-specific feedback to managers. Students complete regular end-of-module questionnaires to provide anonymous, individual feedback on the quality of their courses and the performance of their lecturers.

Managers review feedback systematically and provide students with information on the actions taken through meetings and the student representative system.

The Institution has effective systems in place to review its own standards and assess its own performance. Quality assurance policies and procedures are clearly documented and shared effectively with staff. For example, the detailed faculty performance review and development system sets out the Institution's systematic approach to monitoring the quality of the student learning experience.

Managers compile regular reports that present the results of the Institution's performance review against key performance indicators. For example, progression rates between the Institution's undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are collected and evaluated. However, data on progression to further study or employment outside the Institution is not yet fully collated.

Quality improvement action plans are in place and are systemically monitored and reviewed. This ensures that action plans for enhancement are implemented promptly.

| 4.7 | Online, Distance and Blended Learning (spot check) |

The standards are judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met ☐ NA

Comments

Lecturers have a suitable understanding of the requirements of online learning. They receive appropriate training on using the VLE and other online learning systems and technologies.

Opportunities to develop students' digital literacy skills through the course curriculum have been systematically embedded where appropriate. Lecturers incorporate a range of effective educational technologies into their delivery to enhance learning where relevant.

Students receive appropriate guidance on how to study and use the online materials to help them learn effectively and efficiently.

4.8   Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.   ☒ Yes   ☐ No

PART C – SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

FURTHER WORK TO MEET OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

5.12 Managers must implement effective procedures for external moderation at the post-assessment stage for all courses.	☒ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low
14.8 The Institution must implement all the necessary measures to mitigate the risks from radicalisation and extremism.	☒ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

FURTHER WORK TO MEET OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

None

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS REQUIRED

None	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT *(to be reviewed at the next inspection)*

It is recommended that data on student progression rates to further study or employment outside the Institution is analysed in relation to each specific programme.

THE INSPECTION WAS CARRIED OUT BY:

Steve Ingle	Lead Inspector