



2 Approval Process for Health Facilities

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Approval Process for Health Facilities is to ensure all Health Facilities within the jurisdiction of Dubai Health Authority (DHA) are designed and constructed to a minimum acceptable standard. This is required to maintain the public confidence in the quality of Health Facilities approved, inspected and licensed by the Dubai Health Authority. It is also necessary to promote and maintain Dubai's reputation as a trusted destination for Medical Tourism. These Guidelines aim to achieve these goals through a number of measures as follows:

- Facility Approval Process – a streamlined four-step approval process explained in detail below, from the initial registration of a proposal to the final design, construction and licensing for the operation of the facility.
- Prequalification of **Health Facility Design Consultants** – a process of pre-qualification for design consultants who are authorised to design and submit plans for approval and licensing by the DHA. This is to ensure the design of such critical facilities is in competent hands.
- Standards and Guidelines – a comprehensive set of Ready-to-Use Guidelines for the Briefing, Design and Construction of Health Facilities licensed by the DHA for operation in Dubai. These Guidelines also serve to educate to assist in the above streamlined approval process by informing the applicants, reviewers and inspectors alike by giving acceptable examples which have a “Deemed to Satisfy” or DTS status.

2.1.2 References within Part A of the Guidelines

Where “underlined script” is used, the applicant should refer to the section “Appendices – Standard documents, Templates and Samples” at the rear of Part A.

Where “italic script” is used, the applicant should refer to the applicable section within Part A.

2.2 The Approval Process

2.2.1 The Approval Process – Integrated with the General Building Approval

The Approval Process consists of two online applications, as illustrated in Section 3.3 and summarised below:

1. New Facility Licence Application (via Sheryan) including:
 - Schematic Design Submission (Architectural Design only)



- Detailed Design Submission (Architectural Design, MEP Engineering including Medical Gases, Nurse Call Systems and Medical Equipment)
- 2. Activate Facility Licence Application (via Sheryan) including:
 - Pre-Inspection Assessment (optional)
 - Final Inspection

2.2.2 New Health Facilities

All new Health Facilities proposed which are subject to new applications to the DHA for the approval and licensing after the launch of these Guidelines must fully comply with the requirements of these guidelines.

For any existing licensed facilities, if the Owner wishes to relocate a facility to a different building or location, the approval process will be similar to a New Health Facility.

2.2.3 Existing Health Facilities Undergoing Changes and Refurbishment

Existing Health Facilities undergoing changes and refurbishment, such as re-modelling subject to applications to the DHA for the modification of previous license approvals may also need to follow the processes and requirements of these Guidelines based on the type and extent of the changes being proposed. The ultimate judge of this requirement is the DHA, however as a guide to the applicants, the following types of changes and refurbishments will require full compliance with these guidelines:

- Changing the type of service (i.e. the use of space) – for example converting an Inpatient Unit to ICU or converting the Administration Department to Medical Imaging. In these situations, the whole of the department under the new use will have to fully comply with these Guidelines.
- Changing the scope and size of the facility's services – for example adding 15 more beds to the current Inpatient Unit or expanding the current Operating Unit by the addition of 3 new operating rooms. In these situations, the whole of the new expansion (but not the original facility) need to fully comply with these Guidelines.
- Re-modelling over 50% of an existing department - for example by changing the plans, room sizes and corridors for more than 50% of the existing area. For example, re-designing the bedrooms and support areas of more than 50% of an Inpatient Unit within a hospital (even without adding any more patient bedrooms). In these situations, the whole of the Unit (in this example the Inpatient Unit) needs to be upgraded to fully comply with these Guidelines, not only those areas which are subject to the re-modelling and refurbishment.
- Partial re-modelling, less than 50% of an existing department – for example upgrading only 6 bedrooms and associate ensuite bathrooms in a 30 bed Inpatient Unit whilst keeping the rest of the Unit un-modified or only subject to superficial internal decoration. In these situations only the portion of the Unit being re-modelled will have to fully comply with these Guidelines. In these



situations, the whole of the balance of the Unit will continue under the original approval. It should be noted that this 50% limit will be considered cumulative. So, if a succession of future applications for re-modelling exceeds 50% of the total Unit area (in this example more than 50% of the Inpatient Unit), then the applicant will be required to ensure that the entire Unit complies with these Guidelines.

2.2.4 Existing Health Facilities Undergoing superficial re-decoration

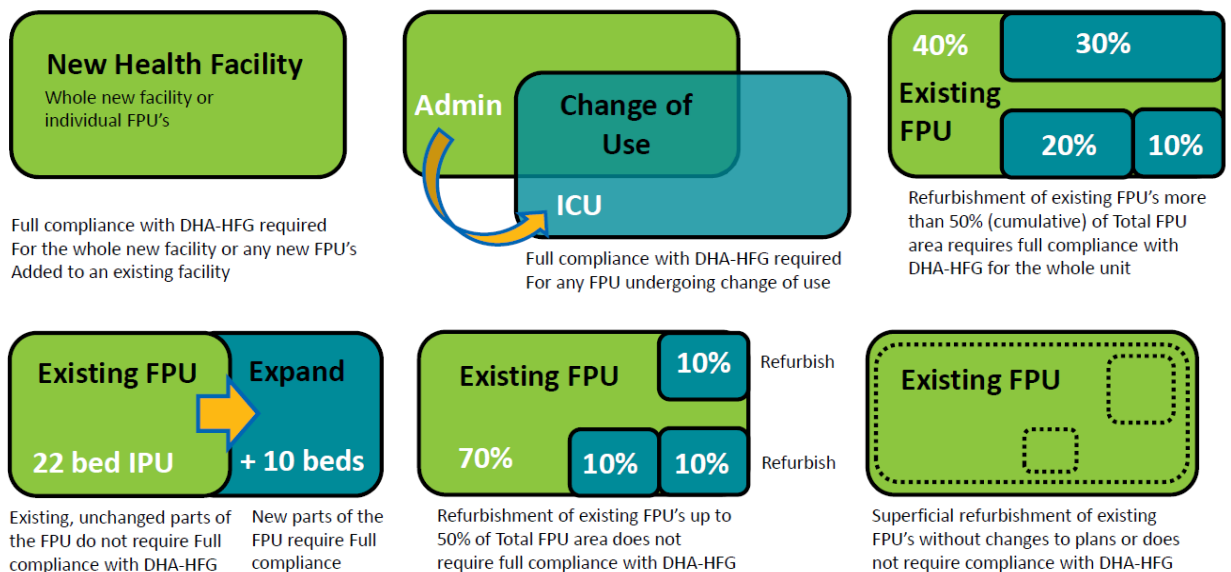
Existing facilities which are undergoing superficial re-decoration without any changes to the plans, increase in size, movement of wall locations and mandatory services (as required by these Guidelines) do not require compliance with these Guidelines. In short for such facilities, these Guidelines will not be retrospectively applied. However the DHA guidelines which existed at the time of the approval of the existign facilities will continue to apply.

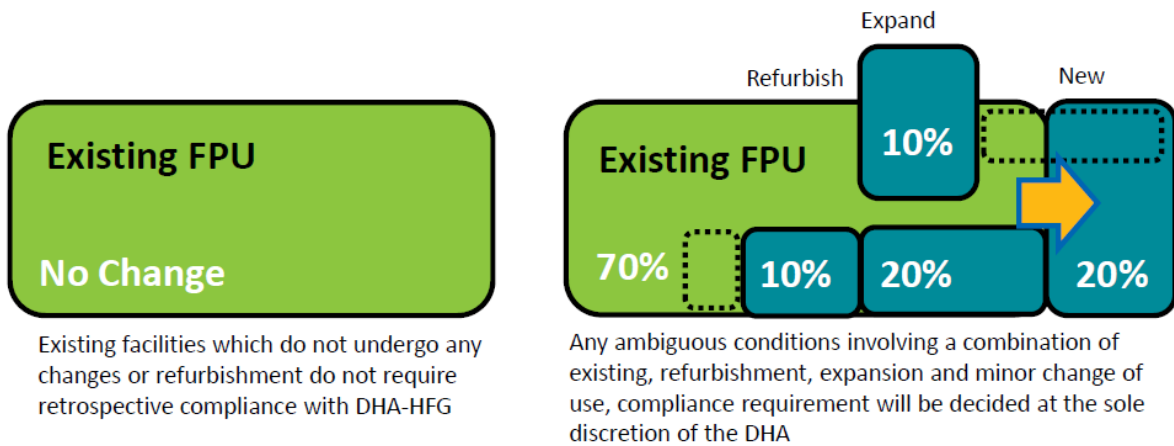
2.2.5 Existing Health Facilities not undergoing any changes

Existing facilities which are not undergoing any physical changes or operational change of use do not have to comply with these Guidelines. In short for such facilities, these Guidelines will not be retrospectively applied. However the DHA guideliens which existed at the time of the approval of the existign facilities will continue to apply.

2.2.6 Exceptional or Ambiguous Situations

In exceptional situations, not anticipated in the above conditions and examples, the sole judge of the requirement for compliance with these Guidelines will be the DHA and the DHA decision will be final. The same applies to ambiguous situations where the applicant is of the view that the modifications comprise only superficial re-decoration, however the DHA reviewers believe that the proposed work is more extensive, amounting to planning modifications or change of use. In such situations, also, the DHA will determine the need for full compliance.





2.2.7 New Health Facilities Undergoing Design Changes during DHA Approval Process

If an applicant wishes to implement design changes whilst proceeding through the Approval Process, the portion that remains unchanged may proceed with the current Approval process (which may have been under previous approval processes or under these Guidelines). If the facility is already under construction according to a DHA approval, the construction may also continue according to the DHA approval at hand. For the new changes, the Applicant should clearly document the proposed changes and re-lodged for the DHA approval. These changes will be processed in a similar manner to proposed changes to an existing Health Facility as per the examples given above. Any new approvals given by the DHA for such changes proposed during the Approval Process (which may be at any of the 4 Steps of the process) will over-ride any earlier approval, unless it is a rejection, in which case the original approval will continue to apply.

Under no circumstances should the Applicant proceed to build the proposed changes without first receiving a new approval from the DHA under these Guidelines. The Applicant should not expect to gain an approval from the DHA inspectors during the construction. In the future, DHA inspectors will not have the authority to approve any design changes applied on site and therefore any deviations from approved plans, discovered during the DHA inspection will not be accepted. The Applicant will be required to lodge an application for the approval of the proposed changes. A new site inspection will be arranged by the DHA Inspection Team accordingly.

2.2.8 Integration of the DHA Approval Process and the Building Approval Process

The DHA Health Facility Approval Process is part of the General Building Approval Process in Dubai. The General Building Approval Process refers to approvals given by other Dubai Authorities for new construction or modifications and expansion of existing facilities. The exact timing of the different submissions to the DHA should be adhered to as certain pre-requisites for the submissions are in place.

The General Building Approval Process is governed and managed by the Dubai Municipality in coordination with other Authorities having jurisdiction in the Emirate of Dubai.



If the subject health facility is located within a Freezone, the applicant is advised to check the approval process with the concerned Freezone Authority.

Refer to Section 3.7 and 3.8 of Part A for the typical General Building Approval Process diagram and how the Approval Process for Health Facilities is integrated and sequenced within the overall process.

2.2.9 Design Changes Requested by the Municipality or Other Authorities

It should not be assumed that an approval by one Authority in Dubai will necessarily match or anticipate the requirements of other Authorities such as the DHA. The applicants need to familiarise themselves with the requirements of all responsible authorities and prepare their proposal for compliance with all such requirements. For maximum clarity, should one Authority (such as the Municipality or Civil Defense) require certain changes to the applicant's proposal after an approval by the DHA, it is the responsibility of the Applicant to modify the DHA application and re-submit the changes for a revised approval by the DHA. The Applicant should be aware that significant changes requested by the Municipality or other authorities but not reported to the Dubai Health Authority will risk future penalties such as denial of 'Licence to Operate' certificate post construction completion.

The DHA should not expect the DHA reviewers or inspectors to check the plans or the actual construction against the approvals by other Authorities. The DHA will only check against its own previous approvals. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that the design complies with the requirements of all Authorities.

2.2.10 Re-aligning the Authority Requirements

Notwithstanding the cautionary notes under 3.2.5 above, applicants should have some comfort that the DHA and the authors of these Guidelines have made a serious attempt to coordinate the requirements of these Guidelines with those of other Authorities to reduce the possible conflict of Authority requirements over the same proposal or facility. Major progress has been made by using some or all of the following initiatives:

- Authorities to remove un-necessary requirements which are no longer regarded as necessary or appropriate
- Authorities to remove un-necessary restrictions to operations, where such requirements do not contribute to better facilities or health care in general
- Authorities to attempt not to cover exactly the same subject, but refer to common requirements instead, including these Guidelines or Dubai Building Code

All Authorities consulted are committed to making the overall approval process as smooth and efficient as possible, to eliminate un-necessary barriers to investment in Health Care in Dubai.

The above attempt at the alignment of the Guidelines and requirements of all Authorities will continue to be supported by the DHA and future editions of these Guidelines will inform the applicants



accordingly. Meanwhile the applicants are advised to re-check the requirements of the other Authorities (rather than go by the past memory) as certain requirements may have been removed or changed due to this health facility design guideline alignment initiative.



2.3 Health Facility Licence Application

All Health Facilities in the Dubai are required to be licensed by DHA with exception of those located within the Dubai Healthcare City Freezone (DHCC). The first step for establishing a new health facility is to obtain a licence. This process identifies the Applicant and describes the type and size of the facility, the health services to be provided, approximate construction cost and delivery timeframe etc.

2.3.1 New Facility Licence Application

All facility licence application must be initiated online via the DHA electronic portal “Sheryan”. Integrating with the online application system “Sheryan”, the applicant has the choice of selecting one of the two methods offered for new facility licence application. Both methods will involve two applications as follow:

1. New Facility License Application
2. Activate Facility Licence Application

Two methods are offered where each method is developed to suit a particular type of healthcare facility. For simple and smaller facilities (clinics and day surgery) or minor extensions to an existing facility, the applicant can refer to Method 1. For larger and more complex facilities (like hospitals), Method 2 should be followed by the Applicant. Each method is explained in details below.

2.3.1.1 Method 1 - Simple Process (one detailed submission)

This method suits simple or small facilities or minor extensions. All “non-hospital” facilities can follow this method where Method 2 is only optional. The applicant can prepare one fully detailed application and make one submission.

Step 1 - New Facility Licence Application

Applicant must create a User account on Sheryan and follow the process as described below:

- Consider the requirements of in these Guidelines and design the proposed facility accordingly
- The recommended steps required to prepare the design are summarised in **Section 1.1 above - “How to Use these Gudielines”**
- Prepare all of the deliverable documents listed in **Appendix 2 of Part A** in these Guidelines
- Access the Sheryan system online and follow on-screen instructions. Be prepared to pay fees by credit card.
- When prompted, provide Applicant Details, Facility Overview and Location Details etc.
- When prompted to “Upload Facility Layout” upload all the required detailed design documents and design reports as per the deliverables listed in **Appendix 2 of Part A** in these Guidelines
- If the Facility is a Hospital, a Feasibility Study must be provided as per the requirements of Part F



of these Guidelines. This can be uploaded when prompted to “Upload Additional Documents”.

- If the Applicant wishes to provide any other supporting documents, use “Upload Additional Documents”
- Accept the “Terms and Conditions” and Submit the application online
- Follow online payment instruction (fees will be automatically calculated based on facility category and the services)
- Follow online instructions and complete a survey form for Dubai Capacity Planning
- After DHA review, you will receive an In-active Facility License or conditions of approval
- If you receive conditions of approval online or by email, revise the design and supporting documents and re-submit in the same manner as shown above
- Obtain approvals from other relevant Authorities (such as Dubai Municipality) prior to Construction start

Step 2 - Activate Facility Licence Application

Step 2 can commence once construction is fully completed and operational commissioning is fully in-place. Applicant to follow the process as described below:

- To start, access Sheryan system online to request an Inspection
- Follow on-screen instructions to complete the License Information, Review (healthcare) Professionals and Required Accreditation
- For any medical imaging/ nuclear medicine services, a separate license from FANR is required. Provide evidence it is being processed at FANR
- Confirm Facility is ready for Final Inspection. This means the facility is ready for operation once the facility passes the inspection
- Review Contact Details, Terms & Conditions and Submit the application
- Follow the online payment instructions
- DHA will contact the Applicant and schedule a suitable time for inspection
- Receive Facility License upon inspection approval (Active License). Otherwise, re-inspection will be required once all identified non-compliances are rectified. Contact the DHA for re-inspection if required
- Facility can commence operation

2.3.1.2 Method 2 - Enhanced Process (two-step submission)

This method suits larger and more complex facilities and it is mandatory for all facilities in the “Hospital” or “Specialised Hospital” categories. For other “Non-hospital” facilities, this method can still be considered as an option. The applicant will first submit a simplified Schematic Application. Then upon



the DHA approval submit a Detailed Application. This allows the financial risk to the applicant to be minimised before committing to a full engineering design team. The steps for this method are as follows:

Step 1a - New Facility Licence Application - Schematic Design Submission

Applicant must create a User account on Sheryan and follow the process as described below:

- Consider the requirements of these Guidelines and design the proposed facility only at the Schematic level. The recommended steps required to prepare the design are summarised in **Section 1.1** above - **“How to Use these Guidelines”**
- Prepare all of the required documents listed in **Appendix 1 of Part A** of these Guidelines
- Access the Sheryan system online and follow on-screen instructions. Be prepared to pay fees by credit card
- When prompted, provide Applicant Details, Facility Overview and Location Details etc.
- When prompted to “Upload Facility Layout” upload all the required design documents and design reports as per the deliverables of Schematic Design Submission listed in **Appendix 1 of Part A** of these Guidelines
- If the Applicant wishes to provide any additional supporting documents, use “Upload Additional Documents”
- Accept the “Terms and Conditions” and Submit the application online
- Follow payment instruction and complete online payment (fees will be automatically calculated based on facility category and the services selected)
- If you are notified of conditions of approval online or by email, revise the design and supporting documents and re-submit in the same manner as shown above
- DHA will review your Schematic Design application. If approved, you will be notified by the DHA and advised to submit your Detailed Submission. Until then your approval is “suspended”

Step 1b - New Facility Licence Application - Detailed Design Submission

- Follow the same steps as above. However, when prompted to “Upload Floor Layout”, provide all the deliverables of a Detailed Design Submission as required under **Appendix 2 of Part A** of these Guidelines
- If the Facility is a Hospital, a Feasibility Study must be provided as per the requirements of **Part F** of these Guidelines. This can be uploaded when prompted to “Upload Additional Documents”
- DHA to review the Detailed Design Submission and if it complies, a Facility Licence will be issued.
- Obtain approvals from other relevant Authorities such as Dubai Municipality prior to Construction commencement
- Proceed to Construction on site



Step 2a - Activate Facility Licence Application - Pre-Inspection Assessment

Step 2a can commence once construction of the facility is fully completed. Unlike in Method 1, inspection will be taken at two stages of the project. The process for this step is described below:

- Contact DHA for a Pre-Inspection Assessment on site when the construction of the building is at 100% completion but operational commissioning of the facility is yet to be implemented by the operator
- Make online payment. DHA Inspection team will schedule the inspection
- Receive a list of items to be rectified or clear pass from the DHA to proceed to Final Inspection (Step 2b)

Step 2b - Activate Facility Licence Application - Final Inspection

- After the completion of the above list of items and the full operational commission of the facility, apply for 'Activation of Facility License' by accessing the Sheryan system
- Follow on-screen instructions and complete the information relating to License Information, Review (healthcare) Professionals and Required Accreditation
- For any medical imaging/ nuclear medicine services, a separate license from FANR is required. Provide evidence it is being processed at FANR
- Confirm Facility is ready for Final Inspection
- Review Contact Details, Terms & Conditions and Submit the application
- Follow the online payment instructions
- DHA will contact the Applicant and schedule suitable time for inspection
- Receive Facility License upon inspection approval (Active License). Otherwise, re-inspection will be required once all identified non-compliances are rectified. Contact the DHA for re-inspection as required

2.3.2 The roles and responsibilities of the Inspectors

The inspections required under Activate Facility Licence Application may be performed by DHA's in-house inspectors or assigned by the DHA, at its sole discretion to an external and prequalified design consultants including Healthcare Architecture (Medical Planning), MEP and Biomedical Engineering. Either way, the roles and responsibilities of the inspectors are as follows:

- Attend the facility at the time advised to the applicant by the DHA
- Inspect the facility visually, accessing areas which are reasonably accessible
- Compare the built facility with the approved plans and conditions of approval under Step 3, Detailed Design Submission



- Note any deviations from the previous approvals
- Note any incomplete work in general terms (not a replacement for the applicant's own defects list)
- Prepare an inspection report
- Make a recommendation for one of the following outcomes:
 - A = Approval without conditions
 - B = Approval with a list of conditions
 - C* = Suspension of Application with a list of reasons
 - D = Outright Rejection

*For Inspections with an outcome of a 'C', DHA requires a second inspection to be conducted once the list of non-compliant items are rectified on site. A second inspection will require additional fee to be paid to DHA.

The DHA inspectors will ensure the constructed facility is built in accordance to the approved design by DHA.

For further details, refer to relevant DHA Inspection Policy available on the DHA website.

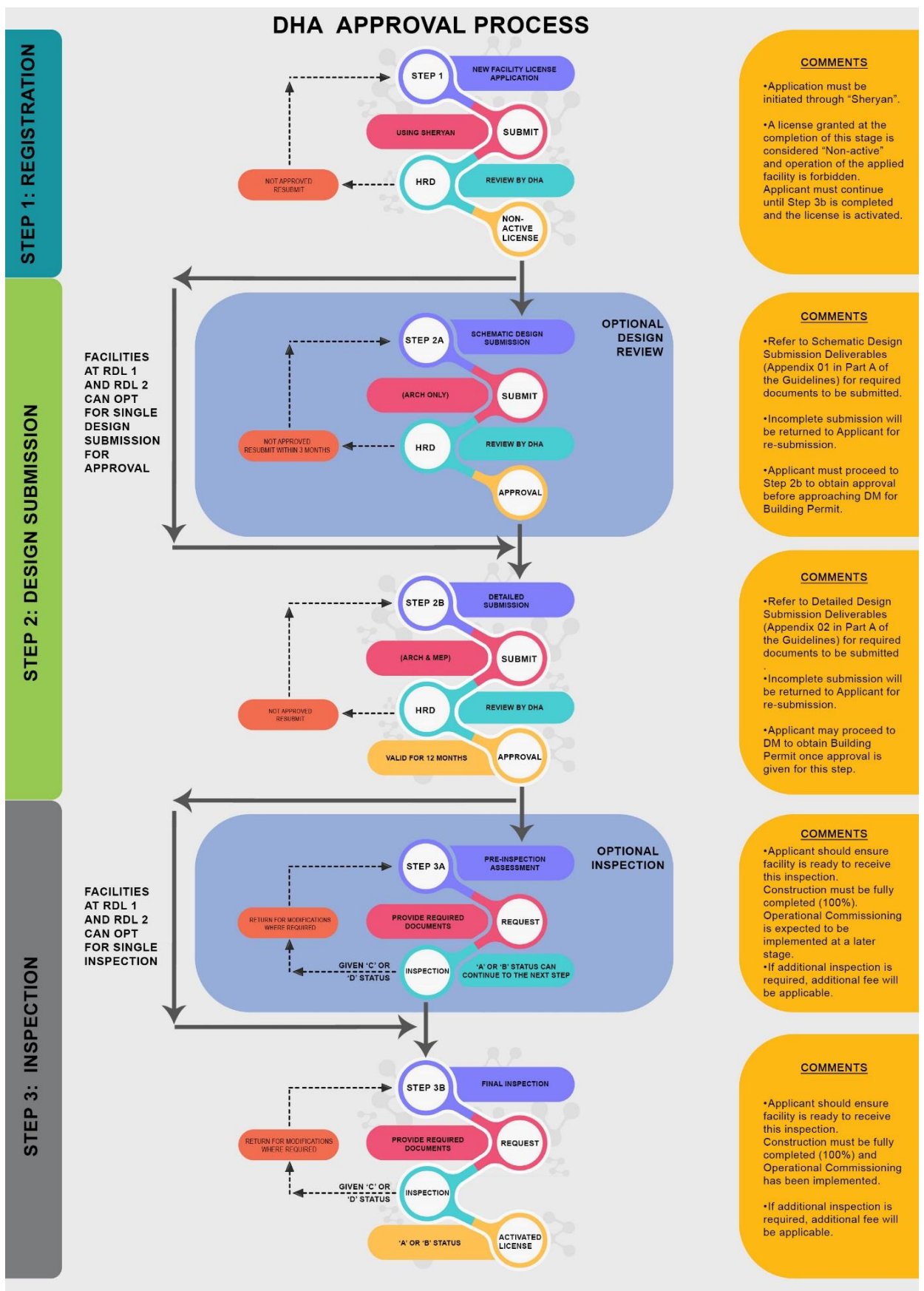
2.3.3 Restrictions on the role of the inspectors

The inspectors, whether the DHA's own inspectors or outsourced external inspectors have certain restrictions on their role. These restrictions should be strictly observed by the inspectors and applicants alike:

- The inspectors are not to act as a "Court of Appeal" against previous conditions of approval, giving any form of relaxation for the previous conditions of approvals
- The inspectors may not re-interpret the requirements of these Guidelines. Instead, the inspectors must only use the previously approved drawings and conditions of approval as the basis for their inspections.
- The inspectors must not consider the areas of work which are outside the jurisdiction of the DHA
- The inspectors must not consider any incentives offered by the applicants for mitigating against non-compliances (for example making a change elsewhere to fix a non-compliance with the plans).
- The inspectors must not imply that they are empowered to approve any revisions since the previous approvals.
- The inspectors must not act as intermediaries between the DHA reviewers and the applicants in cases of non-compliance.

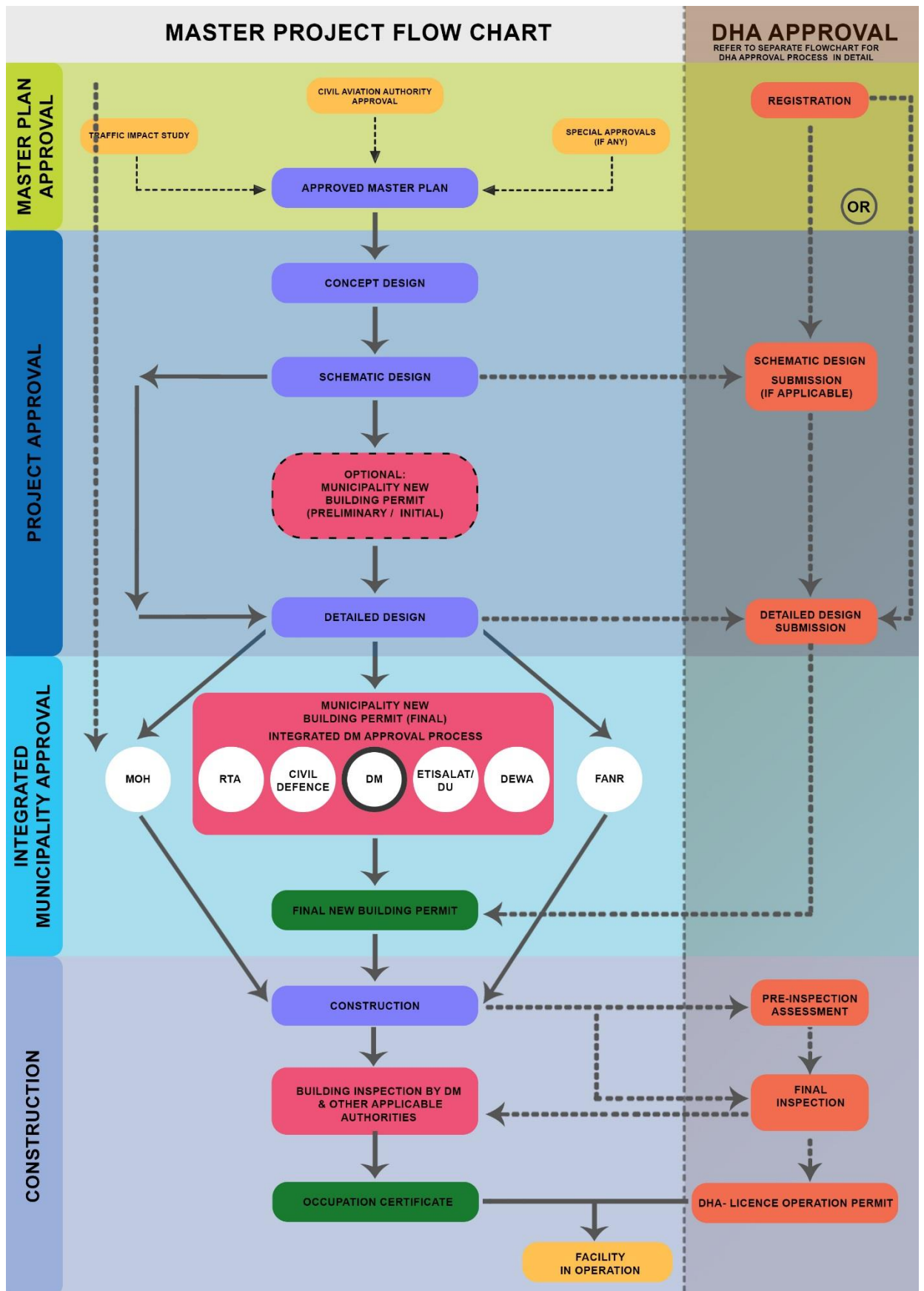


2.4 DHA Facility Approval Process Flow Chart





2.5 Master Approval Process Flow Chart





2.6 Standards and Guidelines

2.6.1 Standards and Guidelines for the Architectural Disciplines

All Health Facilities in the jurisdiction of the DHA are to be designed to the Standards and Guidelines as set out in the table below. Projects lodged with the DHA for review will be tested for compliance against these “Health Facility Guidelines” and where appropriate, the “Dubai Universal Design Code”. The compliance with the remaining Standards and Guidelines in the table will not be tested by the DHA considering their compliance falls under another Authority’s jurisdiction (eg. Dubai Municipality, Dubai Civil Defence)

Standards and Guidelines applying to the Architectural Discipline	
1	DHA Health Facility Guidelines - Parts B to D
2	Dubai Universal Design Code
3	UAE Fire and Life Safety Code of Practice 2017
4	Al Sa’afat Green Building Rating System
<p>In situations where compliance with the Standards and Guidelines has not been achieved or is impractical or an entirely new, innovative proposal is advanced by the applicant, the non-compliance is to be highlighted and openly declared to the DHA using the form provided as part of Appendix 04 to Part A of these Guidelines.</p> <p>Reasons for such non-compliance and any alternative solutions are to be put forward for consideration. The DHA verdict on the alternative solutions is final.</p>	

2.6.2 Standards and Guidelines for the MEP Engineering Disciplines

Refer to Part E of these Guidelines for a full list of referenced external standards and guidelines as well as the contents of Part E (Engineering). It should be noted that all elements of these Guidelines from Part A to F over-ride any external, referenced guidelines including those in Part E.