



The American University of Kurdistan Policy for Curriculum Development

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I. INTRODUCTION

- a. **Authority:** This Board of Trustees at The American University of Kurdistan is authorized to establish rules and regulations to govern and operate the University and its programs.
- b. **Purpose:** The purpose is to set forth policy to provide guidelines on the process for changes and additions with respect to credit-bearing courses or academic programs and outlines administrators and committees' roles at the college and university levels within this process. This policy also identifies the university committees associated with the curriculum and their responsibilities. Each college shall have a policy, approved by the faculty of the college, regarding the handling of curricular matters and in which a college curriculum committee is defined.
- c. **Scope:** This policy applies to faculty, all department chairs, and deans of the academic colleges.

II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. **Responsible Executive:** President and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- b. **Responsible Administrator:** Deans and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- c. **Responsible Office:** Faculty Senate, Deans, the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

- d. **Policy Contact:** Office of Provost

III. POLICY DEFINITIONS

- a. **Credit or Credit Hour:** A unit of measure representing the equivalent of an hour (50 minutes) of instruction per week over the entire semester. It is applied toward the total number of credit hours needed for completing the requirements of a degree or other award. Laboratory/clinical and studio hours' calculation may be varied.
- b. **Curriculum:** The term "curriculum" refers to the major element of teaching and learning. It includes (1) disciplinary knowledge, such as the list of subjects, topics, and the texts included in the course of study; (2) disciplinary ways of knowing, skills, and practices; (3) teaching methodologies; and (4) assessment practices. All curricula are informed by the nature of the discipline/field, and the broader context in which the curriculum is enacted. Curriculum is both the planned process, the actual implementation of the teaching, the learning process, and student experience.

Learning Outcomes: A learning outcome describes what students should be able to do by the time they have completed a course or program following Bloom's taxonomy. Outcomes are complex and embody knowledge, skills, and practices.

c. **Course Modification**

- **Minor Course Modification:** A minor modification to a course is defined as anything not covered in Significant Course Modification and III(e)(f) & (h).
- **Significant Course Modification:** A significant modification to an existing course is one that is characterized by any of the following:
 - The proposed modification affects other departments or colleges.
 - The proposed modification reflects a change in status, e.g., credit hour, contact hours, prerequisites, elimination.
 - The proposed modification includes a change in the mode of delivery for all sections of the course wherein the change in mode has a significant impact on the students.

- d. **New Course:** A new course is defined as any course that does not currently exist as a permanent course.

- e. **New Program:** Refer to the Policy of New Academic Programs Development.

- f. **Normal student credit hour load:** The normal student load is 15-16 semester credit hours. As a rule, the maximum student load should not exceed 18 semester credit hours in any one semester with a maximum of 24 clock hours in class and laboratory/clinical and studio. In those curricula with predominant laboratory/clinical and studio loads, the maximum scheduled clock hour load shall not exceed 30.

g. **Program Modification**

- **Minor Program Modification:** A minor program modification is generally defined as those modifications to individual courses and curricular offerings that do not affect the overall program requirements, including:
 - New elective courses and the deletion of elective courses.
 - Changes to course titles and course descriptions.
 - Changes to prerequisites, co-requisites, cross-listed courses, credit restrictions and/or credit exclusions.
 - Changes to credit weighting of elective courses, lab, studio, tutorial, or other components.
 - Changes in the design, course learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods of an individual course.
 - Other minor changes to individual course offerings that do not affect the overall program requirements.

- **Significant Program Modification:** Major modifications to a program include but are not limited to:
 - The proposed modification affects other departments or colleges.
 - The proposed modification reflects a change in status, e.g., course number, credit hour, contact hours, prerequisites, elimination.
 - The proposed modification includes a change in the mode of delivery for all sections of the course wherein the change in mode has a significant impact on the students.
 - Changes to, or the addition of, experiential learning components, which are part of the course delivery.
 - The proposed modification amounts to a 33 1/3% or more change in course topics or assessments.

IV. POLICY STATEMENT

- a. The University President in consultation with Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Faculty Senate shall establish procedures for the development and review of all curricular offerings, including their establishment, modification, or discontinuance. Furthermore, these procedures shall include:
 - Appropriate involvement of the Faculty Senate.
 - Regular review and justification of courses and programs.
 - Opportunities for training persons involved in aspects of curriculum development.
 - Consideration of the job market and other related information for new courses and/or programs.
 - The Board shall approve all new programs and program deletions.

- b. The curricula of AUK shall be of high quality consistent with the University mission and vision. This policy contributes to the assurance and enhancement of the quality of curricula at AUK, ensuring that curricula are responsive to students' needs, the discipline, and the socio-cultural context within which they operate. Without compromising academic autonomy, curricula need to be accountable to the students, parents, industry, government, and the wider society.

- c. This policy ensures that there are plans in place for regular curriculum review so that curricula are responsive to changing disciplinary, educational, fiscal, and social circumstances.

- d. Review of curricula shall be standard practice and done regularly in every department. The frequency of the curricular review is stated in the Policy of Academic Program Review.

V. POLICY PRINCIPLES

This policy is based on the principles that:

- a. The program and curriculum are clearly aligned to both the college and the University's mission and vision.
- b. Thorough research into needs in the region, carried out by the affected faculty together with independent experts is integral to program and curriculum design and development.
- c. The embracing philosophy of curriculum design and development is based on a humanizing pedagogy, a student-centered approach to recognize and interact with the existing knowledge. Thus, the development of students' core values and critical thinking abilities can be achieved so that they are able to contribute meaningfully and creatively to society.

These principles encompass the following notions:

- a. The accommodation of “best practice” for a particular discipline and context.
- b. The inclusive teaching and learning process is based on current research findings, such as academic literacy acquisition.
- c. Learning is achieved in an authentic context for authentic purposes.
- d. The curriculum aims to provide the most viable and appropriate manner for students to gain understanding.
- e. Program and curriculum development will adhere to the quality cycle (Refer to the Policy of Academic Program Review).
- f. All new programs will be developed within the existing institutional framework and the external framework, such as accreditation standards.
- g. Program and curriculum design and development will conform to the American higher education standards and KRG Ministry of Higher Education's general requirements.
- h. The program and curriculum will be developed by the university, in particular the faculty senate, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, this may include other academics, professional bodies, employers in private and public sectors, and the Advisory Committee.
- i. Outcomes and assessment criteria will be explicitly stated for each course and will be integrated by the outcomes of the program as a whole, forming the basis for development and review.
- j. Programs will have clearly stated learning outcomes which include the corresponding knowledge, values and skills required.

- Outcomes are expressed in terms of competencies.
 - Outcomes include critical cross-field outcomes where appropriate.
 - Outcomes correlate with assessment criteria.
 - Assessment criteria indicate clearly how the learner will demonstrate competence.
 - Assessment plans and timetables are feasible to implement.
 - Assessment is used to develop and measure learning through formative as well as the usual continuous and summative methodologies.
- k. Outcomes will be linked to related assessment criteria and will inform the assessment of competencies at the end of the learning experience.
- l. Teaching and learning activities and assessment methods will support the specified learning outcomes.

VI. POLICY PROCEDURES

Minor Course Modification Procedures

- a. Proposal of minor course modification can be initiated by faculty.
- b. Proposals for such course modifications will be submitted to the department curriculum committee, department faculty, and the department chair.
- c. For minor course modifications, the department chair is the final approval agency.
- d. Notification of any action is sent to the dean by the department chair.

Significant Course Modification Procedures

- a. For all course defined above IV(b), the department chair will forward department approved proposals to the College Curriculum Committee (CCC).
- b. After review and deliberation, the CCC will forward its recommendation regarding the proposed course to the dean.
- c. If the course does not affect another college or students outside the college in which the course will be offered, once a course modification is approved by the dean, the dean will ensure the appropriate dissemination of the course information.
- d. If the course proposal affects another college or students outside the college in which the course will be offered, the dean of the college proposing the course will forward the proposal to the deans of the affected colleges.
- e. Proposal recommendations from deans will be forwarded to the provost for approval and further action. The recommendation from the dean of the college proposing the course shall be accompanied by supporting documentation concerning the need for and the budgetary requirements of the proposal.
- f. Once a course modification has final approval, the dean from the college proposing the course will ensure the appropriate dissemination of the course information.

- g. If a course proposal includes a request for any General Education designation, the CCC will also forward the proposal to the General Education Coordinator/Committee (GEC) for action. The GEC will forward any course approvals to the Department of Admission and Records (ARD) to enter in the appropriate databases.

Minor Program Modification Procedures

- a. As stated under the Policy Definition IV(h), the department chair will approve the minor program modification.
- b. Once the department chair approves the minor program modification, it is forwarded to the dean.
- c. The dean's recommendation will be attached and forwarded to the provost for approval and further action. The dean's recommendation is to be accompanied by supporting documentation concerning the proposal's need for and the budgetary requirements.
- d. For minor program modifications, the Provost and VP of Academic Affairs is the final approval executive.

Significant Program Modification Procedures

- a. Once the department chair and the program faculty review the significant program modification, their recommendations will be forwarded along with the proposal to the CCC.
- b. The CCC will forward its recommendation regarding the proposed program modifications to the dean, who will then forward the recommendations to the University Curriculum Design Committee (CDC). After deliberation, the CDC will notify the proposers of its recommendation. If the recommendation is to move forward, it will present its recommendation to the Faculty Senate for review. The Faculty Senate will forward its recommendation to the University Cabinet for consideration.
- c. In all cases, significant program modifications shall be accompanied by supporting documentation concerning:
 - The need for the proposed curriculum.
 - Supporting statements from the deans and curriculum committees of any other college that would be involved in the proposal's implementation.
 - Budgetary implications of the proposal.
 - Implications of the proposal for any support services not covered in the above, such as the library, facilities, academic/student services, and IT.

New Course Development Procedures

- a. For a new course defined above IV(e), the department chair will forward the proposals to the College Curriculum Committee (CCC).
- b. After review and deliberation, the CCC will forward the new course recommendation regarding the proposed course to the dean.

- c. If the new course does not affect another college or students outside the college in which the new course will be offered, and once a new course is approved by the dean, the dean will ensure the appropriate dissemination of the new course information.
- d. If the new course proposal affects another college or students outside the college in which the course will be offered, the dean of the college proposing the course will forward the proposal to the deans of the affected colleges.
- e. Proposal recommendations from deans will be forwarded to the provost for approval and further action. The dean of the college's recommendation proposing the new course shall be accompanied by supporting documentation concerning the need for and the budgetary requirements of the proposal.
- f. Once a new course has a final approval, the dean from the college proposing the new course will ensure the appropriate dissemination of the course information.
- g. If a new course proposal includes a request for any General Education designation, the CCC will also forward the proposal to the General Education Coordinator/Committee (GEC) for action. The GEC will forward any course approvals to the Admissions and Registration Department (ARD) to enter in the appropriate databases.
- h. The procedure from proposal to final approval or rejection shall not take longer than 30 days.
- i. The CCC has to justify their rejection of the course in writing, giving clear reasons for the rejection.

New Program Development Procedures (Refer to the Policy of New Academic Programs Development)

VII. UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM DESIGN COMMITTEE (CDC)

- a. Purpose: The purpose of the University Curriculum Design Committee is to make recommendations about educational design and delivery policies and procedures to the Faculty Senate. CDC also facilitates consistency in the quality of curriculum management.
- b. Functions
 - i. Report to the Faculty Senate and make recommendations to the Board of Trustees to include:
 - Review of significant program modification proposals
 - Review the new program development proposals
 - Appropriate requisites
 - ii. Review courses and programs, maintaining compliance with internal and external policies.
 - iii. Recommend policy changes pertaining to curricular issues.
 - iv. Implement government regulations and accrediting agency standards and guidelines pertaining to the curriculum development process:
 - Train committee members, faculty, department chairs, deans, and staff, as appropriate

- Maintain and provide regulations and accreditation standards updates
 - Disseminate information.
- v. One committee member from each college will attend college faculty meetings to report on courses/programs that are being reviewed.
- c. CDC Members, including
- i. The provost or designee, voting.
 - ii. A representative from among the academic deans (or designee), voting
 - iii. A faculty representative from each college of the University, voting
 - iv. The Director of Institutional Effectiveness (or designee), -voting.
 - v. The Faculty Senate representative, voting.

VIII. POLICY HISTORY

- a. **Approved by:** Board of Trustees
- b. **Adopted:** June 14, 2021
- c. **Amended:** June 14, 2021