

AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
Guidelines, Policies and Procedures

Policy Name	Curriculum Development Policy
Policy Number	040
Approved by	Academic Council
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Date of Revisions	NA
Contact	Provost's Office / Registrar's Office

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy serves to describe the procedures by which academic programmes and courses are added, amended or deleted in accordance with University policies and practices, as well as ensuring that these programmes and courses meet regulatory body requirements.

2.0 Academic Governance

- 2.1 The administration of curriculum development is conducted by the following University bodies:
- 2.1.1 University Academic Council
Chair: University Provost
 - 2.1.2 Kenya Academic Council / Senate
Chair: University Provost
 - 2.1.3 Registrar's Working Group
Chair: University Registrar
 - 2.1.4 Academic unit-based programme committees
Chair: Academic Dean

3.0 Curriculum / Course Requirements

- 3.1 Regardless of instructional delivery format (face-to-face; online; blended; open, distance and e-learning (ODEL); etc.), all courses must comply with AKU's credit hour policy (cf., Policy # 003) and the regional regulatory credit hour definition, and have student learning outcomes equivalent to the comparable traditional face-to-face instructional delivery for the course or similar course.

4.0 Guiding Principle in Curriculum Development

- 4.1 This policy recognizes that different academic units and programmes of study will have distinct foci, stakeholders and unique challenges to address in their curricula.

5.0 Academic Programme Structure

- 5.1 The University's academic structures – type of academic calendar, duration of academic terms / semesters, regionally approved definitions of course credits and determination of course credit values – will be derived from a careful and appropriately proportioned consideration of the required level of intellectual attainment.
- 5.2 The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan; the Commission for University Education (CUE), Kenya; the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), Uganda; the Tanzania Council for Universities (TCU); and the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA – UK) shall be the source of credit hour definitions for the University. Other sources may be added as the University expands.
- For example, the Commission for University Education (Kenya) and the Higher Education Commission (Pakistan) state that the following method shall be used to define a credit hour: one credit hour means one hour of lecture per week; or two hours of tutorial per week per week; or three hours of laboratory / practicum work per week; or five hours in farm or similar practice per week over the entire length of a term of study.
- 5.3 The University Registrar will be responsible for ensuring that the course credit values awarded reflect the quality and standards of the University, fall within the requirements of the University's qualification frameworks for that academic level and comply with the requirements of the regional accreditation bodies.
- 5.4 Following the approval of courses and programmes of study by Academic Council, the University Registrar will be responsible for ensuring that:
- Appropriate course codes are assigned
 - Credits assigned to a course are indicated in the course description
 - Credits are earned only when the course and assessment have been completed successfully

6.0 Curriculum Design Process

Curriculum will be developed in accordance with the University's *Review Process for Academic Programme Proposals*. The curriculum design process is a Six-Step Process.

NOTE: The addition of a 'major', 'specialization' and / or 'track' to an existing programme of study will be considered and reviewed must be approved under the rules of University's *Review Process for Academic Programme Proposals*.

6.1 The Concept Stage

- The academic unit will prepare a 3-5 page Concept Note.
- The Concept Note is sent to the Academic Secretariat
- The Academic Secretariat will forward the Concept Note to:
 - Vice Provost, Asia and UK: for Pakistan, Afghanistan and UK proposals
 - Vice Provost, East Africa: for Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda proposals
- The Concept Note will provide the following information:
 - Brief overview of the proposed academic programme

- The need for the programme in the region and/or country
- That the programme fits with AKU's mission and academic unit's strategic plan
- Environmental scan: are there related programmes in the region; similar international programmes
- Market survey with appropriate benchmarking
- Faculty and staff required (new and existing)
- Facilities and space requirement
- The Vice Provost shares the Concept Note with the Deans: discussion; identification of synergies
- Following approval of the Concept Note, the proposal moves to Step 2

6.2 Development of a Detailed Proposal

The academic unit will develop a full programme proposal under the following headings:

6.2.1 General Information

- Vision and mission; Philosophy of the Institution (institutional beliefs, values and tenets generated from the vision and mission); University admission requirements; minimum University entrance requirements; other admission requirements; procedures for application for admission; academic resources; facilities and equipment
- Brief description of facilities and equipment that will support the proposed programme
 - Lecture rooms, library, IT and communication; labs, workshops / studios
- Indicate if the facilities and equipment will be shared with other programmes
- Brief description of the academic and support staff including their qualifications.
- Programmes currently offered by the University
- Definitions
 - Credit hour; lecture / instructional hours; contact hours; notional hours; course units
- Academic organization of the programme reflecting academic quarters/trimesters/semesters

6.2.2 The Curriculum

- New programme proposals will provide the following concisely stated information:
 - Title of the programme; philosophy of the programme; rationale of the programme; needs assessment/market survey/ situation analysis; stakeholder involvement; justification for the programme; programme's goal; programme learning outcomes; course learning outcomes (CLO) mapped to programme learning outcomes (PLO)
 - Modes of delivery aligned to the AKU Teaching and Learning Framework (see University Policy #031)
 - Academic regulations for the programme will cover:
 - Admission eligibility requirements (direct and indirect). These must define the minimum qualifications for entry into the proposed programme. AKU's minimum eligibility requirements may exceed those set by national/professional regulators
 - Admission requirements, including information on AKU's written tests and oral interviews
 - Transfer credit (see University Policy #003)

- Grading policy (see University Policy #001)
- Examination regulations and academic progression
- Graduation requirements
- Classification of degrees
- Appointment and retention of external examiners
- Thesis / dissertation requirements
- Course evaluation
 - Assessment policy, whether these will be summative or formative and must include related rubrics of assessments
- Management and administration of the curriculum and programme
- List of courses offered by the programme
- Duration and structure of the programme
- Quality assurance and curriculum review aligned to the AKU Academic Quality Framework (see University Policy # 030)

6.2.3 Course Outlines

- Course titles; course codes; credit values; prerequisites; purpose of the course; expected learning outcomes; course content; mode of delivery; instructional material and equipment; recommended readings; recommended textbooks; recommended reference material

6.3 Submission to Academic Council

As part of the submission to Academic Council, a review of the Detailed Proposal is conducted by the University Registrar, University Librarian, Chief Information Officer, Director of Student Affairs; Dean of Students; Head of Hostels.

6.4 Financial / Sustainability Review

Following Academic Council's approval of the academic programme, the appropriate Finance Office will provide a financial / sustainability report to the University's Executive Committee.

6.5 University Executive Committee Review

A review of the programme proposal will be conducted by the University Executive Committee (President; Provost & Vice President, Academic; Chief Financial Officer & Vice President, Finance; Vice President, Human Resources).

6.6 Final Approvals

As applicable, final approval of proposed programmes will be sought from:

- Professional bodies (e.g., Pakistan Medical and Dental Council; Pakistan Nursing Council; Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists' Board; Tanzania Nurses and Midwives Council, etc.); regional accreditation and regulatory bodies (Higher Education Commission, Pakistan; Commission for University Education, Kenya; Tanzania Council for Universities; National Council for Higher Education, Uganda)
- Where applicable, AKU's Board of Trustees

7.0 Modifications to the Curriculum

7.1 Preface

- As part of the Academic Quality Framework, review of curriculum will occur periodically and academic entities may need to make modifications to their programmes of study as part of continuous improvement or for other reasons. These modifications may take place at the programmatic, modular or course level (programmes may consist of modules/courses). In making modifications, academic entities, in particular the academic Entity Head, will be required to determine if the proposed change is minor or major in nature. The following guidelines, which are designed to ensure that proposed changes are in line with the strategic aims of the university and the proposing entities, and with considerations of quality assurance and improvement, will assist academic Entity Heads in deciding whether a modification is minor or major and also provide guidance on the process by which the proposed changes are reviewed and / or approved.
- If unsure whether proposed change is minor or major, the head of the proposing entity should consult with the University Registrar for confirmation.

7.2 Definitions

The following are operational definitions used in this policy:

7.2.1 Annual Updating

- The annual updating of information, the purpose of which is to maintain the operational currency of a course or module and enhance the quality of student experience, is encouraged and does not constitute a Minor or Major Modification. The annual updating of courses would include the following:
 - Updating of module leader or course leader contacts, dates of the course, class venue/time, and other related information that changes annually
 - Updating of the faculty teaching the course and who will be evaluated through the Student Evaluation of Teaching system
 - Updating of teaching and learning resources such as publications, websites, journals, cases, bibliography, site visits, outside speakers, etc.
 - Changes in the questions/detailed content used in course assessment but not methods
 - Changes in the language of the task instructions
 - Changes in teaching strategies that are more engaging of their students
 - Annual updating, as part of periodic reviews, does not require approval beyond that in place within the entity

7.2.2 Minor Modification

- A Minor Modification involves a change to a module or course that does not substantially alter the module or course in a manner that affects the overall aims, objectives and philosophy of a programme. For instance, a Minor Modification may involve one or more of the following aspects:
 - Changes to the title or description of a module or course
 - Changes to the pedagogy to be more engaging of students
 - Changes to assessment methods

- Addition or deletion of modules and/or courses in a manner that does not alter the overall aims, learning outcomes or academic requirements of a programme

7.2.3 Major Modification

- A Major Modification involves revision to a programme that substantially and fundamentally alters the overall aims, objectives, philosophy and academic requirements of a programme. For instance, a major modification may feature one or more of the following:
 - Change of the title of the programme and/or the award to which it leads and/or the programme's overall aims and objectives
 - Change to nature of the learning outcomes of the programme
 - Change in the duration and/or mode(s) of delivery of programme (online; face to face; BDL), excluding minor changes such as enhanced use of digital instructional technology, a shift in the balance of lectures and seminars, etc.
 - Changes in programme's requirements, including student admission criteria or standards but excluding changes in course assignments, e.g., essay requirements, assigned readings, etc.
 - Change to weightings at module or course level for the assessment of students
 - Substantial changes to the content and/or structure of modules or courses that fundamentally alters the programme

7.3 Course / Module / Programme Modification Review Process

7.3.1 Minor Modifications

- Minor modifications are reviewed as follows:
 - Faculty responsible at module or course level considers the need for and proposes a Minor Modification
 - Proposal is reviewed and approved by the Unit Head of the academic entity to ensure its academic suitability as well as conformance to the definition of Minor Modification
 - Formal proposals for Minor Modifications must be signed by the proposing module or course leader and be accompanied by the appropriate supporting documentation. Requests should be submitted to the academic entity head for approval
 - Formal written approval of a Minor Modification by the academic entity head and all proposed documentation should be kept on record within the academic entity for review as necessary
 - For minor modifications, the academic entity should inform its students, faculty, and the Office of the Registrar in writing
 - The Office of the Registrar would be responsible for maintaining a log of Minor Modifications and submitting them, as "information items only", to appropriate committees within the University

7.3.2 Supporting Documentation

- Documentation in support of proposals for Minor Modifications must include the following, although the entity head may request additional information:
 - Purpose and justification for the modification
 - Updated course/module specifications
 - Updated curriculum map, mapping CLOs with PLOs

- Updated programme specification and curriculum, where modules or courses have been added or deleted
 - The University Registrar must approve the credit value assigned to new courses
- Evidence of student consultation, where applicable
- Evidence of consultation with appropriate faculty, staff and other stakeholders
- Evidence that the proposed changes are financially viable and the necessary resources required are available. Conversely, where such proposed changes would have financial and other resource implications (e.g. hostel space, Library, IT, additional/new physical space and or personnel), the proposing entity should make recommendations as to how such additional/new resource requirements might be met
- Impact, if any, on other programmes, faculty, or resources
- Minutes from the relevant programme or course team meeting, curriculum committee meeting, the annual programme monitoring review meeting

7.3.3 Major Modifications

- If changes meet the criteria for a Major Modification, the proposal must be submitted to the Registrar's Working Group and subsequently to Academic Council for consideration.
 - The request should be accompanied by:
 - Supporting documentation as indicated above
 - Evidence of the impact that the changes might have on the requirements of professional licensing and/or other regulatory bodies, where applicable as well recommendations as to how any impact might be mitigated
 - For Major Modifications, once Academic Council approves the modification, the Office of the Registrar would be responsible for dissemination of the information to students, faculty, other academic entities and for maintaining a log of the Major Modifications
 - All modifications of courses, modules and programmes and adherence to this policy will be the subject of periodic reviews under the AKU Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework (see Policy #030)

8.0 Discontinuing a Programme of Study

- 8.1 A proposal to discontinue a programme of study requires thoughtful planning and careful consultation with all affected stakeholders. On the recommendation of the Dean and the University Provost, a proposal to discontinue a programme of study will be sent to the Board of Trustees' Academic and Student Affairs Committee (ASAC) for consideration / approval.

9.0 Implementation

- 9.1 This policy shall be implemented by all undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate programmes.

10.0 Review

- 10.1 This policy shall be reviewed from time to time, as necessary.

Appendix A

Applicable University Policies to this Policy include:

- Policy # 003: *Credit Framework Policy* (Academic Council, September 2016)
- Policy # 004: *Qualifications Framework Policy* (Academic Council, February 2004)
- Policy # 010: *Checklist for Submitting New Academic Programme Proposals to Academic Council* (Academic Council, March 2018)
- Policy # 022: *Authority and Approval Process for the Creation of a New Academic Units and New Research Units / Reorganisation of an Existing Academic Units and Existing Research Units* (Academic Council / University Research Council, October 2019)
- Policy # 025: *Guidelines for Programme Curriculum Modifications* (Academic Council, March 2018)
- Policy # 030: *Academic Quality Framework: Policies and Procedures* (Academic Council, March 2015)
- Policy # 031: *Teaching and Learning Framework* (Academic Council, March 2018)
- *Review Process for Academic Programme Proposals* (Academic Council, February 2019)
- Policy # 038: *Graduate Degree Completion Time Limits* (Academic Council, February 2019)