



**Title:** Certification, Authentication and Retention Policy

**Code:** GU-PL10CAR

**Version:** 3.1

**Date of Issue:** 2023

**Effective Date:** July 2023

**Approval Authority:** University Council

**Document Owner:** Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Review:** The policy is subject to a periodic review every 4 years or in a shorter cycle as per amendments of regulations

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all certificates awarded by Gulf University (GU):

- Meet the requirements of the Higher Education Council (HEC) in the Kingdom of Bahrain,
- Are issued only as a result of decisions made by the relevant authorities,
- Are issued only to individuals who have met the assessment requirements of the qualifications associated with them,
- Are safeguarded from any attempted fraud,
- Are guaranteed by the existence of a secured academic records system.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all certificates issued by Gulf University.

## 3. Acronyms

<b>BQA</b>	Education and Training Quality Authority
<b>CILOS</b>	Course Intended Learning Outcomes
<b>HEC</b>	Higher Education Council
<b>NQF</b>	National Qualifications Framework
<b>PILOS</b>	Program Intended Learning Outcomes

## 4. Definitions

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

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

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

**Course Intended Learning Outcomes:** Course Intended Learning Outcomes describe the knowledge, skills and attributes envisaged to be achievable by students who have been enrolled in the course. CILOs, therefore, contribute to program intended learning outcomes (PILOs).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 5. Policy Statement

A higher education qualification is essential for employment both nationally and globally. As a result, the certification is important since the document certifying the attainment of a qualification is the key to employment which might otherwise not

be achievable. Certification attests to the learning of the individuals who have attained it and thus provides confidence to employers and other stakeholders.

HEC, therefore, emphasizes the need for Universities to ensure that their certification is valid and not open to fraud and other forms of abuse.

Based on the above, Gulf University ensure that any certification issued in the name of the University is an accurate and valid record of a student having passed all the courses and achieved all the credits necessary for the qualification in accordance with the NQF. GU also ensures proper authentication of its certificates.

## **6. Policy Details**

- 6.1 GU only issues certification in relation to a student's learning upon passing all courses, detailed in the program description that are necessary to complete a qualification.
- 6.2 Based on graduation decision by the University Council, graduation certificates are issued.
- 6.3 GU ensures that NQF level of the qualification is shown on graduation certificates issued by the University.
- 6.4 GU ensures protection of certificates against fraud through:
  - a. defining special paper, followed by controlled purchasing and keeping stock.
  - b. handling any batch of special paper before, during and after printing by a contracted external provider.
  - c. defining and embedding of a watermark in the certificate.
  - d. defining and securing the barcoding of the certificate.
  - e. defining and securing the provision of a serial number.
  - f. detailing of University resolution approving student graduation on the certificate.
  - g. provision of student's unique HEC identification number on the certificate.
  - h. controlling the embossing of the certificate with GU stamp.
- 6.5 GU ensures that all documentation related to any graduation are validated, securely stored and made available on request by regulatory bodies.
- 6.6 GU maintains a secure archive room for student records and ensures that access to this room is limited and recorded.
- 6.7 GU ensures regulation on issuing any duplicate certificate with careful checking of the original records.
- 6.8 GU issues duplicate certificate only to the graduate to whom the one was awarded.
- 6.9 GU ensures that proper procedures are followed for authentication of certificates.

## 7. Responsibilities

### **Students and Graduates are responsible for:**

- Following this document appropriately

### **Deans are responsible for:**

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

### **Unit of Admission and Registration is responsible for:**

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

### **The Finance Department is responsible for:**

- Appropriate implementation of this document.

### **The University Library is responsible for:**

- Appropriate implementation of this document.

### **The Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for:**

- Appropriate implementation of this document

### **University Policy Development and Review Committee is responsible for:**

- Systematic review of the effectiveness of this document.

## 8. Related Policies

- No related policies

## 9. Related Procedures

- Certification, Authentication and Retention Procedures

## 10. Related References and Standards

<b>BQA</b>	Institutional Review Handbook
<b>BQA</b>	National Qualifications Framework Handbook
<b>BQA</b>	Programs-within-College Reviews Handbook
<b>HEC</b>	Academic Regulations