



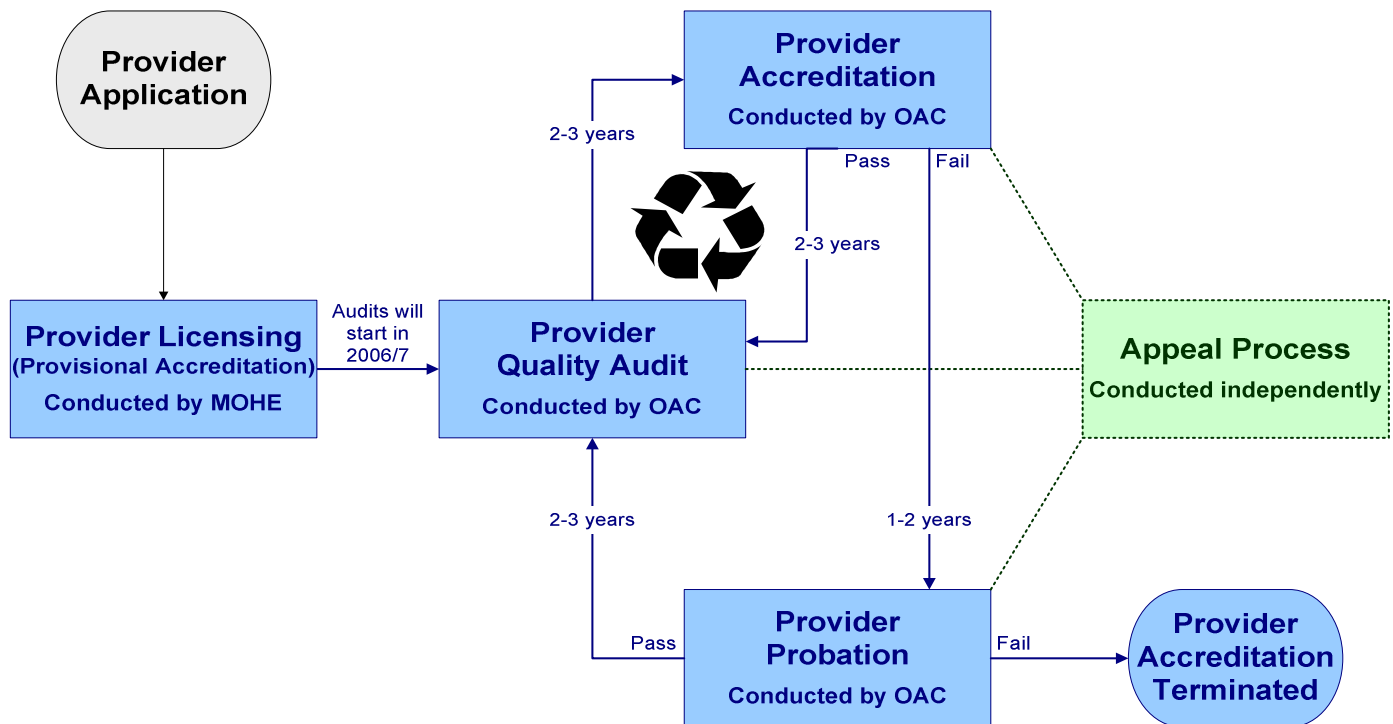
Licensing and Accreditation System for Oman: a proposal



Oman is in the process of developing a system for licensing and accrediting institutions of higher education providers (HEPs) and their programs. These processes are designed to provide confidence to the public about the quality of higher education in Oman, through the maintenance of national standards (internationally benchmarked) and the promotion of quality assurance and quality enhancement practices.

Each licensing, accreditation or audit process involves a self-review by the HEP of the topic (be it the provider institution or the higher education program). This is followed by an independent assessment of the self review report by a panel of peers (national and international; academic, industry and, where appropriate, government), leading to some form of public outcome (a report and/or formal decision). All processes may be appealed on the grounds that the process was flawed or applied in a manner unfairly prejudicial against the HEP.

Provider Licensing and Accreditation



Provider Licensing (Provisional Provider Accreditation) constitutes formal approval to operate as a higher education provider (HEP) in Oman. It comprises an independent assessment of a *proposal* against a set of provider standards and legislative requirements. A license is a prerequisite for enrolling students into higher education programs.

Provider Accreditation is designed to provide verification that a HEP has the general capabilities, capacity and competencies to effectively provide high quality education. It comprises an independent, summative assessment of *actual experience* against a set of provider standards. It addresses fitness of purpose and fitness for purpose. It is renewed every five years.

Quality Audit is conducted midway between Provider Accreditations. It comprises an independent, formative evaluation of the effectiveness of the HEP's quality assurance systems. Quality Audit acts as both a follow-up to the previous accreditation process, and preparation for the next accreditation process.

Provider Probation occurs when a HEP fails an accreditation process. The HEP is given a period or time to address recommendations, after which a second summative assessment is conducted. Provider accreditation provides a baseline assurance of the HEP's competency. As such, during probation, new programs may not be licensed and existing programs may not be accredited.

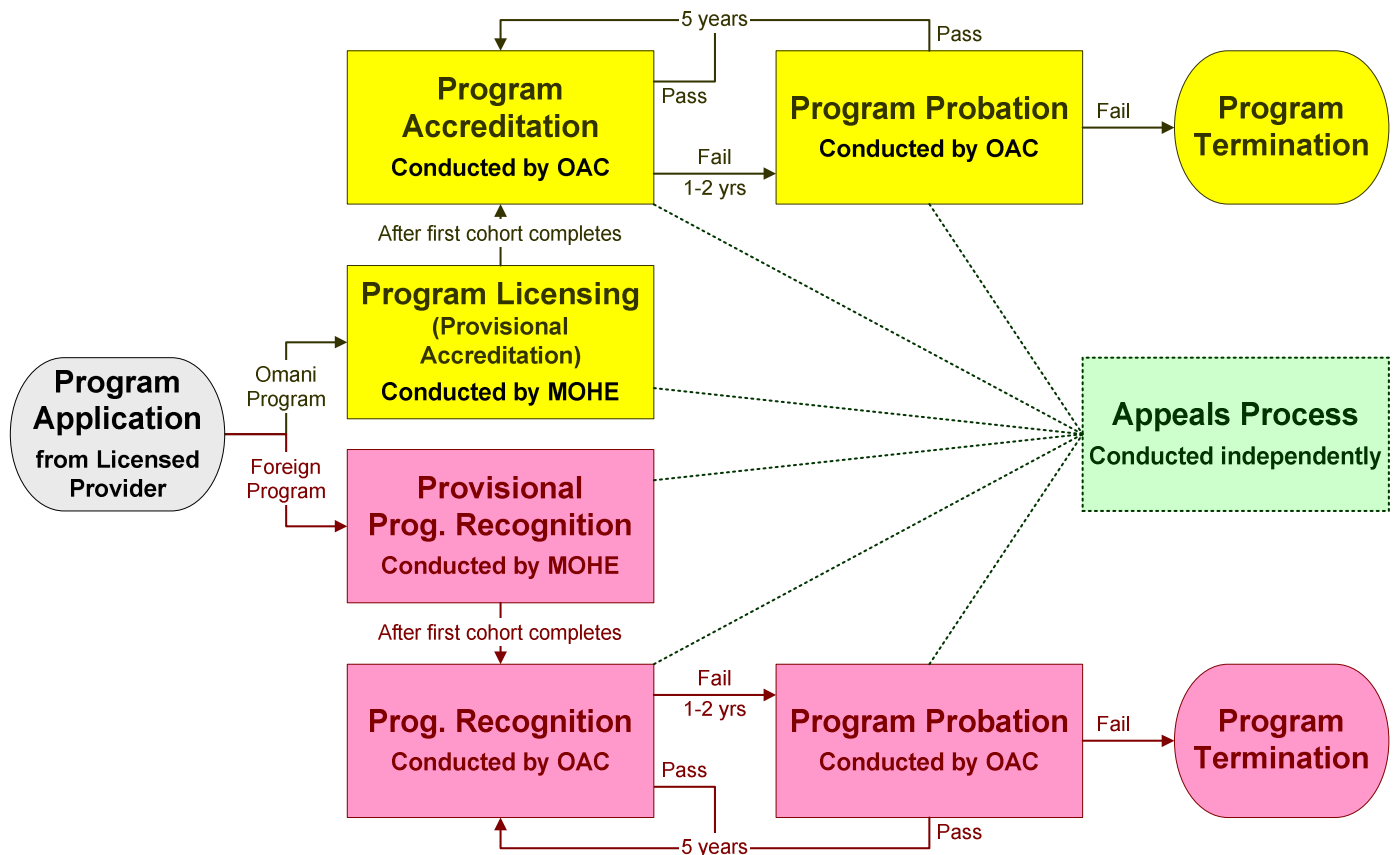
Program Licensing and Accreditation

Program Licensing (Provisional Program Accreditation) constitutes formal approval to offer a program of higher education in Oman by any provider, or anywhere by Omani providers. Program licensing comprises an independent assessment of a *proposal* against a set of academic standards. It is designed to check that programs are likely to meet minimum standards. It also ensures that programs offered in Oman meet a national need.

Program Accreditation occurs once a cohort of students has graduated. It comprises an independent, summative assessment of *actual experience* against a set of program standards. It is designed to provide independent verification that the program meets acceptable standards, with a strong focus on student learning outcomes.

Program Recognition is a substitute for Program Accreditation, and applies when a program is already robustly accredited via another satisfactory process. It comprises a check of the effectiveness of transnational quality assurance arrangements.

Program Probation occurs when a program fails an accreditation process. The HEP is given a period or time to address recommendations, after which a second summative assessment is conducted. Given that a possible outcome is the termination of the program, new students may not be enrolled into the program during probation.



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