

## Self-Evaluation of the Foundation English Language Programme at the Center for Preparatory Studies Offered at the Sultan Qaboos University, Oman: Process and Findings

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**Abstract :** The context: The Center for Preparatory study is one of the strongest and most vibrant academic teaching units of the Sultan Qaboos University (SQU). The Foundation Programme English Language (FPEL) is part of a larger foundation programme which was implemented at SQU in fall 2010. The programme has been designed to prepare the students who have been accepted to study in the university in order to achieve the required educational goals (the learning outcomes) that have been designed according to Oman Academic Standards and published by the Omani Authority for Academic Accreditation (OAAA) for the English language component. The curriculum: At the CPS, the English language curriculum is based on the learning outcomes drafted for each level. These learning outcomes guide the students in meeting what is expected of them by the end of each level. These six levels are progressive in nature and are seen as a continuum. The study: A periodic evaluation of language programmes is necessary to improve the quality of the programmes and to meet the set goals of the programmes. An evaluation may be carried out internally or externally depending on the purpose and context. A self-study programme was initiated at the beginning of spring semester 2015 with a team comprising a total of 11 members who worked with-in the assigned course areas (level and programme specific). Only areas specific to FPEL have been included in the study. The study was divided into smaller tasks and members focused on their assigned courses. The self-study primarily focused on analyzing the programme LOs, curriculum planning, materials used and their relevance against the GFP exit standards. The review team also reflected on the assessment methods and procedures followed to reflect on student learning. The team has paid attention to having standard criteria for assessment and transparency in procedures. A special attention was paid to the staging of LOs across levels to determine students' language and study skills ability to cope with higher level courses. Findings: The findings showed that most of the LOs are met through the materials used for teaching. Students score low on objective tests and high on subjective tests. Motivated students take advantage of academic support activities others do not utilize the student support activities to their advantage. Reading should get more hours. In listening, the format of the listening materials in CT 2 does not match the test format. Some of the course materials need revision. For e.g. APA citation, referencing etc. No specific time is allotted for teaching grammar Conclusion: The findings resulted in taking actions in bridging gaps. It will also help the center to be better prepared for the external review of its FPEL curriculum. It will also provide a useful base to prepare for the self-study portfolio for GFP standards assessment and future audit.

**Keywords :** curriculum planning, learning outcomes, reflections, self-evaluation

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