

Policies and Procedures

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| Policy Title | New Program Design and Approval Policy and Procedure | Policy Number | 431 |
| Section | Academic Affairs | Approval Date | 5 February 2025 |
| Subsection | Instruction and Curriculum | Authorizing Entity | BoT |
| Responsible Office | VP Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation | Effective Date | 2 March 2025 |
| Distributed To | All AUBH Faculty and Staff | Next Review Date | 5 February 2027 |

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 All programs leading to an award from the American University of Bahrain (AUBH) are subject to a rigorous design and approval process to ensure that the University delivers a transformative student experience based on academic excellence in line with its mission, vision, and strategic goals. This policy applies to all new programs delivered by AUBH.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

2.1 Program Development Committee: A group of expert faculty who will work on developing the initial and final proposal with the help of the Provost Office, VP of Finance and Administration, VP of Institutional Research and Assessment, and the University Curriculum Committee (UCC).

3.0 POLICY

3.1 New program proposals must be consistent with the university's mission and vision statements and its strategic direction and goals

3.2 Two levels of proposals (Initial and final proposals) are required for the initiation of new programs

3.3 The College should conduct a feasibility study justifying the proposal to introduce the program before the Dean's Council's recommendation to proceed with the initial proposal

3.4 External, independent feasibility study is conducted as part of the initial proposal submitted to the governing Boards.

3.5 Initial approval of the Board of Trustees (BoT) & Board of Directors (BoD) - i.e., the Board of Governors (BoG) - upon the recommendation of the Dean's Council is required prior to the detailed development of the program curriculum and the completion of the final proposal.

3.6 All new programs are designed in line with AUBH's Program Design Policy

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3.7 It is recommended that the final proposal is subject to external scrutiny before submitting it to the Dean's Council for discussion and to the University Council and the Boards for final approval.

3.6 Approved new programs must be included in the version of the university catalog associated with their year of implementation.

3.8 All new programs must be submitted to the Higher Education Council (HEC) for licensing, the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA) for placement on the National Qualification Framework, and WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) for Substantial Changes approval before enrolling new students.

4.0 PROCEDURES

4.1 Initial Phase:

The development process of a new academic program proposal might begin with a request that could be initiated at the College level that contains a brief description of the proposed program. The introduction of a new program might also be suggested by the BoT, which will be transmitted by the President to the concerned college.

The main steps in the first phase are:

4.1.1 Identify the College that will be responsible for developing the new program proposals, if needed.

4.1.2 The Dean of the College establishes a Program Development Committee that includes a group of faculty who are experts in the field to develop the new program proposals. The Committee might include external members if needed.

4.1.3 The Program Development Committee develops and submits to the Dean a short and concise initial proposal following the initial proposal template (Appendix 1).

4.1.4 The proposal is discussed by the college and recommended for submission to the Dean's Council when satisfied.

4.1.5 The Dean or the Program Development Committee Chair presents the initial proposal to the Dean's Council for discussion.

4.1.6 Upon the recommendation of the Dean's Council, the initial proposal is presented by the Provost to the BoT for their approval.

4.1.7 The Provost communicates the BoT's decision to the Dean and, in case of approval, requests to proceed with the development of the final proposal.

4.2 Final Proposal:

The main steps in the second phase are:

4.2.1 The Program Development Committee develops and submits to the Dean of the College a final proposal utilizing the final proposal template (Appendix 2). The proposal should show evidence of a benchmarking activity with, typically, three university programs: one offered locally, one regionally, and one internationally, and covering: Program design (total credits, study mode, program learning outcomes, credit distribution: general requirements, core requirements, general electives, core electives); Course titles and content; Course learning outcomes; Teaching and learning methods; Assessment methods; and Graduation requirements. The choice of the universities/programs should be justified and in line with the AUBH benchmarking principles stipulated in the AUBH QA/QI Framework.

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4.2.2 The College evaluates the final proposal and recommends it for submission to the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) for evaluation and approval.

4.2.3 The submission should also include the detailed program specification document, program semestrial plan, benchmarking studies' outcomes, and all external reports, where applicable.

6.2.3 The UCC reviews and evaluates the final proposal, provides its recommendations to the College, and approves the submission once satisfied.

6.2.4 The Dean of the College presents the final proposal to the University Council, which, once satisfied, approves the submission to the BoT & BoD before sending it to the Higher Education Council (HEC).

5.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

5.1 AUBH QA/ QI Framework

5.2 Program Design Policy

5.3 Course Design and Development Policy

5.4 Mapping and Confirmation Procedure

5.5 External Review of Academic Programs Procedure

5.6 Program Specification Template

5.7 Course Syllabus Template

5.8 Course Scorecard Template

POLICY HISTORY

| Date of Last Action | Action Taken/Changes | Authorizing Entity | Effective Date |
|---------------------|---|--------------------|----------------|
| 5 February 2025 | This policy replaces the original policy approved by the university president on 15 April 2021 | BoT | 2 March 2025 |
| 5 February 2025 | <p>The Following changes were introduced to the Policy:</p> <p>The document was moved to the new template and approved in line with the current Policy Governing University Policies.</p> <p>The program lead was replaced by the Dean of the College.</p> <p>The need for the Management Committee approval is replaced by the approval of the University Council.</p> | BoT | 2 March 2025 |

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| | <p>The feasibility study section was embedded in the policy statements.</p> <p>Appendices 1 & 2 were revised to ensure the feasibility of offering the program at an initial stage of developing the proposal and that complete set of the documents are prepared at the stage of submission to the UCC Committee.</p> | | |
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6.0 Appendix I

The Initial Proposal should be a concise document, not exceeding 10 pages (excluding appendices), which should include, but not limited to, the following:

6.1 Program Overview

Provide a brief overview of the new proposed program by focusing on, but without being limited to, the following:

- A brief introduction to the field of study
- A brief introduction to the local, regional, and international educational and socio-economic environment as it relates to the proposed program and identify the main stakeholders, competitors, and eventual partners.
- A brief introduction to the main features of the new proposed program
- A brief introduction to the distinctive features of the new proposed program.

6.2 Rationale, Justification, Impact and Overall Essentiality

Provide a brief rationale and justification for offering the proposed program by focusing on, but without being limited to, the following:

- The main rationale for offering the new program.
- How central and critical the proposed program will be for AUBH.
- Why it deserves to be offered by AUBH and how it will benefit AUBH.
- How it will contribute to helping AUBH fulfill its mission
- The expected impact on the society and individuals
- How it maps and relates to the University's strategic plan
- How it will help AUBH distinguish itself from other local and regional institutions.
- The potential for the program to become among the best if not the best program in the region in this field of study.

6.3 Need and Demand Analysis

Provide information and evidence on the needs and expected demand for the proposed program. Briefly reflect on the long-term viability and sustainability of the proposed program by looking beyond the current and immediate interests and circumstantial needs and demands.

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Briefly discuss the need to offer the program at the proposed academic level (Master, Bachelor) and how the proposed level best fits the market and country needs and demand.

The needs and demand analysis should be described as detailed below:

- **Country needs:** How graduates from the program will contribute to the social and/or economic development of the country.
- **Market needs:** Evidence of employers' need for graduates from the new program.
- **University needs:** How the new program is needed to academically complement and support other existing programs or to advance the field of study at the University.
- **Student Demand:** Provide evidence of student demand by referring to the potential students and enrollment in related programs at the university or at other educational institutions in the country and/or the region.

6.4 Relation with Existing Programs

Identify, where applicable, other programs offered at the University that are similar or are related to the proposed program and existing courses currently offered at AUBH that are related to the proposed program. Briefly describe how the proposed program relates to/differs from the other identified programs and evaluate the impact of the program on these programs.

6.5 Program Inputs and Processes

Briefly discuss the availability and adequacy of existing resources needed by the proposed program by considering, without being limited to, the following:

- The availability and qualifications of existing faculty who may contribute to the program.
- The availability, quality, and adequacy of buildings and facilities needed by the proposed program.
- The availability, quality, and adequacy of resources such as materials, equipment, and instructional/educational resources needed by the proposed program.

7.0 Appendix II

When developing the final proposal, the program development committee should consider preparing the following:

7.1 Detailed Program Specification that includes:

- An Overview of the Program
- The Program Structure
- Courses Description
- Learning Outcomes and Course Mapping

7.2 Semestrial Plan, which proposes the courses student should take in each semester to ensure smooth progression and timely completion of the program graduation requirements.

7.3 Detailed course syllabi and mapped and confirmed scorecards.

7.4 Benchmarking study report.

7.5 Evidence of the College Advisory Committee's discussions of the proposed program at the different stages of developing the program.

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7.6 External review report, if available.

7.7 Program budget and resource timeline.

All these documents should be submitted to the University Curriculum Committee for approval before they can be submitted to the University Council.