

GLOBAL CHALLENGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A GULF PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The continuous expansion of higher education institutions in the Gulf over the past years reflects ambitions beyond the region. As a matter of fact, higher education institutions in the gulf region adapt and respond to some global challenges such as internationalisation, globalisation, ranking, benchmarking, accreditation etc. Higher education institutions exist in a world that continuously and increasingly operates across autonomous and sovereign borders just like countries have become interconnected worldwide. It is undeniable that HEIs are feeling the gravity brought about by the global challenges. Of course, every institution aims to attract the best faculty and students on a global scale. Over the last decade, HEIs around the world are facing many challenges in terms of achieving effective teaching, learning, assessment and curriculum. There are many changes and developments in the higher education: learners are changing, learning styles are changing as well as learners' demands are changing. Too, much more is expected of HEIs in terms of their wider participation and engagement globally, nationally and regionally. The main role of universities and colleges nowadays is to prepare the students or alumni for global future. Due to the rapid developments, challenges and trends in higher education across the globe, higher education should succumb to "global engagement" in order to cope with the various challenges that may affect the operation of HEIs. "Global engagement" is usually used to apprehend the activities and interconnections of various higher education institutions. Global engagement, at the level of individuals, refers faculty-to-faculty research partnerships, student mobility, faculty-based research networks, student and faculty exchanges, and participation in jointly taught courses. On the other hand, global engagement at the institutional level refers to formalised relationships which can be clearly defined through memoranda of understanding, cooperative research projects, professional networks, and other related ventures.