

AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
Guidelines, Policies and Procedures

Policy Name	Checklist for Submitting New Academic Programme/Stream/Specialisation Proposals to Academic Council
Policy Number	010
Approved by	Academic Council
Date of Original Approval	January 15, 2008
Date of Revision	April 25, 2012 January 2018 March 29, 2018 October 24, 2019 April 2024
Contact Office	Registrar's Office

1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1. When submitting an academic proposal to Academic Council, care should be taken to ensure that the information provided is updated, relevant and complete.
- 1.2. It is imperative that programme/Stream/Specialisation proposals are first vetted in internal academic unit committees before being forwarded to Academic Council for review.
- 1.3. The proposal should ensure conformity to the requirements of the University's Curriculum Development Policy (#040), all applicable University academic policies and follow local / regional higher education authority guidelines for purposes of accreditation / recognition of the degree/qualification.
- 1.4. Any deviation from the University academic policies should be brought to the notice of the University Registrar and Academic Council.
- 1.5. The proposal should be accompanied by:
 - 1.5.1. At least two external reviews of the programme/Stream/Specialisation covering the overall structure, academic content, academic rigour, assessment methodology, other important attributes. At least one reviewer should have expertise in specific curriculum areas, or with an international background, or a current employer or vocational expert. External reviewers are selected based on their experience in higher education and have the capacity to draw on their expertise to evaluate the quality and academic standards of the programme.
 - 1.5.2. A final sign-off before submitting for approval from the Provost, Chief Financial Officer, and the University Registrar.

2. INTRODUCTION/ BACKGROUND / RATIONALE FOR THE PROGRAMME/ STREAM/SPECIALISATION

- 2.1. The programme/Stream/Specialisation should be broad-based and consider the relevant needs of other on-campus programmes/Streams/Specialisations; some courses could be offered as electives in other programmes/Streams/Specialisations.

Requirement:

- Provide background information on the programme/Stream/s/Specialization/s, including its purpose and significance in capacity building.
- Provide its alignment to the Teaching Learning Framework Policy # 31 section 2.2 (graduate attributes).
- Highlight the unique aspects of the degree, which may stem from the teaching methodology, the calibre of the educators, or aspects of student experience. This can encompass distinctive elements of the learning journey inherent in the programme overall and/or unique to AKU specifically.
- Outline the primary programme goals/learning outcomes. What will students gain from the degree and the programme experience? Emphasize high-level skills or experiences applicable beyond their academic studies, extending into various professional environments. The objective is to underscore the core attributes of an AKU graduate in this field.

2.2. Confirmation that Unit-level endorsement has been obtained.

2.3. Explain what makes the programme/Stream/Specialisation unique or different to similar programmes/Streams/Specialisations, if any, offered in the market.

2.4. Specify any prerequisites for enrolment.

3. EXTERNAL SPONSORS FOR THE PROGRAMME/STREAM/SPECIALISATION

3.1. If any, to be identified with an accompanying note.

4. STAKEHOLDERS / TARGET AUDIENCE / PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

4.1. Identification/mapping of stakeholders [add Students as Partners] of the programme/stream/specialization.

4.2. Conduct needs assessment and / or feasibility study to justify marketability of programme, long-term demand, and sustainability.

4.3. If assessment or study is not conducted, provide justification for the same.

5. PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION

5.1. Where applicable, these should be mentioned.

6. EFFECT ON RELATED PROGRAMMES/STREAM/SPECIALISATION, IF ANY

6.1. Explain the interrelatedness with other programmes/Streams/Specialisations; synergistic effect on other programmes/Streams/Specialisations; any 'piggy-back' relationships with other programmes/Streams/Specialisations.

7. STATE THE EVALUATION CRITERIA TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS/ IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME/STREAM/SPECIALISATION IN THE SHORT AND LONG TERM

8. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAMME/STREAM/SPECIALISATION

8.1. To elaborate where applicable:

8.1.1. Level of the programme/Stream/Specialisation (certificate, diploma, bachelors, masters or PhD).

8.1.2. Offered full-time / part-time / or a combination of the same.

- 8.1.3. If based on the concept of ‘sequential accumulation of credits’ leading to a higher qualification.
- 8.1.4. Independently or jointly offered; If joint, give profile of partners (internal and external).
- 8.1.5. Open and Distance Learning (ODL), on-campus or residential programme, or a combination of face-to-face and ODL.
- 8.1.6. Aims intended learning outcomes of the programme and its alignment with the Graduate attributes of AKU.
- 8.1.7. Exit competencies upon graduating from the programme.
- 8.1.8. Programme structure and mapping/design with respect to:
 - course descriptions / modules//concepts to be learnt
 - Assessment alignment to the intended learning outcomes
 - Overall instructional strategies
 - Elective and compulsory courses including any philosophical underpinnings of the module/ course.
 - Thesis/ dissertation
 - Practicum/ internship.
 - Faculty Profile [expertise, experience, speciality field] required to facilitate the course
 - External Examiners: State the terms of appointment. (Refer to existing policies on External Examiners).
 - Credit framework and timeframe. (Refer policy on ‘Credit Framework’.) Explain the basis of credit unit calculation and distribution of credits for the modules/ courses.

9. STATE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

- 9.1. Successful completion of all coursework, both core and elective courses; practicum; field projects; any other special projects; successful defence of thesis/ dissertation (where applicable); minimum attendance for each course in the programme; adherence to policy guidelines on plagiarism, ethics etc.; minimum CGPA, as per policy.

10. EVALUATION OF COURSE PARTICIPANTS

- 10.1. Explain the alignment of the assessment/evaluation to the intended learning outcomes and if the evaluation will be based on continuous assessment [formative], end-of-term/semester [summative] examinations or combination of both.

11. SPECIFY THE MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM TIME ALLOWED FOR GRADUATING FROM THE PROGRAMME/STREAM/SPECIALISATION

- 11.1. See University Policy #038. In addition, specify action to be taken in case of failure to meet the criteria to continue in the programme based on on-going monitoring by term/ semester (for example warning, suspension, termination).

12. DESCRIBE THE INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR OVERSEEING THE PROGRAMME TO ENSURE CONTINUED ADHERENCE TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS. FOR DETAILS REFER TO SECTION 4 (PROCEDURE) OF THE AKU ACADEMIC QUALITY FRAMEWORK POLICY.

13. BRIEFLY EXPLAIN THE MARKETING STRATEGY TO ADVERTISE/ PROMOTE THE PROGRAMME/STREAM/SPECIALISATION

14. ADMISSIONS

- 14.1. State the prerequisites/entry criteria (e.g. required qualifications/years of experience,

knowledge of English). Mention if English language support will be provided to enrolled students throughout the programme.

15. SELECTION PROCESS

15.1. The entire admission process/selection criteria should be described in detail. It should be made known to all, transparent and above-board: admission test; interviews (separate/joint); personal statement; references/testimonials (professional and/or institutional); curriculum vitae; other criteria.

16. DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM

16.1. State the desired qualifications/expertise of lead faculty and their availability to teach in the programme.

17. STATE THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

18. DESCRIBE THE SYLLABUS FOR EACH COURSE/ MODULE

18.1. The description should cover the following:

18.1.1. Intended Learning Outcomes of the Course /

18.1.2. Desirable competencies at the end of the course

18.1.3. Outline of the concepts included as the course content

18.1.4. instructional Strategies e.g. demonstrations, role-play, simulation, group discussion, Reflective journal etc.

- Assessment strategies and plan for feedback to the learner

18.1.5. Mode of delivery of the course:

- Face-to-face, lectures,
- On-line interactions
- Distance Learning
- Hybrid/blended/Hyflex

18.1.6. Learning resources

- Textbooks, hand-outs, assigned readings, CDs / DVDs, bibliography etc.
- Library
- Learning Resource Centres
- Web sites/searches/online resources
- Laboratories
- Field Sites
- Any others (attending / presenting at conferences, workshops etc.)

18.1.7. Mentorship/Faculty Office Time

19. QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS

19.1. Academic Council will review the recommendations of the University Registrar and then take an informed decision whether to endorse the programme or not. In any case, any approval granted for a new programme offering is for an initial period of five years and then re-evaluated in the light of experience. Council may then decide to continue with the programme or to discontinue it.

19.2. Mechanisms to monitor programme quality should be elucidated in the proposal, including effective feedback mechanisms for the self- directed learning sessions.

19.2.1. Monitoring and evaluation by students of:

- Course
- Faculty
- Overall programme structure / content

19.2.2. Monitoring and evaluation by faculty of:

- Course
- Faculty who has taught in the programme (peer review)
- Overall programme structure/content
- End of course reports

19.2.3. Self and External review of the programme

20. SPACE REQUIREMENTS

20.1. Space requirements for students, faculty and staff should be projected for the short, medium, and long terms. This is necessary to avoid a reactive situation caused by inadequate planning when, due to a surge in enrolment; the University finds itself in a quandary to provide the additional space needed on short notice.

20.1.1. No new programme/stream/specialisation should be launched unless space availability (classroom/laboratory / computer lab etc.) is confirmed.

20.1.2. Consider sharing of space between academic units as per timetable of courses.

21. STATE SCHEDULE OF PROGRAMME/STREAM/SPECIALISATION OFFERINGS FOR THE NEXT THREE (3) YEARS

22. STUDENTS RELATED MATTERS

22.1. Financial assistance available

22.2. Accommodation (if applicable)

22.3. Mentorship

22.4. Placement services (if applicable)

23. BUDGET AND FINANCE

23.1. Finance should independently critique the proposal budget which should be signed-off by the Vice-President Finance & CFO. All associated human resources and other costs should be included.

23.2. Resource Implications

23.2.1. The general assumptions upon which the programme costs, including personnel cost, are based should be realistic, carefully examined, and appropriately clarified. The budget should consider the following needs:

- Additional faculty: Any honoraria or other remuneration to be paid to visiting faculty, internal and external to the country, should be in line with prevailing rates.
- Additional staff
- Additional space
- Additional equipment
- Additional furniture and fixtures
- Additional learning resources e.g. library books, subscriptions to magazines/ journals, subscription to databases etc.
- Additional administrative expenses e.g. communication, photocopying, printing, stationery, utility, transportation, etc.

- Additional infrastructure costs e.g. new construction, new utility lines, new network cable lines, etc.

23.3. Tuition Fees

23.3.1. The rationale for the fee structure or payment of a stipend should be sufficiently justified. Offering of fellowships/ teaching assistantships.

23.4. Other

23.4.1. Other resource implications such as IT, Library, Registrar's Office, Student Experience, Hostels, and other student services as required.

24. RESEARCH: THESIS / DISSERTATION / PROJECT

24.1. Ensure that the scope and duration of the students' thesis are manageable within the prescribed timeframe and resources.

24.2. Students should not be geographically restricted in their research if conducted within budgetary constraints.

24.3. It is the responsibility of developers of the graduate programmes to ensure that there is adequate provision for students' research costs in the total programme cost if the research is part of the University's obligation.

25. SPECIAL FEATURES

25.1. To be noted if any. For example, lab requirements, travel, field trips etc.

26. GENERAL INFORMATION

27. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF FACULTY TO TEACH IN THE PROGRAMME/STREAM/SPECIALISATION

27.1. Master's level courses may be taught by PhD students from the 2nd year onwards. The criteria should be linked to the policy on the 'Requirements for Designation of Graduate Faculty'. It is not good practice to have faculty with Master's level qualifications in a discipline, especially lead faculty, to teach in a Master's programme in that discipline. Possibility of engaging visiting faculty should be considered to help lessen the workload of AKU faculty members; it also gives an opportunity to expose the student to diverse points of view.

28. SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROGRAMME/STREAM/SPECIALISATION

28.1. State the minimum number of students to be enrolled in a course if it is to be offered. Also, state the proposed cohort size.

28.2. State the conditions/ circumstances under which the programme/stream/specialisation will not be offered (e.g. non-availability of specialised faculty, stoppage of funding).

29. CONCLUSION / ACTION REQUESTED

29.1. State unambiguously the scope of approval required.

30. AUTHORS

30.1. The names of the authors of the proposal should be clearly stated and the proposal dated.

Matters Requiring the Approval of Academic Council

Academic Programmes Review Process

Approved: Academic Council, April 25, 2024

<p>Step 1. The Concept Stage</p> <p>1.1 Academic unit will prepare a 3–5-page Concept Note</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Concept Note should clearly outline the knowledge, understanding, skills, and other attributes that students will develop upon successful completion of a specific programme. It should also provide details of teaching and learning methods, assessment criteria, career opportunities in the field, and how the programme aligns with the qualification’s framework. <p>1.2 Concept Note Submission: Once prepared, the Concept Note is submitted to the Academic Secretariat.</p> <p>1.3 Concept Note Review: The Academic Secretariat reviews the Concept Note and submits for approval.</p> <p>1.4 Concept Note contents- The Concept Note should provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brief overview of the proposed academic programme • Justification for the programme's need in the region/country. • Alignment with AKU's mission and the academic entity's strategic plan • Environmental scan/landscaping, including related programmes in the region and similar international programmes. • Market survey findings with appropriate benchmarking • Faculty and staff requirements (both new and existing) • Facilities and space requirements <p>1.5 The Concept Note is shared with Deans/Directors: discussion; identification of synergies.</p> <p>1.6 Following Step 1 review & approval, proposal moves on to Step 2.</p>
<p>Step 2. Development of a Detailed Proposal</p> <p>2.1 Academic units will develop a full programme proposal.</p> <p>2.2 The University Finance should work with the Academic Unit to develop the financial feasibility.</p> <p>2.3 The detailed proposal is sent to the Academic Secretariat</p> <p>2.4 The University Registrar reviews the proposal for compliance (AKU, professional bodies, regional /government accreditation bodies, etc.) and sign off</p> <p>2.5 The University Registrar will ensure that the proposal is distributed to internal offices for necessary sign offs (Hostels, Student Services, IT, Library, etc.)</p>
<p>Step 3. Financial Review</p> <p>3.1 Prior to the approval from the Academic Council, the proposal will be sent to Finance for comment and approval.</p>
<p>Step 4. Academic Council</p> <p>Following receipt of Step 1, 2, and 3 sign-offs, the proposal will be sent to Academic Council</p> <p>4.1 Consideration/review of the proposal by the Academic Council</p>
<p>Step 5. Executive Committee Review</p> <p>5.1 Following receipt of comments from Finance, the proposal will be sent to the Executive Committee for approval</p>
<p>Step 6. Final Approvals</p> <p>6.1 Approved programme is sent to professional regulatory body, regional accreditation body (as appropriate)</p> <p>6.2 Where required, newly approved programme will be sent to ASAC and the Board of Trustees</p>