



Title: Program Review and Development Policy

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Approval Authority: Board of Trustees

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Review: The policy is subject to a periodic review every 4 years or in a shorter cycle as per amendments of regulations

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide the review and development of programs offered by Gulf University for enhancing their quality and ensuring that all programs remain relevant to workplace needs as well as to the needs of society in general. The policy outlines a set of principles to be used in program review and development.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all programs offered at Gulf University.

3. Acronyms

BQA	Education and Training Quality Authority
CILOS	Course Intended Learning Outcomes
C-PRDC	College Program Review and Development Committee
HEC	Higher Education Council
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PILOS	Program Intended Learning Outcomes
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
U-PRDC	University Program Review and Development Committee

4. Definitions

Advisory Board: The Advisory Board advises departments incorporated in Gulf University on the strategic direction of both Gulf University and individual departments in order to further the interests and reputation of Gulf University and the Kingdom of Bahrain more generally. This advice can extend to program development, student recruitment and retention and can serve to foster relations with the business community, local government, and other external agencies.

Benchmarking: Benchmarking involves comparing an institution's processes and practices against good practices in other Higher Education Institutions.

Course: A course is composed of teaching and learning activities which guide and support students towards the attainment of a set of learning outcomes. A course is the smallest unit of teaching and learning activities at Gulf University.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes: Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) describe the knowledge, skills and attributes envisaged to be achievable by students who have been enrolled in a course. CILOs therefore contribute to PILOs.

Graduate Attributes: Graduate attributes refer to the characteristics a graduate is expected to display upon having completed a program associated with the qualification that has been awarded. Graduate attributes refer to the personal qualities, academic capabilities and more general skills developed as a result of following the program.

Internal Reviewer: Internal reviewer refers to an academic staff of the College with specialization in one of the domains of the program. S/he provides feedback and recommendations on the current program and subsequently on revised program to program Review Team after reviewing the program documents in detail.

External Reviewer: External reviewer refers to an academician in the domain of the program outside the University at National, Regional, or international level with adequate experience in program design and development. S/he provides feedback and recommendations on the current program and subsequently on revised program to program Review Team after reviewing the program documents in detail.

Mapping: Mapping refers to the process of placing qualifications on Bahrain National Qualifications Framework. This process requires the credit value of qualifications to be stated and for qualifications to be placed at the appropriate level on the NQF.

Notional Learning Hours: Notional learning hours describe time allocated to study. This study time can comprise formal classroom instruction, time spent in self-study (for example, reading and revising notes) and time spent on assessment. Notional learning hours are calculated by those with experience in the subject area by envisaging the time that the average student would spend on tasks required by a course or program.

NQF Credit: A NQF credit is a measurement of learning at specific levels of a National Qualifications Framework. It is assumed that one credit of learning will result from ten 'notional' hours of study. Credits are assigned to courses, programs,

and qualifications. The credits assigned to qualifications comply with Bahrain National Qualifications Framework.

NQF Level: Bahrain National Qualifications Framework comprises ten levels. Each level signifies a stage of achievement with respect to learning ranging from the less to the more complex and demanding.

NQF Level Descriptors: NQF Level descriptors provide a general, shared understanding of learning and achievement at each of the ten levels of the NQF. Each descriptor relates to generic statements that describe the expected level of achievement with respect to:

- Knowledge (theoretical understanding and practical application)
- Skills (generic, problem solving, analytical skill and communication, ICT, numeracy)
- Competence (autonomy, responsibility, and context).

Level descriptors are used to map qualifications on the NQF and were designed to be used across a wide range of learning contexts.

Program: A program is a carefully designed and structured series of teaching and learning activities which support and guide students towards the achievement of the intended learning outcomes set for it.

Program Intended Learning Outcomes: Program Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) describe the knowledge, skills and attributes envisioned to be achievable by students who have followed a program of study. Demonstration of achievement of the PILOs is a necessary requirement for the award of a qualification associated with a program.

Purpose Statement: A purpose statement describes the overall goal or purpose of a program of study by, for example, describing the way graduates of the program will contribute to workplace needs or to society more generally. It can also describe the way the program contributes to the vision and mission of the institution offering the program.

Qualification: A qualification recognizes and certifies the learning achieved as a result of following a program of study. It therefore signifies and certifies the achievement of the PILOs by a student who has followed the program.

5. Policy Statement

This policy guides the review of programs in line with the vision, mission and strategic direction of Gulf University. Current programs are reviewed by both

Internal and External Reviewers. The justification of needs to revise current programs arises with input from benchmarking, requirements of accreditation bodies, market research, published reports at national and international level in related fields etc. The process of reviewing and developing programs incorporates both annual and periodic reviews involving members of the academic staff, with feedback from other internal and external stakeholders including current and former students and employers. Major revisions in current programs/periodic review process involve feedback from 2-3 Internal Reviewers (within the College) and 3 External Reviewers. The policy signifies the providing and developing appropriate staffing and learning resources at GU.

All programs at Gulf University are benchmarked against other comparable programs locally, regionally, and internationally; and the reviews are cognizant of the requirements necessary for a qualification to be registered on the NQF and to comply with the regulations of HEC as well as the requirements of BQA.

6. Policy Details

Program reviews are both annual and periodic, outlined as follows:

6.1 Annual Review

Annual review is a key component of quality management and is aimed at effecting *minor* ongoing changes to programs in a continuous quest for quality improvement. Gulf University's Policy on Teaching and Learning identifies the need for ongoing reflection on teaching, a process which is defined as 'involving members of the academic staff using feedback from internal and external stakeholders to consider how they might re-plan and re-design the overall approach to teaching in a course or program or how they might adopt different approaches and methods to teaching'.

Annual review, therefore, involves members of the academic staff seeking feedback from internal and external stakeholders to consider how the design of courses and programs could be improved. Minor changes can affect course level to ensure that courses continue to guide students towards achieving CILOs and, thus, PILOs by offering quality learning experiences.

Such feedback can be elicited relatively easily using various methods detailed in the Procedures for Program Review and Development.

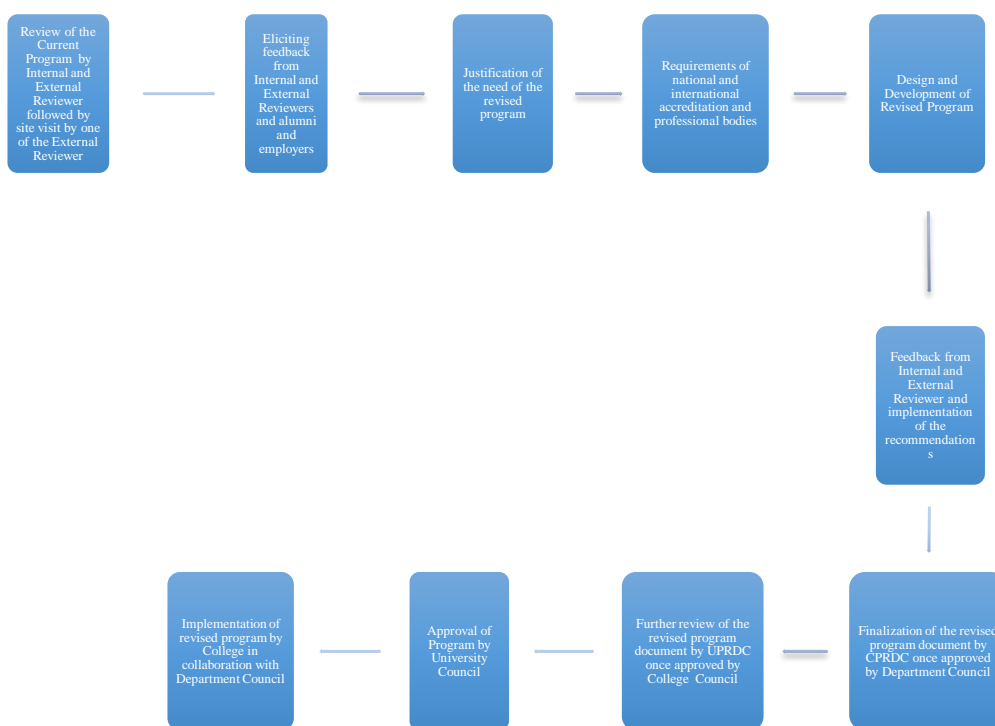
6.2 Periodic Review

6.2.1 Periodic program reviews are conducted every five to six years. It is evidence-based evaluation of the design, market need, competitiveness, student outcome and satisfaction, and employability of the graduates. Program Review Team is responsible for designing and developing the revised program.

- 6.2.2 Internal and External Reviewers are selected as per the criteria and their roles are identified to review the current and revised program.
- 6.2.3 The developed criteria for selecting internal and external reviewers ensure that they are subject experts and have academic experience in the related discipline and reflect diversity in terms of field, experience and background; industry exposure to identify labor market need, sufficient knowledge and expertise in recent trends in program design and development. S/he is familiar with the requirements of accreditation bodies and quality practices at national, regional, and international level.
- 6.2.4 The role of internal and external reviewers focuses on reviewing the current program based on program documents, feedback from internal and external stakeholders etc. Justification of need for change in current program provides the basis to propose revision in the current program. Program review team provides justification of need for change to internal and external reviewers along with details of program and curriculum and its alignment with university mission, graduate attributes. After reviewing the relevant documents internal and external reviewers provide feedback and recommendations to develop the revised program as fit for purpose and best practices in national, regional, and international universities.
- 6.2.5 Program justification of need for change in the current program considers accreditation standards in the related field of study, requirements of professional bodies, compliance with regulatory bodies, market research, benchmarking, published national and international reports in related field, feedback from internal and external stakeholder etc. and their reflection in the revised program.
- 6.2.6 As part of periodic program review the courses developed within program structure shall be mapped to NQF level descriptors according to the qualification levels in accordance with mapping policy and procedure. In order to ensure consistency and alignment of the revised program with university mission, graduate attributes, standards of International Accreditation Bodies the following mappings are done Mapping of Program Aims to University Mission, Mapping of Program Graduate Attributes to University Graduate Attributes, Mapping of PILOs to Program aims, and Mapping of PILOs to Standards of International Accreditation Bodies. To ensure consistency and

alignment of student achievement of ILOs for each course and contributing for the program through curriculum mapping, teaching learning and assessment mapping the following set of mappings are reviewed: Alignment of Teaching, Learning & Assessment Philosophy to PILOs, Mapping of Courses to PILOs, Mapping of CILOs to PILOs, Mapping of Courses to Assessment Methods, Overall Mapping of Assessment Methods to CILOs, Mapping of components/criteria of each assessment method to CILOs.

6.2.7 This formal review process involves the following:



As part of periodic program review the courses developed within program structure shall be mapped to NQF level descriptors according to the qualification levels in accordance with mapping policy and procedure. In order to ensure consistency and alignment of the revised program with university mission, graduate attributes, standards of International Accreditation Bodies the following mappings are done:

- Mapping of Program Aims to University Mission.
- Mapping of Program Graduate Attributes to University Graduate Attributes.
- Mapping of PILOs to Program aims.
- Mapping of PILOs to Standards of International Accreditation Bodies.

To ensure consistency and alignment of student achievement of ILOs for each course and contributing for the program through curriculum mapping, teaching learning and assessment mapping the following set of mappings are reviewed:

- Alignment of Teaching, Learning & Assessment Philosophy to PILOs.
- Mapping of Courses to PILOs.
- Mapping of CILOs to PILOs.
- Mapping of Courses to Assessment Methods.
- Overall Mapping of Assessment Methods to CILOs.
- Mapping of components/criteria of each assessment method to CILOs.

6.3 Compliance

All above mentioned Teams, Committees and Councils shall ensure full compliance with HEC, BQA and NQF regulations and standards in relation to both annual and periodic reviews.

7. Responsibilities

Faculty members are responsible for:

- Following this policy appropriately.

Heads of Departments are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all faculty members and students are fully informed of this policy.
- Implementing this policy appropriately.

Deans are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all faculty members follow this policy.
- Implementing this policy appropriately.

C-PRDC and U-PRDC are responsible for:

- Following this policy appropriately.
- Adhering to the responsibilities listed in relevant TORs.

Internal and External Reviewers are responsible for:

- Following and implementing this policy appropriately.
- Adhering to the responsibilities listed in relevant TORs.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for:

- Appropriate implementation of this policy.

University Policy Development and Review Committee is responsible for:

- Systematic review of the effectiveness of this policy.

8. Related Policies

- Assessment Policy
- Mapping Policy
- Program Design, Development and Approval Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy

9. Related Procedures

- Assessment Procedures
- Mapping Procedures
- Program Design, Development and Approval Procedures
- Program Review and Development Procedures
- Teaching and Learning Procedures

10. Related References and Standards

BQA	Institutional Review Handbook
BQA	National Qualifications Framework Handbook
BQA	Programs-within-College Reviews Handbook
HEC	Academic Regulations