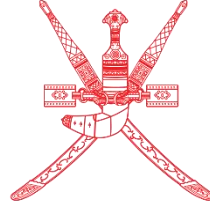


Sultanate of Oman
Oman Authority for
Academic Accreditation and
Quality Assurance of Education



سلطنة عمان
الهيئة العمانية للاعتماد الأكاديمي
و ضمان جودة التعليم



POLICY ON COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE

Policy Number	OAAAQA/PDM/03		
Category	Planning & Development Matters (PDM)		
Initiator	Directorate General of Planning and Development		
Contact Person	Director General of Planning and Development (DG-DGPD) Email: dgpd@oaaa.gov.om		
Related Policies/Manuals	N/A		
Version	2		
Approved by	OAAAQA Executive Committee	Date: 17 November 2021	(v 2)
	OAAAQA Legal Affairs Department	Date: 5 April 2017	(v 1)
	OAAAQA Board	Date: 30 March 2017	(v 1)
Circulation	Internal & External		
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POLICY ON COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles the OAAAQA has to follow in order to ensure effective communication, either internally with its staff members or external reviewers, or externally with educational institutions, other stakeholders, and the public in general. The policy also sets out the mechanisms, rules and guidelines regarding the language of internal and external communication.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all types of communication and language usage within the OAAAQA and between the OAAAQA, external stakeholders and the public in general.

3. Policy Statement

This policy establishes equitable and practical communication and language principles that honour the spirit of relevant national legislation and policies, e.g. Article 3 in Oman's Basic Statute of the State issued by Royal Decree 101/96 which stipulates that Arabic is the official language of the state, as well as the OAAAQA's organisational values of transparency, accountability, collaboration and diversity. The policy also takes into account language usage, practicality, feasibility, cost effectiveness, contextual circumstances and the balance between OAAAQA's resources and the language and communication needs of its staff, stakeholders and the public in general.

1. Internal Communication

- 1.1 Arabic and English are the working and communication languages in OAAAQA in general. Written communication, including memos, emails, proposals, and manuals in circulation within and between the divisions and offices may be in Arabic or English, but may be translated into the other language depending on the nature of the communication, the language proficiency of the target readership, and whether there is a need for the document to be translated.
- 1.2 Arabic is the official working and communication language within and between all Administration and Finance departments and between these departments and the CEO's Office, the Chairman of the Board's Office and the Arabic speaking members of OAAAQA staff.
- 1.3 English is the language of communication between the Administration and Finance departments and the non-Arabic speaking members of OAAAQA staff.
- 1.4 All internal circulars, paper-based or electronic, including decrees, Board or Executive Committee decisions, guidelines and regulations, HR forms, service request forms, operational planning templates, news stories, and notifications pertaining to health, safety and security shall be in Arabic or English, depending on the target audience of the document/communication .
- 1.5 Where reasonably practicable, and to ensure proper documentation and ease of reference, OAAAQA e-mail is the preferred means of communication between staff. This, however, shall not replace the need to directly communicate and verbally engage with the staff concerned through, for example, meetings or telephone discussions, when needed.
- 1.6 Signage of all facilities and buildings in the OAAAQA shall be in both Arabic and English.
- 1.7 All documents, reports, email signatures, presentations, forms and official correspondence shall be formatted as per the approved templates and/or house style specifications of the OAAAQA.
- 1.8 As a general rule, communication within the OAAAQA (verbal or written) shall be in plain language, clear, suitable for the readership, effective and efficient. In addition,

communication shall be factual/ accurate, straightforward/direct, impartial and reflect OAAAQA values such as transparency and integrity.

1.9 OAAAQA staff should normally acknowledge in writing the receipt of written correspondence received from internal stakeholders.

1.10 The language of meetings is determined in view of the language proficiency level of the majority of the participants.

2. External Communication

2.1 Arabic is the official language of communication between the Chairman of the OAAAQA Board Office and CEO's Office and other government officials or organisations, unless otherwise specified or preferred by the target readership.

2.2 External communication shall be factual/ accurate, straightforward/direct, impartial and reflect OAAAQA values such as transparency and integrity.

2.3 OAAAQA staff shall normally acknowledge in writing the receipt of written correspondence received from external stakeholders.

2.4 All official documents, such as approved policies, bylaws, manuals and the Executive Summaries of the reports and decisions of External Quality Assurance (EQA) activities shall be in Arabic and English. However, for practical considerations, documents shared with the sector, like the examples cited above, and which are initially drafted in either English or Arabic as part of OAAAQA EQA activities, may be first disseminated in the language they are initially developed in until an officially approved translation is made available. In such case, a bilingual member of staff from the technical divisions must be designated to respond to any queries recipients may have about the document.

2.5 OAAAQA website shall be in Arabic and English. However, downloadable contents of the website, such as PDF files pertaining to, for example, the EQA activities mentioned above, may be in Arabic or English only, until a translation is approved and made available.

- 2.6 OAAAQA's submissions to, and presentations at, local, regional and international events and submissions sent to other government or private entities' websites or publications must be as per the language requirements of the organising/host entity. However, the OAAAQA is not liable for any errors or inaccuracies in any translation of its documents or submissions that may be unilaterally and completely prepared by an outside entity.
- 2.7 Where reasonably practicable and where paper-based communication is not required as a matter of protocol, OAAAQA e-mail is the preferred means of communication between OAAAQA staff and external stakeholders. This, however, should not replace the need to directly communicate and verbally engage with the concerned stakeholders through, for example, meetings or telephone discussions, when needed.
- 2.8 Communication with local and international External Reviewers before, during and after EQA reviews, including appeal activities, shall be in English, unless the EQA review submission is in Arabic and the review is partially or fully conducted in Arabic by an Arabic speaking Panel. Similarly, all communication, electronic or paper-based, verbal or written and deliberations between the Panel Members before, during or after the review visit shall be in the language of the submission made by the educational institution. Deliberations among the Arabic speaking Panel Members on supporting materials submitted in Arabic may be either in English or Arabic, depending on the language of the submission.

4. Procedure

N/A

5. Abbreviations

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
EQA	External Quality Assurance
HEI	Higher Education Institution
OAAAQA	Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education

6. Definitions

External Quality Assurance (EQA) activity: Any OAAAQA Quality Audit or Standards Assessment activity such as:

- Institutional Quality Audit
- Institutional Standards Assessment
- Programme Standards Assessment
- General Foundation Programme Quality Audit
- Institutional Standards Re-assessment Activities
- Institutional and Programme Reaccreditation Activities

7. References

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8. Document History

Document History				
Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Circulation Date	Brief Description
1	30 March 2017	OAAAQA Board	This version was not circulated, awaiting review and comments by the Legal Advisor	This is the first OAAAQA Policy in relation to communication and language.
1.1	11 May 2017	OAAAQA Executive Committee	15 May 2017	In response to the Legal Advisor's comments, the phrase "Arabic or" was added to bullet 5 under <i>External Communication</i> section.
2	17 November 2021	OAAAQA Executive Committee	24 April 2022	In response to comments received from some Directors of Departments in the meeting to discuss 2021 OP Mid-Year Report, minor amendments were made to the policy to ensure that translation does not become a hindrance to timely completion of some projects.