



وزارة التعليم العالي  
والبحوث العلمي

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
& SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH



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# حوار "مستقبل التعليم العالي في الإمارات"

نوفمبر 2024

Dialogue

"Future of Higher Education in the UAE"

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES  
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
& SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH



الإمارات العربية المتحدة  
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# Licensing and Accreditation for Universities and Academic Programs

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# Objectives: Revamping the main processes of licensing and accreditation to uplift Higher Education system quality





 What?	Objectives of the revamp	
	 <b>Quality</b>	Focusing on <b>outcomes</b> to uplift <b>higher education quality</b>
	 <b>Efficiency</b>	Reduced <b>time and resources</b> internally & externally
	 <b>User satisfaction</b>	<b>User centric processes</b> straightforward and accessible

## Main current processes included in the scope of the study

Service	Current steps	Current Duration
Initial Institutional Licensing	28 steps	6 months
Renewal of Institutional Licensure	24 steps	6 months
Initial Program Accreditation	13 steps	6-9 months
Renewal of Program Accreditation	11 steps	6 months

## Key enablers to achieve objectives

	<b>Digitalize, automate &amp; leverage advanced tech</b>
	<b>Coordinate &amp; cut redundancy</b>
	<b>Simplify</b> workflows & focus reviews on <b>outcomes</b>
	Link <b>financial instruments</b> to <b>outcome-based</b> performance
	<b>Customize Journeys</b> to grant greater <b>flexibility</b> for <b>high performing</b> universities



## Defined Targets:

### Major improvements across 5 key customer journeys and 2 enablers

		Before	Current
HEI Journey	Journey 1: <i>New University starts operations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>6 month</b> for licensure</li> <li>• <b>6-9 months</b> for initial program accreditation</li> <li>• <b>2 onsite visits</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Combined journey:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• License in <b>1 week / immediately if local license available</b></li> <li>• Program approval in <b>1 week</b></li> <li>• <b>1 visit</b></li> </ul>
	Journey 2: New University obtains first time accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application &amp; an onsite visit (<b>6-9 months</b>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual visits (<b>1-2 days</b>) during first cohort</li> <li>• Final review after 1<sup>st</sup> cohort (<b>1.5-3 months</b>)</li> </ul>
	Journey 3: Established universities renews licensure/ accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application &amp; onsite visit <b>6 months</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Risk-based</b> cycles</li> <li>• Mid cycle (<b>1-2 days</b>), final year review (<b>1.5-3 months</b>)</li> </ul>
	Journey 4: Established universities introduce new program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application &amp; onsite visit <b>6-9 months</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Automatic</b> for lower risk universities with international accreditation</li> <li>• <b>Simplified</b> for other low risk universities</li> </ul>
	Journey 5: University pays government fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institution pays per <b>cost estimation</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-determined <b>fee structure</b></li> <li>• Fees linked to <b>risk level</b></li> <li>• Can <b>waive</b> / reduce fees for <b>strategic</b> programs</li> </ul>
Enablers	Enabler 1: Evaluation framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No unified framework, focus on <b>inputs</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unified outcome based evaluation on <b>6 key outcomes</b></li> </ul>
	Enabler 2: Internal coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Duplication</b> &amp; overlap of tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear <b>division of roles, unified interface</b> with universities</li> </ul>

# External journey

# Journey 1: New University starts operations

## Before Improvements

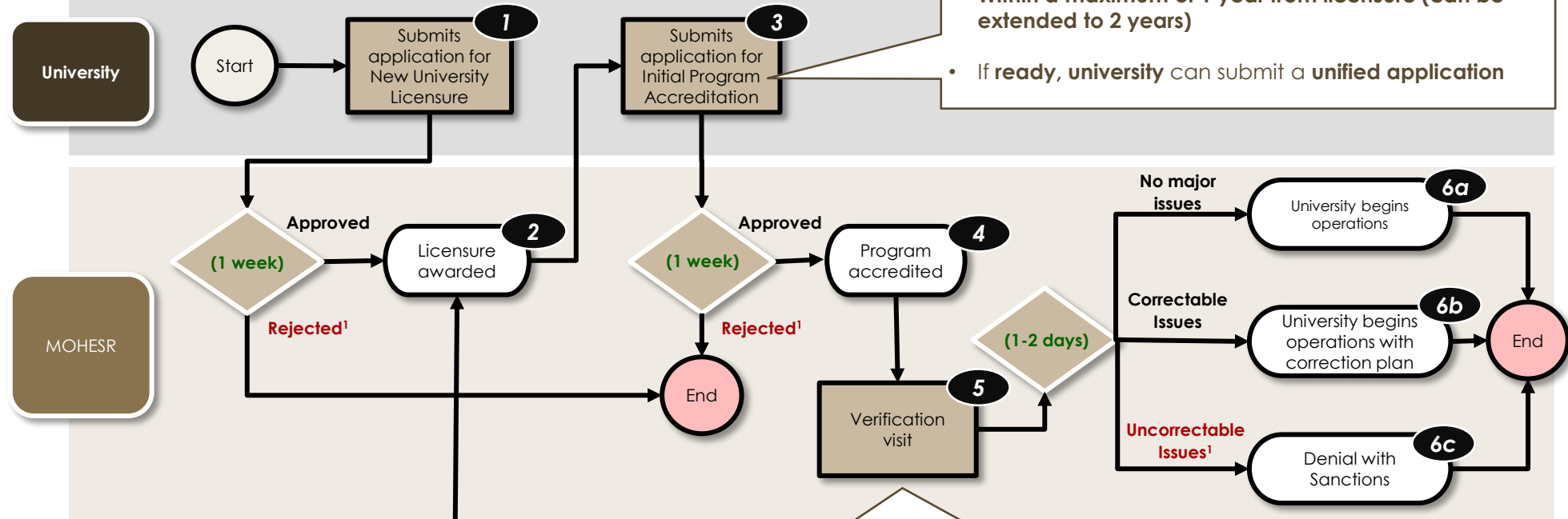
- **6 month** for licensure
- **6-9 months** for initial program accreditation
- **2 onsite visits**

## Key improvements

- ✓ **1 journey**
- ✓ **2 weeks** in total
- ✓ **1 visit**
- ✓ **Automatic** if university has local license

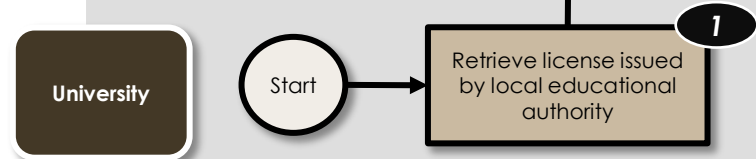
## Process

### Case 1: No License from local educational authority



- Within a maximum of 1 year from licensure (can be extended to 2 years)
- If ready, university can submit a **unified application**

### Case 2: Licensed from local educational authority



At least 2 months before the program launch

# External journey

# Journey 2: New University obtains first time accreditation

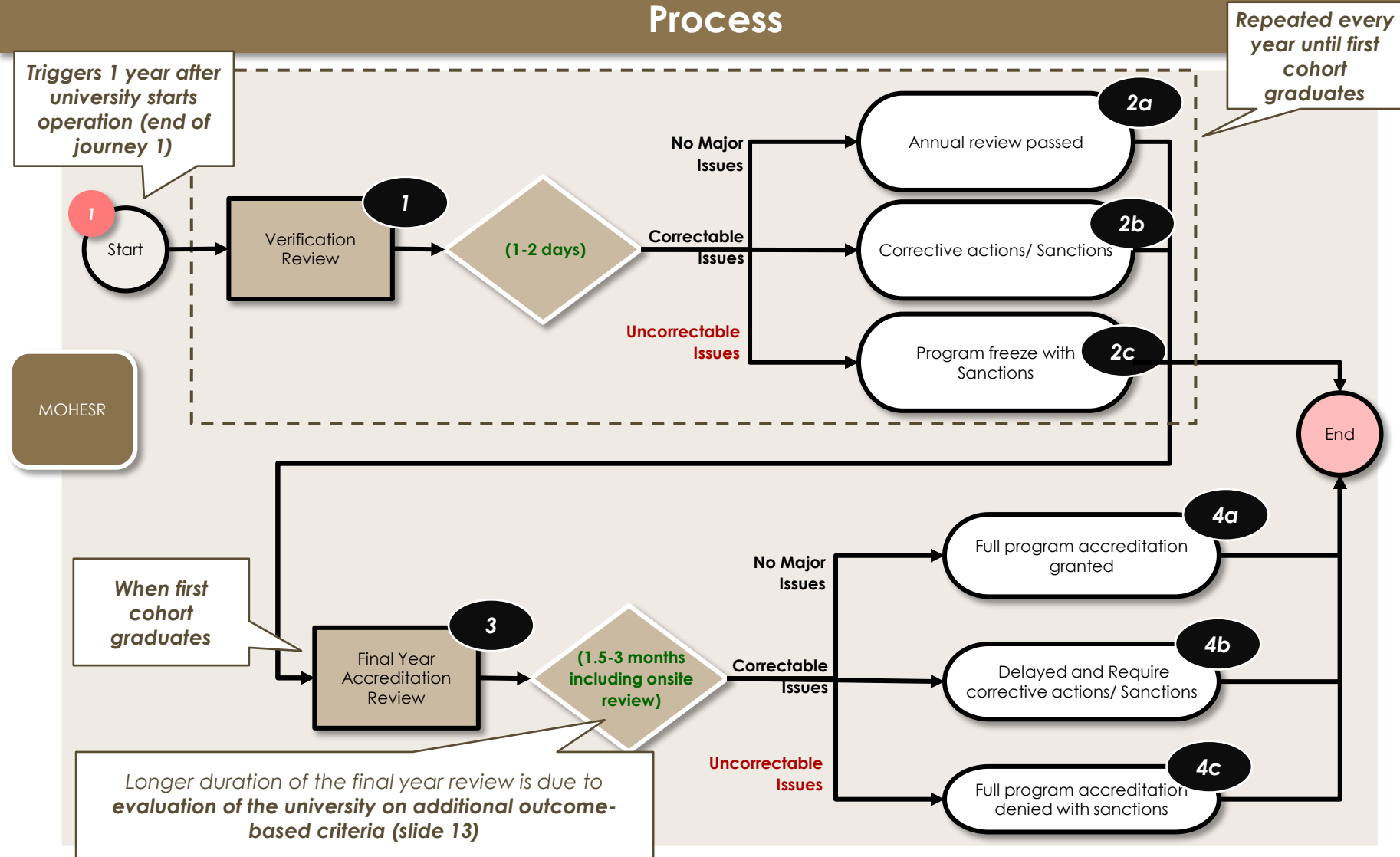
## Before Improvements

- Application & an onsite visit (6-9 months)

## Key improvements

- ✓ Continuous annual checkpoints
- ✓ Final review reduced to 1.5-3 months

## Process



## External journey

## Journey 3: Established universities maintain accreditation

### Before Improvements

- Application & onsite visit **6-9 months**

### Key improvements

- ✓ **Risk based classification** of universities
- ✓ **Coordinated inspection & accreditation reviews**
- ✓ **1-2 days** for mid-cycle, **1.5-3 months** for final year

## Process

### Frequency of Renewals According to Risk Levels

#### Low Risk (High Confidence)

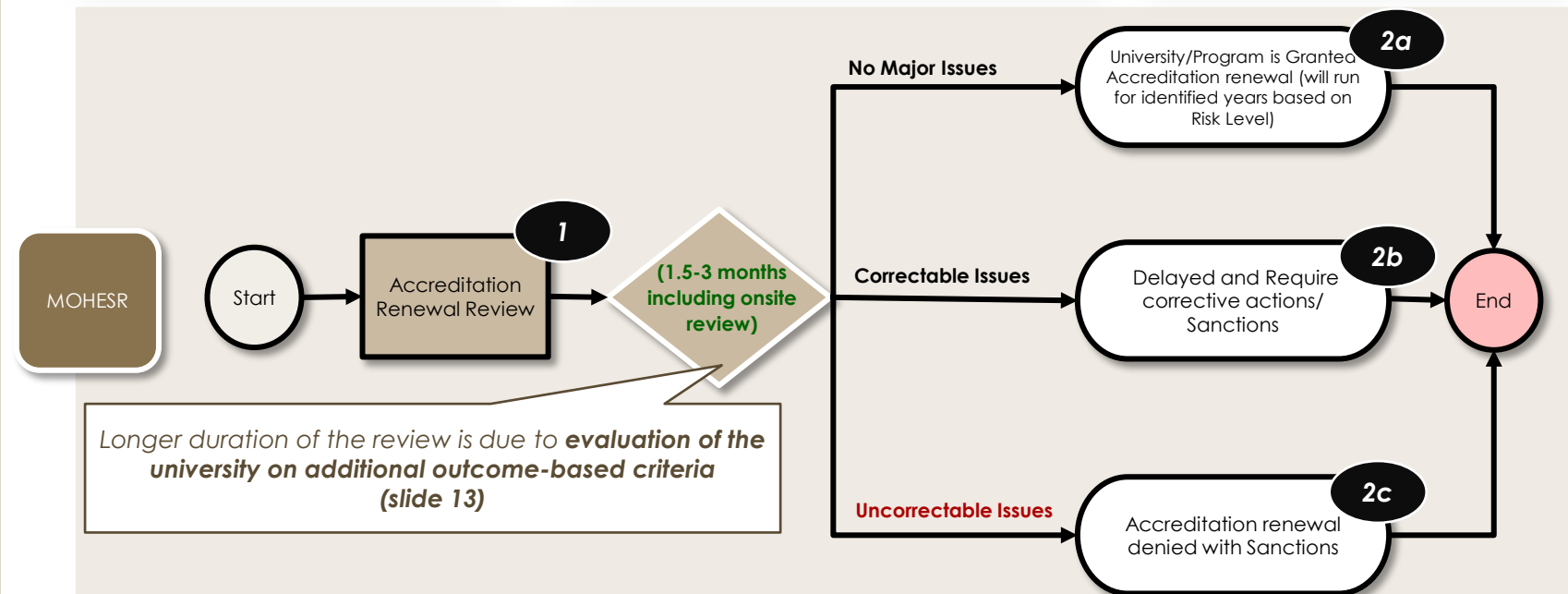
- Renewal **every 6 Years**
- Inspection mid-cycle (every 3 years)

#### Medium Risk (Medium Confidence)

- Renewal **every 4 Years**
- Inspection mid-cycle (every 2 years)

#### High Risk (low Confidence)

- Renewal **every 2 Years**
- Inspection mid-cycle (every year)





# External journey

# Journey 4: Established universities introduce a new program

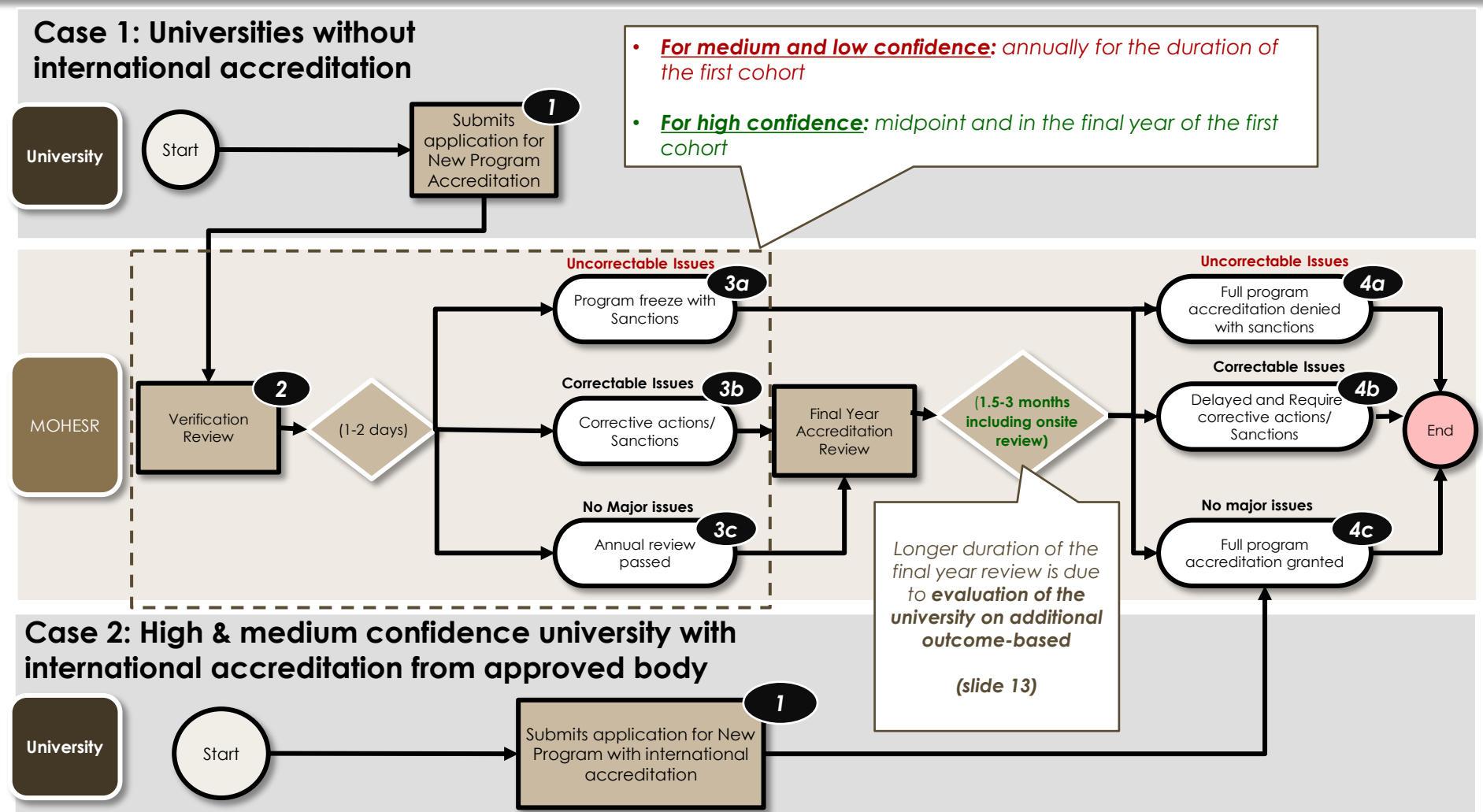
## Before Improvements

- Application & onsite visit **6-9 months**

## Key improvements

- ✓ **No duplication** with international accreditation
- ✓ **Simplified process** for **high confidence** universities
- ✓ Intermediary reviews reduced to **1-2 days** and final review to **1.5-3 months**

## Process



## Internal enabler

### Before Improvements

- No unified framework, focus on **inputs**

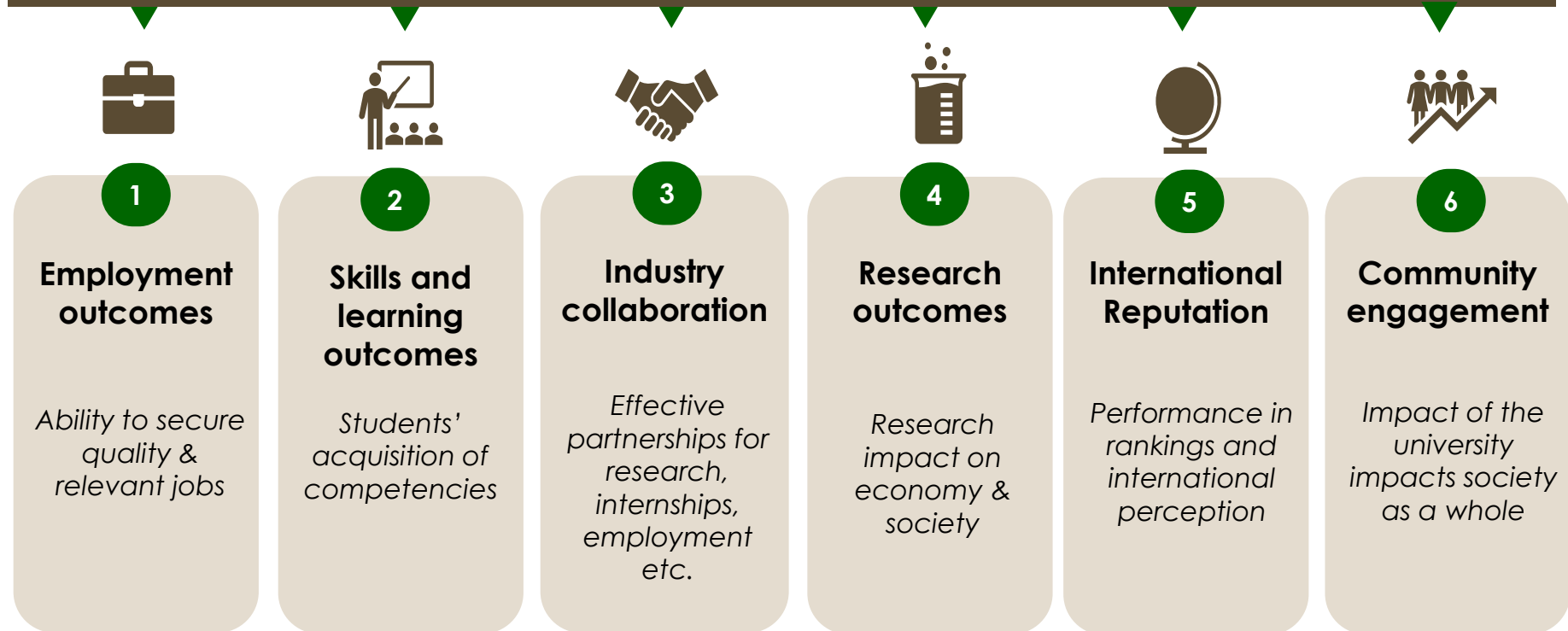
### Key improvements

- ✓ **Unified** outcome based evaluation on **6 key outcomes**

## Enabler 1: Outcome-based evaluation to ensure higher education quality

### Outcome based evaluation framework

6 key outcome dimensions identified:



- The 6 dimensions are being detailed into specific criteria
- Penalties matrix is being developed & linked to outcome-based evaluation framework

## Internal enabler

## Enabler 2: Internal coordination between departments

### Before Improvements

- **Overlap of tasks and ownership** and lack of coordination

### Coordination framework

#### The Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA)

Academic standards guardian

- **Developing outcome-based standards**
- **Conducting technical reviews**

#### Department of Higher Education Institutes Support

University services owner

- **Interface with the high education** institutions
- **Managing** and coordinating of **operations** for licensing
- **Monitoring implementation & collection** of all fees

#### Department of Higher Education Institutes Compliance and Quality

Compliance lead

- **Managing** & coordinating all **verification visits**
- **Delivering inspection visits**
- Monitoring **implementation of penalties and fines**

### Key improvements

- ✓ Clear **division of roles, unified interface** with universities