



وزارة التعليم العالي
والبحوث العلمي

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION
& SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH



وزارة التعليم العالي
والبحوث العلمي
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION
& SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

حوار "مستقبل التعليم العالي في الإمارات"

نوفمبر 2024 November 2024

Dialogue

"Future of Higher Education in the UAE"

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION
& SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH



الإمارات العربية المتحدة
وزارة التعليم العالي
والبحـث العلمي

Students Admission Policy

Objectives: Revising admission criteria to position universities as true upskilling partners driving educational and socio-economic outcomes



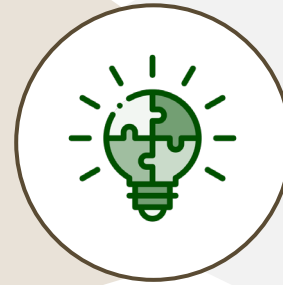
01 | Economic outcomes

- ✓ Labour productivity
- ✓ Employment & Emiratization



02 | Social outcomes

- ✓ Quality of life
- ✓ Social integration & mobility



03 | Educational outcomes




- ✓ Access to higher education
- ✓ Skills & learning outcomes

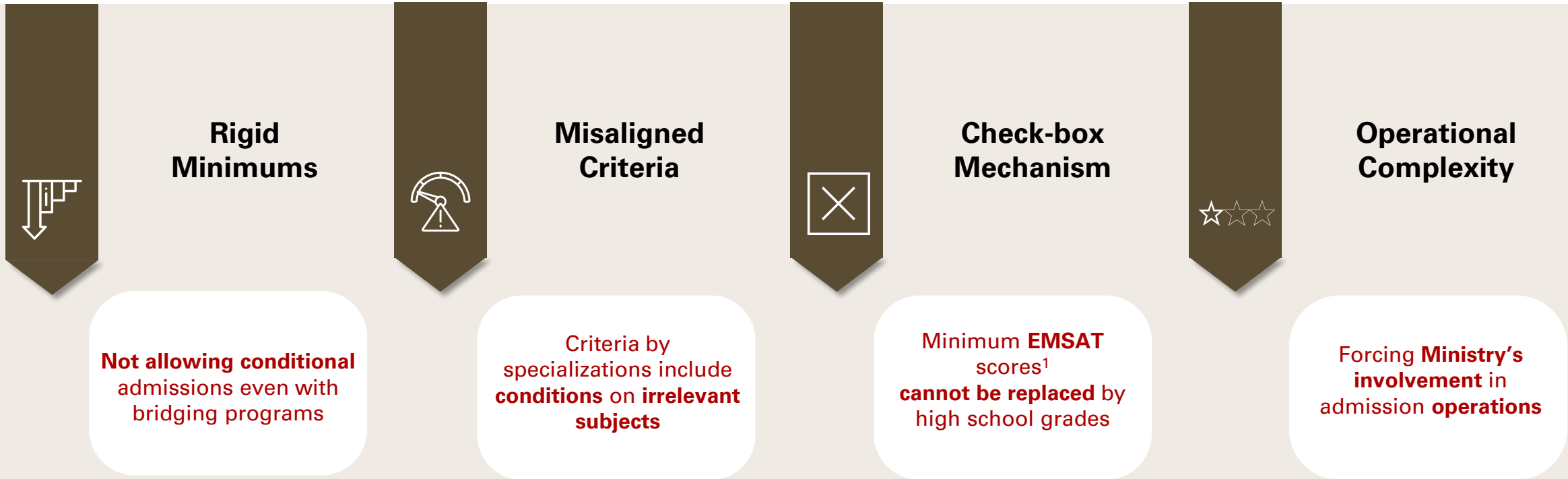


How to revise MoHESR policy on **student admissions** to enable universities to have **greater responsibility & autonomy** in driving higher education outcomes?

Current state: Negative impact on education & employment outcomes due to rigid criteria preventing universities from playing their role in upskilling the youth



Restricted access to higher education  A large number of grade 12 students ineligible to apply for any bachelor program	Negative impact on employment outcomes  Majority of job seekers on NAFIS are high school or below	Negative impact on stakeholder satisfaction  Students, parents & universities blame Ministry's policies for restricted access
--	--	--



Target model: To uplift higher ed. quality, MoHESR recommends flexible admission guidelines allowing universities to design their own policies and offer bridging courses



Model 1 – Fully centralized admission policy

Strict minimum admission criteria and control mechanisms.



- ✘ Limiting autonomy of universities
- Universities cannot act as upskilling partners
- Limiting access to education
- Negative impact on employability
- Operational complexity

Model 2 – Hybrid flexible admission policy

- Simple minimum **guidelines**
- **Universities** develop their own policies & can provide bridging options
- **Outcome-based evaluation** to control universities



- ✔ Expanding higher education **access**
- Universities as **upskilling partners**
- **Control based on real outcomes**
- **Accountability** on universities

Recommended model

Model 3 – Fully decentralized admission policy

Full autonomy to universities to set their own admission policies



- ✔ Accountability on universities
- Very limited operational involvement
- ✘ Limited safeguards to protect students
- Limited guidance for universities
- Requires mature self-regulating system

Target model: Flexible, targeted & streamlined admission guidelines



1

General guidelines by program level

Before Model



- English criteria use only standardized tests
- Bachelor conditional admission **not allowed**
- Conditional admission in diplomas & higher diplomas **limited to a minimum score**

Target Model



- Using **high school English grades** as a more **holistic** assessment
- Universities allowed to admit students **conditionally** if they provide **bridging** courses

2

Specific guidelines by specialization

- **10** regulated specializations
- Combination of **minimum overall high school average** and **minimum subject specific EMSAT scores**

- **5** regulated specializations
- Focus on performance in **relevant subjects** only
- Using **high school** subject grades as a more **holistic** assessment
- Universities allowed to admit students **conditionally** if they provide **bridging** courses

Overview of current & proposed admission criteria by program level

Degree Level	Current state	Target state
Bachelor Degree	EMSAT English: 1,100 Conditional admission: not allowed Additional subject specific requirements (slide 10)	High School English score: 80
Standalone Higher Diploma Level 5	EMSAT English: 900 Conditional admission: 700-900	High School English score: 70
Standalone Diploma Level 4	EMSAT English: 900 Conditional admission: 700-900	High School English score: 70
Awards, Micro-credentials Level 4 & 5	N/A	N/A

Rational for new proposal

- ✓ **Flexibility** and **holistic assessment**
- ✓ **Universities** as **upskilling partners** via **bridging courses**

Expected impact of new proposal¹

- ✓ **2x** increase in students eligible for bachelor
- ✓ **1.3x** increase in students eligible for higher diploma / diploma

Key notes

- In targeted proposal, **universities can admit students conditionally as long as they offer bridging courses/programs**
- All degree levels are per the QFEmirates 2024
- High school score is National Curriculum certificate scores for English subject
- Students from a non-MoE national curricula are not required to prove proficiency if they have taken English AP, A-level or IB. Remaining students can prove proficiency via international standardized tests (equivalency table provided in Appendix).

Overview of current & proposed admission criteria by specialization

Degree Type	Current	Targeted
Medicine	EMSAT Math: 800 (or equivalent) EMSAT for 2 of Chem/Bio/Physics: 800 (or equivalent) High School Average: 85 (Elite) or 90 (Advanced)	High School Subject Score: 90 in Math and 2 of Chem/Bio/Physics
Dentistry	EMSAT Math: 800 (or equivalent) EMSAT for 2 of Chem/Bio/Physics: 800 (or equivalent) High School Average: 80 (Elite) or 85 (Advanced)	High School Subject Score: 90 in Math and 2 of Chem/Bio/Physics
Pharmacy	EMSAT Math: 800 (or equivalent) EMSAT for 2 of Chem/Bio/Physics: 800 (or equivalent) High School Average: 80 (Elite) or 85 (Advanced)	High School Subject Score: 80 in Math and 2 of Chem/Bio/Physics
Engineering	EMSAT Math: 800 (or equivalent) EMSAT Physics: 800 (or equivalent) High School Average: 75 (Elite) or 80 (Advanced) or 90 (General)	High School Subject Score: 80 in Math and Physics and 1 of Chem/Bio
Law	EMSAT Math: 600 (or equivalent) High School Average: 70 (Elite) or 75 (Advanced) or 80 (General)	High School Subject Score: 70 in Math for reasoning
Technology Programs	EMSAT Math: 700 (or equivalent) EMSAT Physics: 700 (or equivalent)	N/A
Natural Sciences	EMSAT Math: 700 (or equivalent) EMSAT for 1 of Chem/Bio/Physics: 700 (or equivalent)	N/A
Business (Accounting, finance, Economics)	EMSAT Math: 600 (or equivalent)	N/A

Key notes

- In targeted proposal, **universities can admit students conditionally as long as they offer bridging courses/programs**
- Other specializations not listed do not have minimum subject specific requirements
- High school score is National Curriculum certificate scores in advanced stream
- Students from a non-MoE national curricula can showcase proficiency via equivalent (equivalency table provided in appendix)

Rational for new proposal

- ✓ **Flexibility** and **holistic assessment**
- ✓ **Focus** on relevant **subjects**
- ✓ **One average** across all streams under assumption that high school streams are being unified
- ✓ Minimums aligned with **historical patterns & benchmarks**
- ✓ **Universities** as **upskilling partners** via **bridging courses**

Expected impact of new proposal¹

- ✓ **1.4x to 6x** Increase in students eligible for these specializations

Impact:

At least 4 key personas of students expected to be significantly supported by the model shift

