



Contribution from Oman Human Rights Commission on the Right to Education: Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Assessment

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❖ Information about Oman Human Rights Commission:

Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) was established in 2008 by Royal Decree No. (124/2008) to be an independent national body dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights in Oman. In recognition of the Commission's importance and status, Royal Decree No. (57/2022) was issued, reorganizing the Commission and establishing a new operational framework, elevating it to the level of full independence in carrying out its work. The Commission operates as a national mechanism responsible for protecting, promoting, and monitoring human rights both domestically and internationally.

The establishment of the OHRC by the Sultanate of Oman reflects its recognition of the importance of protecting and safeguarding these rights, as well as its commitment to upholding the international conventions related to human rights. OHRC is tasked with the following responsibilities:

1. Developing a national human rights strategy and monitoring its implementation in coordination with all relevant human rights entities.
2. Monitoring the protection of human rights and freedoms in the Sultanate of Oman in accordance with the Basic Statute of the state, international treaties and conventions to which Oman is party, and applicable laws.
3. Observing and responding to comments raised by foreign governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations regarding human rights in Oman by coordinating with the concerned authorities to investigate and address these issues.
4. Providing advice to state entities on matters related to human rights and freedoms and contributing to the preparation of reports addressing these topics.
5. Monitoring any violations or abuses related to human rights in the Sultanate of Oman and assisting in their resolution.
6. Conducting field visits to prisons, detention centers, hospitals, and labor gatherings to assess the human rights situation in these locations.
7. Receiving complaints related to human rights, studying them, making recommendations to the competent authorities, and following up on their resolutions.



8. Collaborating with international mechanisms related to human rights, preparing reports, and participating in regional or international human rights meetings.
9. Organizing conferences, training courses, and seminars related to human rights in coordination with relevant entities.
10. Representing the Sultanate of Oman in regional and international conferences, events, and meetings concerning human rights.

❖ Overview

OHRC notes that Oman adopts a comprehensive legislative and regulatory framework for organizing school curricula, which is aligned with national directions such as Oman Vision 2040 and the Education Philosophy of the Sultanate of Oman, and is also consistent with international education goals stipulated in international human rights instruments—foremost among them the guarantee of the right to education and the empowerment of all learners to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for life, citizenship, and social integration.

The General Framework of Curriculum Concepts in the Sultanate of Oman is considered one of the key supporting documents in this regard. It aims to define general concepts and mechanisms for their integration into curricula and includes concepts related to fundamental human rights—foremost the right to education—alongside the values of citizenship, identity, tolerance, sustainable development, and others.

❖ National Legislations and Policies:

Among the most prominent national legislation and policies related to curricula in the Sultanate of Oman are the following:

1. **The School Education Law**, issued by Royal Decree No. (31/2023), which establishes the regulatory foundations for school education, affirms the compulsory nature of basic education, and emphasizes the State's responsibility to provide and guarantee it, reflecting the Sultanate's commitment to the principle of the right to education.
2. **Reference frameworks governing curriculum development**, such as the National [Education Strategy 2040](#), the [Education Philosophy of the Sultanate of Oman](#), and the [General Framework for Omani Curriculum Standards](#), along with related directives and decisions that regulate educational standards and learning outcomes.
3. **The role of the Oman Authority for Quality Assurance of Education** in developing a national quality assurance system and evaluating public and private schools, thereby enhancing the quality of education, its outcomes, and the effectiveness of curriculum implementation.



1. Curriculum Conceptualization, Design, and Implementation

(a) To what extent do curriculum systems address learning needs and knowledge acquisition to respond to contemporary challenges, while simultaneously ensuring the acquisition of life skills and competencies? What challenges exist?

Response:

OHRC notes that the organization of school curricula in the Sultanate of Oman balances the acquisition of foundational knowledge (scientific, linguistic, and cultural concepts) with the development of skills and competencies (thinking skills, innovation, problem-solving, digital skills, and life and work skills). This is reflected through:

- The development of curricula based on clear learning outcomes and defined standards within the Omani curriculum framework.
- The integration of modern concepts into curricula in accordance with the General Framework of Curriculum Concepts (including concepts related to rights, identity, sustainable development, and the right to education).
- The updating of content delivery methods in line with digital transformation and the development of interactive educational resources.

Despite this flexibility, curricula face several challenges, most notably the rapid pace of global change (digitally and cognitively) compared to curriculum development cycles, and disparities in the readiness of digital and technological infrastructure among schools due to accelerating changes.

(b) How does the curriculum integrate intercultural understanding, local languages, local knowledge, and parallel knowledge systems?

Response:

OHRC notes that the school curricula in Oman integrate intercultural understanding and local knowledge through multiple approaches, most notably:

1. Strengthening Omani national identity and the Arabic language within curricula through textbook content, activities, and projects.
2. Incorporating value-based and rights-related topics such as tolerance, coexistence, and rejection of extremism, thereby fulfilling educational objectives related to intercultural understanding.



3. Utilizing the Omani environment as a learning resource (community, heritage, local geography, history, handicrafts, and traditional industries).
4. Activating the General Framework of Curriculum Concepts as a reference for integrating national and global concepts, including those that support the principle of the right to education and the principles of equity and fairness.

OHRC also notes that the Curricula incorporate forms of local knowledge linked to the Omani environment—such as traditional practices in agriculture, fishing, and water management (e.g., aflaj systems)—and connect them to modern scientific concepts, reflecting integration between school-based knowledge and parallel knowledge systems. Educational activities further promote cultural dialogue, respect for diversity, and appreciation of local community expertise, while developing critical thinking skills that enable learners to compare different knowledge systems and understand them within their social and cultural contexts. In this way, the Omani curriculum contributes to developing learners who are confident in their identity, open to other cultures, and capable of integrating local and global knowledge in a cohesive manner.

(c) Are there any restrictions related to specific subjects? If yes, please explain the reasons.

Response:

OHRC notes that there are certain regulatory controls applied to specific subjects within the Omani curriculum, based on educational, cultural, and national considerations. These include Islamic Education and Social Studies, where content is subject to careful regulation to ensure alignment with religious principles, national identity, and state educational policies, thereby preventing the inclusion of concepts or practices that conflict with societal values. Curricula also impose controls on the selection of texts and topics in Arabic and foreign languages to ensure age appropriateness, alignment with the local cultural context, and ethical and educational suitability of content. OHRC notes that the objective is not to restrict the right to knowledge, but rather to regulate content in a way that promotes balanced education and protects learners from intellectual harm or misinformation.

(d) Is the process of curriculum design and approval flexible and adaptable? Are emerging challenges or societal changes reflected in curriculum reviews? If not, what are the challenges?

Response:

OHRC notes that the process of designing and approving school curricula in the Sultanate of Oman is characterized by a degree of flexibility and gradual development. It relies on national reference frameworks established by the Ministry of Education, while considering the State's strategic directions—Oman Vision 2040. Curricula undergo periodic review and development processes aimed at aligning educational content with pedagogical developments and societal



changes through the integration of modern concepts such as digital transformation, competency-based learning, future skills, and sustainability.

Emerging challenges are reflected in curriculum reviews through the updating of learning outcomes, the integration of interdisciplinary topics, the strengthening of critical thinking, innovation, and self-directed learning skills, as well as the development of teaching and assessment methods that support active learning. Curriculum development also benefits from educational research findings, feedback from the educational field, and comparative international experiences.

Nevertheless, OHRC noted that curriculum flexibility faces several challenges, including the need to align rapid updates with available human and financial resources, ensure teacher readiness to implement changes, the length of approval procedures in some cases, and the need to balance openness to global changes with the preservation of national identity and values. Accordingly, Omani curricula can be described as adaptable and continuously developing, although this flexibility is sometimes influenced by regulatory and implementation-related factors that require ongoing attention.

(e) Who are the stakeholders involved in curriculum decision-making? Is there space for participation by the academic community, teachers, students, parents, and the local community? What safeguards exist to prevent undue influence or conflicts of interest, including from the private sector? Please provide examples.

Response:

The Ministry of Education is the primary authority responsible for the design, development, and approval of school curricula in the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Directorate General for Curriculum Development through curriculum specialists across all subject areas. OHRC noted that opportunities are also provided for teachers and educational supervisors to participate through curriculum development teams and by offering feedback on curriculum content.

Students, parents, and the local community participate indirectly through opinion surveys, national and international assessment results, and feedback from the educational field, as well as through the utilization of local community expertise in certain topics, particularly those related to heritage, environment, and national culture.

OHRC noted that the curriculum development process in the Sultanate of Oman is governed by clear regulatory controls to prevent undue influence and conflicts of interest, including:

- The adoption of national frameworks and educational standards that guide content selection.



- Subjecting curricula to multiple stages of scientific and educational review and validation prior to approval.
- Ensuring separation between educational decision-making and commercial entities or the private sector, where the role of the private sector—if any—is limited to technical or printing aspects without interference in content.
- Adherence to national values and religious and cultural principles as a governing reference for any curriculum development.

Concrete examples include:

- The formation of curriculum development and alignment committees comprising academics and teachers to review science, mathematics, English language, information technology, and environmental science curricula in line with international standards.
- The review of Social Studies and Islamic Education content to ensure alignment with national identity and to prevent any undue external influence.

2. Pedagogy and Classroom Learning:

d. How are teachers trained and supported to initiate and implement learner-centered, inclusive and participatory pedagogies, and what factors limit their ability to do so?

Response:

OHRC notes that the Specialized Institute for Professional Training of Teachers (SIPTT) plays a central role in training and supporting teachers to adopt learner-centered, inclusive and participatory pedagogical approaches, in alignment with national education priorities and international frameworks.

Teacher professional development is structured through a holistic approach that includes long-term strategic programs, national programs, and short-term targeted training. These programs emphasize active learning methodologies, differentiated instruction, inclusive education practices, formative assessment, and student engagement strategies. Training is delivered through a blended approach combining face-to-face training, online learning, and workplace-based professional practice, enabling teachers to apply acquired knowledge directly within their classroom contexts.

The Institute also integrates professional learning communities, mentoring practices, and school-based tasks to support sustained pedagogical change. Teachers are encouraged to reflect on



their instructional practices, analyze classroom data, and collaboratively develop solutions that respond to the diverse needs of learners, including students with learning difficulties, gifted students, and students requiring psychosocial support.

In addition, some specified training programs address socio-emotional learning, mental health and well-being, trauma-informed approaches, and inclusive education, particularly through programs targeting school social and physiological specialists, senior teachers, school principals and supervisors. These initiatives aim to strengthen teachers' capacity to create safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments.

However, OHRC notes several factors may limit teachers' ability to fully implement learner-centered and inclusive pedagogies. These include variability in school contexts and resources, workload pressures, time constraints for sustained professional practice, and differences in teachers' prior training and readiness for pedagogical change.

To address these challenges, the Institute continues to expand flexible training modalities, enhance digital learning platforms, strengthen mentoring and follow-up mechanisms, and align professional development more closely with school-based needs and strategic priorities, supporting continuous professional learning across teachers' career pathways.

3. Student Assessment

a. How are assessment systems aligned with the aims of education under international human rights law? Please describe the balance between holistic, formative and flexible approaches and more standardized or high-stake assessments.

Response:

OHRC notes that education in Oman aims to promote the full development of the human personality, equity, and effective participation in society which are in line with Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Assessment systems are aligned with these aims through national education policies implemented by the Ministry of Education and guided by Oman Vision 2040, which emphasizes quality, learner-centered education, and human capital development.

In grades (1–4), student performance is evaluated and their academic achievement level is measured through a continuous assessment system, without a full end-of-year examination. For grades (5–12), the semester system is applied, whereby the student's average performance during the semester represents the final result for the academic year. Each academic subject includes a final end-of-semester examination in addition to continuous assessment tools.



In grades (1-10), Oman prioritizes continuous and formative assessment, including adaptation of teaching, giving feedback and student self -assessment. These approaches support holistic learning, reduce early academic exclusion, and enable teachers to provide timely feedback and targeted support. In Post-Basic Education (Grades 11–12), standardized national examinations serve important functions related to certification, progression, and system accountability. These high-stakes assessments are complemented by continuous formative assessment to ensure that student achievement reflects sustained learning rather than single examination outcomes.

Overall, OHRC notes that Oman’s assessment system seeks to balance holistic, formative, and flexible approaches with standardized assessment requirements, consistent with international human rights law. This balanced framework supports quality education, fairness, and learner well-being while meeting national development priorities.

b. To what extent do current assessment practices safeguard against discrimination, excessive standardization and cultural assimilation? Please provide examples of measures taken to ensure fairness for learners facing linguistic, socio-economic, disability-related or geographic barriers. Do you have examples of local, culturally grounded or community-developed approaches to defining and evaluating successful learning?

Response:

OHRC notes that current assessment practices in Oman incorporate measures aimed at safeguarding learners from discrimination, excessive standardization, and cultural assimilation, in line with international human rights standards. National curricula and assessments are developed centrally to ensure equity, while allowing space for school-based assessment that reflects learners’ diverse contexts.

To address linguistic barriers, Arabic is the primary language of instruction and assessment, ensuring accessibility for all learners, while targeted support is provided for students facing literacy challenges in early grades. Socio-economic disparities are mitigated through free public education, standardized assessment criteria, and school-based formative assessment that reduces reliance on high-stakes examinations alone.

For learners with disabilities, OHRC notes that the Ministry of Education provides assessment accommodation, adapted tools, and individualized educational plans where appropriate, ensuring equal opportunities to demonstrate learning. Geographic equity is also supported through unified national standards, teacher training, and supervisory systems that aim to ensure consistency in assessment quality across urban and rural schools.



OHRC confirms that Oman also promotes culturally grounded approaches to assessment through projects, practical tasks, and activities linked to local environments, heritage, culture and community life. Subjects such as social studies, Islamic education, and life skills incorporate locally relevant content, enabling students to demonstrate learning in culturally meaningful ways. These practices help ensure that assessment supports inclusion, cultural identity, and fairness, while maintaining national coherence and quality.

c. How do assessment practices support the dignity, motivation and wellbeing of all learners and educators? Are there known pressures, unintended consequences or forms of stress linked to examinations or inspection regimes?

Response:

As mentioned in previous answers, OHRC notes that Oman's assessment system seeks to uphold the dignity, motivation, and well-being of learners and educators by combining formative, holistic, and inclusive approaches with standardized examinations.

Nonetheless, high-stakes national examinations, particularly in Post-Basic Education (Grades 11–12), can create pressure for students and teachers. Reports indicate stress related to exam preparation, performance expectations, and inspection regimes, which may affect well-being if not balanced with supportive classroom assessment and guidance. OHRC notes that these concerns are addressed through formative assessment, vocational/career guidance programs, and curricular reforms designed to promote learner-centered approaches, foster resilience, and maintain a positive educational environment.

d. How is teacher autonomy supported in assessment and can they use alternative assessment models, such as portfolios, project-based assessments, performance tasks, exhibitions of learning, self-assessment or peer assessment? Are teachers allowed to adapt assessment methods to diverse learner needs?

Response:

In the Omani assessment system, OHRC notes that teachers are encouraged to use a variety of assessment tools that support both individual and group learning. These include portfolios, project-based assessments, performance tasks, presentations, exhibitions of learning, self-assessment, and peer assessment. Day-to-Day Observation, Classroom Questioning, Presentations, Written Work and Projects — are examples of assessment as an integral part of teaching.



Teachers are also allowed to adapt assessment methods to meet diverse learner needs. This flexibility enables teachers to differentiate assessment tasks according to students' abilities, learning styles, and readiness levels, while still aligning with national curriculum standards and learning outcomes. By using varied and flexible assessment strategies, teachers can ensure fair evaluation, inclusive practices, and meaningful feedback that supports student progress.

Overall, the assessment system in Oman values teacher professional judgment and promotes balanced assessment practices that develop both academic achievement and essential life skills through individual and collaborative work.

e. Are the budgets of educational institutions linked to student performances? If, so to what extent and what safeguards are in place against undue pressure from school rankings, commercial tests or external actors?

Response:

In Oman, the budgets of educational institutions are not linked to student performance or school rankings. There is no performance-based funding system that rewards or penalizes schools financially according to examination outcomes.

While funding is not performance-based, school performance is evaluated through structured quality assurance processes, including the role of the Academic Qualifications Authority. The Academy contributes to evaluating and assuring the quality of educational outcomes by setting national standards, reviewing qualifications, and supporting evaluation frameworks that help monitor institutional effectiveness and alignment with national learning standards. These evaluations are used for system improvement and quality enhancement, not for determining school budgets.

Safeguards in place include:

- Centralized oversight of curriculum, assessment, and funding decisions by the Ministry of Education.
- National assessment frameworks designed primarily for monitoring learning outcomes and improving teaching quality, not for ranking schools publicly.
- Professional accountability mechanisms (such as supervision, school self-evaluation, and improvement plans) that focus on development and support rather than financial consequences.



- Participation in international studies such as TIMSS and PIRLS, which is used for benchmarking and system-level analysis only, not for ranking schools, evaluating individual teachers, or allocating budgets.
- Development-oriented evaluation processes, supported by authorities such as the Academic Qualification Authority, focusing on improvement rather than competition.

Overall, the Omani system emphasizes equity, stability, and continuous improvement, ensuring that schools can focus on enhancing teaching and learning without financial pressure linked to student performance or external rankings.

f. How do assessment systems recognize socio-emotional learning, creativity, cooperation, problem solving and other competencies that are difficult to capture through standardized testing? Please provide examples where such competencies are meaningfully evaluated.

Response:

OHRC notes that competencies such as socio-emotional learning, creativity, cooperation and problem-solving are best recognized through assessment approaches that go beyond standardized tests. classroom participation, portfolios, project work, practical performance, classroom observation and self- and peer-assessment allow these skills to be meaningfully evaluated in authentic contexts.

In Oman, ongoing education reforms increasingly reflect this shift by integrating such methods to support holistic learner development aligned with national priorities. For example, project-based learning in Omani schools allows students to work in teams to investigate local environmental or social issues, where teachers assess cooperation, communication and problem-solving using clear rubrics. Student portfolios and presentations provide evidence of creativity and reflection over time, while classroom observation tools and self-assessment tools capture socio-emotional skills such as perseverance and responsibility.