

**PROFILE OF  
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM  
NATIONAL ACCREDITATION  
COUNCIL**

**PRESENTED BY:**  
**DATIN HAJAH KHADIJAH BINTI HAJI AKBAR**  
ACTING EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL SECRETARIAT  
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

**FOR:**  
**THE ROUNDTABLE MEETING OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES OF  
THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE MEMBER COUNTRIES**  
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## **Abbreviation**

|       |   |  |
|-------|---|--|
| ACCA  | : | Association of Chartered Certified Accountants   |
| ASEAN | : | Association of Southeast Asian Nations           |
| BDNAC | : | Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council |
| HEIs  | : | Higher Education Institutions                    |
| MoE   | : | Ministry of Education                            |
| NCC   | : | National Computing Centre                        |
| ODL   | : | Open Distance Learning                           |
| OIC   | : | Organization of the Islamic Conference           |
| PSC   | : | Public Service Commission                        |
| PSD   | : | Public Service Department                        |

## **1. Introduction**

The need for recognition or accreditation had been stipulated in the 1961 General Order of Public Services Brunei Darussalam where based on the Order, accreditation of qualifications is the responsibility of appointed officers in relevant departments. For instance, assessment for qualifications in agriculture was referred to State Agriculture Officer while qualifications related to medicine were assessed by State Medicine Officer.

As such practice is believed not to be beneficial, an independent accrediting body namely the Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council (BDNAC), Brunei Darussalam was established in 1990 by decree of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam. The establishment is mainly to ensure continuity towards assessment and accreditation activities.

### **1.1 Vision and Mission**

Being the sole accreditation agency in Brunei Darussalam, the BDNAC has a mission to ensure and to maintain the quality and standard of educational credentials in accordance with the provisions as set and required by the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam. The realization of this mission will eventually support its vision of establishing a national and international reputable accrediting agency.

## 1.2 Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the establishment of the BDNAC are as follows:

- To assess and ascertain the value and status of any qualifications.
- To ensure the evaluation processes and assessment criteria are consistent in accordance with national priorities.
- To establish appropriate accreditation guidelines and to publish directories of qualifications and institutions accredited by the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.

## 1.3 Organization Structure

Since its establishment, the BDNAC is put under the Ministry of Education (MoE), Brunei Darussalam as the Chairman of BDNAC is the Minister of Education himself. The Chairman is assisted by the Deputy Minister of Education who is the Deputy Chairman of the Council and the Permanent Secretary (Higher Education), MoE as the Secretary.

Other members of the Council include the Chairman of Public Service Commission (PSC), the Director General of Public Service Department (PSD), Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Religious Affairs, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Health, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, Permanent

Secretary of Ministry of Development; and Vice Chancellor of Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

The Council is responsible to consider and evaluate the status and quality of qualifications awarded by various local and overseas institutions; to set up, if necessary, appropriate committees including special and ad-hoc to assist the Council pertaining to the evaluation and assessment of qualifications in various subjects or disciplines; to act upon matters relating to the Council's responsibilities either directed by His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam or if and when the Council considers it appropriate and necessary to do so and to review the status of any qualifications as and when the Council sees it fits or necessary.

The Council is assisted by ten sub-committees whose responsibility is to assess and evaluate qualifications and to make recommendations to the Council in the following disciplines of Accountancy and Management, Communication, Engineering and Architecture, Education, Environmental Sciences, Islamic Religious Studies, Medicine, Law, Military and Security and Info-Communication Technology.

With regard to administrative matters, the Council is backed by the Secretariat which is headed by the Executive Secretary. Among the roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat are to act as reference body by providing assistance and advice concerning accreditation and recognition of qualifications and institutions to government departments, private sectors and individuals; to make recommendations concerning accreditation in terms of policies, criteria, procedures, processes and

priorities and to establish contacts as well as to organize discussions with overseas institutions or other similar bodies.

## **2. Quality Assurance Processes**

### **2.1 Needs for accreditation**

The main purpose of accreditation in Brunei Darussalam is for recruitment in the public sector. It is not until recently, the private sectors too want their future employee have a qualification that is accredited by BDNAC.

Accreditation is also importance for considering the awarding of scholarship and in-service training for students or working individuals respectively. In this case, the Secretariat will normally consider two aspects of accreditation namely the institution and the course. Hence it is important to note that although the institution/university is recognized, it does not necessarily mean that all courses offered by such institution are accredited by BDNAC.

There are also demands from relevant authorities who wish to know the equivalence of accredited qualifications for the purpose of considering a salary scheme. For instance, an Advanced Diploma qualification from Australian institution is accredited on a case-by-case basis as equivalent to Higher National Diploma for the purpose of employment in Brunei Darussalam.

Further, there are also requirement from local registration and licensing boards of specialized profession such as teaching, medical and engineering that requires opinion or views on whether or not qualification hold by individual is accredited and acceptable for the purpose of employment in Brunei Darussalam.

The BDNAC also looks into the courses run by local private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) so as is to ensure all courses offered by these HEIS are of the same quality as the courses offered by public HEIs. Most courses offered by these private HEIs are based on franchise and collaboration agreement with established awarding body namely Informatics, NCC Education and ACCA.

## 2.2 Processes involved

The accreditation process involving new cases normally follows the procedures below:

- Receiving and acknowledging queries or applications.
- Gathering relevant information
- Preparing working papers or case studies for the relevant sub-committees.
- Submitting the papers to the sub-committees for recommendations.
- Submitting the recommendations to the Council of assessment and decisions.
- Conveying the Council's decisions to the appropriate applicants.

The length of time taken to arrive at the decisions of new case varies from case to case depending on the nature of cases being considered. However, decisions based

on precedent cases or cases of comparable nature are immediate.

### 2.3 Public accountability

The Secretariat is accessible to the public via many forms of communications. Among the ways that the Secretariat can be reached is by providing consultancy services through telephone or face-to-face; correspondence and email. The Secretariat also conducts a series of seminars, talks and forums for schools and colleges as well as government and private sectors.

The Secretariat also disseminates information of accreditation by participating in education exhibitions conducted by private education providers. Among the education providers include the British Council and Amstrads.

### 2.4 Accreditation criteria

#### 2.4.1 Basic Criteria

Accreditation process will firstly taking into account the government policy towards qualifications awarded by institution/universities in countries that already have some form of relationships with Brunei Darussalam, for example, The Commonwealth countries, OIC and ASEAN countries.



#### 2.4.2 Criteria on Qualifications

Each qualification will be assessed and evaluated based on various aspects namely entry requirements; course duration; course content and methodology; mode of assessments; and medium of instruction. These criteria are based on the system of education in Brunei Darussalam where as normally the case, the entry requirement to join diploma courses offered by local HEIs is a minimum of 4 GCE 'O' levels while to do a bachelor degree course, it needs a minimum of 2 GCE 'A' levels.

As for the course duration, the minimum duration for bachelor degree course is 3 years full time whereas for master degree courses, it should not be less than 1 year full time. BDNAC also emphasis on the face-to-face interaction mode of study as open distance learning (ODL) mode is currently not being recognized in the country.

#### 2.4.3 Criteria on Institutions

Criteria on institutions is assessed and evaluated based on aspects of international recognition; educational and physical infrastructure including facilities; the qualification and number of academic staff; student-lecturer ratio; management of institutions; and quality assurance system.

#### 2.4.4 Criteria on Professional Bodies

Like assessment on institution, criteria on professional bodies are also depend on a number of aspects such as the roles and responsibilities of the body particularly in terms of registration and licensing; the legal and statutory status (Act of Law) of the body; and the international recognition of the body.

### **3. Rapport with International Accreditation Agencies**

For the purpose of cross-referencing and in order to get up-to-date and first-hand information, assessment of accreditation by the Secretariat is based on various sources published by international accreditation agencies such as Australian Universities Quality Agency, Australia, Malaysian Qualifications Authority, Malaysia, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, New Zealand and Quality Assurance Agency, United Kingdom.

The BDNAC has also become an intermediate member of Asia Pacific Quality Network and participated in international seminars that discussed the issue of quality assurance, best practices and accreditation.

### **4. Issues and Challenges**

The BDNAC continuously review its policies so as it be up-to-date as well as to be in line with the MoE's goal of life-long learning. Currently, the Council is assessing the need to recognize ODL where it is believed that with accreditation of ODL, it will not

only help working individuals to continue to further studies without having to stop working but also it will enhance multiple pathways/wide access to higher education.

The BDNAC further looks into the accreditation of professional qualifications that are not available in Brunei Darussalam but being offered by overseas institutions/universities. Such assessment is necessary for consideration of sending relevant officers namely local teachers and nurses to specialize in their areas. This matter is considered as crucial as decisions made by the Council should not only benefit the country but also upon completion of their studies, these relevant officers should be able to specialize in the said area.