



The American University of Kurdistan Policy for New Academic Program Development

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CONTENT

- I. Introduction
- II. Roles and Responsibilities
- III. Policy Definitions
- IV. Policy Statement
- V. Policy Procedures
- VI. Policy History
- VII. Appendix:
 - a. 1- Financial Projection
 - b. 2- Contacts of University Officers
 - c. 3- The New Academic Program Checklist

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 a policy to provide guidelines for developing a new academic program. This policy is a continuation of the Policy of Curriculum Development, emphasizing the new academic program development process.
- c. **Scope:** This policy applies 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. **Academic Programs:** The following qualifies as “Academic Programs” and fall under the scope of these guidelines.
- b. **New Program:** A new program is defined as one that is:
- Offered for the first time; and/or
 - Substantially different to the original by virtue of 50% or more of the credit value of the content being new, or the exit level outcome differing from that of the original qualification;
 - Offered through a new mode of delivery; and/or
 - Assumes a new title

IV. POLICY STATEMENT

The University President, in consultation with Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Faculty Senate, shall establish procedures for the development of new academic programs. New academic programs enable the University to maintain intellectual leadership as well as stay current in the educational marketplace. New academic programs that are consistent with the University's mission and strategic direction are encouraged and expected.

Since many new academic programs are inherently multi-disciplinary, and often do not fit neatly within a single college, it is recommended that new academic programs must follow guidelines and processes. This process attempts to address some concerns, such as:

- Potential overlap of similar programs that are developed in different colleges and the opportunity to build a unified, stronger, cross-department program.
- Avoidance of potential confusion in recruiting students to similar University programs.
- Consideration of proposals for meeting University-wide curricular requirements, such as Kurdish Studies.
- Inefficiencies of operating disciplinary overlapping programs.

The AUK New Academic Programs' curricula should be of a quality commensurate with the University's 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, graduates' career goals, 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.

V. POLICY PROCEDURES

The procedures specify the process to be followed in the development of new academic programs.

Step One: Idea Generation

Ideas for new academic programs may come from many sources. They might be the outcome of faculty ideas, student or community requests, strategic planning processes, and/or advances in a discipline. During the idea generation phase, proposers should ask:

- a. Why are we offering this program?
- b. Whom are we targeting?
- c. Where is the market -prospective students and industry interests?
- d. What design of program is optimal?

Step Two: Idea Screening

The number of new academic programs that could be developed may well exceed available resources for their successful development and implementation. Even good program ideas often surpass the resources available or may be inconsistent with the university's strategic direction. Thus, various ideas for new programs must first be reviewed and prioritized. The general questions that should be applied in reviewing possible new programs should include the following:

- a. Is the proposed program consistent with and supportive of the mission and strategic direction of the University?
- b. Can the proposed program be delivered with sufficient academic quality?
- c. Is the proposed program consistent with the strength and core competencies of the department? If not, can these be reasonably developed?
- d. Is the proposed program free from duplication or competition with a current or planned program within the University? Or, to what extent is it expected that enrollments in this program would compete with existing program(s) for students and resources?
- e. What is the expected excess of net revenues over projected program direct expenses to be generated by the program?
- f. Does available market data indicate an adequate demand for this program in the KRI to justify implementation? Provide summarized market demand analysis.

- g. Is the proposed program sustainable on a long term basis? If not, what is the projected life expectancy of the proposed program?
- h. Does the proposed program have characteristics that are distinctive from similar programs offered by the competition?
- i. In what format(s) will the proposed programs be offered (e.g., traditional face-to-face, hybrid, on-line)?

Answers to these questions, as well as other relevant information, should be provided in a concept paper as a pre-proposal document.

Step Three: Develop Concept Paper as the Pre-Proposal Document

A new academic program should begin with the submission of a detailed Concept Paper as a pre-proposal document. While relatively short in format, it should still provide sufficient information for a meaningful evaluation prior to approval for the development of a full program proposal.

- a. If the Concept Paper was initiated by the faculty of the department, its submission to the College Curriculum Committee (CCC) for review implies full support from members of the department. The reviews and comments are sent to the department chair and Dean, who will determine further action.
- b. The department initiating the Concept Paper should seek consultation from the University Curriculum Design Committee (CDC). The CDC can meet with proposers to discuss the ideas contained in the Concept Paper. Considerations include whether the ideas are consistent with AUK's mission, the program has strong educational and intellectual foundations, the program's design demonstrate the potential for financial sustainability, and it does not duplicate other AUK programs. In that case, the CDC will provide a recommendation to the department to begin developing the formal proposal. Support for concept development as well as serious market research and graduate employability is required at this point.
- c. If the Concept Paper involves another college(s), the Concept Paper is forwarded to the other college's dean(s) for review and may include a review by the CCC of that college and a letter of support.
- d. The initiating Dean will submit the Concept Paper and letters of support, if appropriate, to the Provost for review.
- e. The Provost should present the concept paper to the University Cabinet to ensure that it meets with the strategic directions and fiscal situation of the University.
- f. The Provost will notify the Concept Paper proposers of the decision whether or not to move the Concept Paper to a full proposal, the next phase of program development.

Step Four: Develop Full and Formal Program Proposal

Once the Provost approves the Concept Paper, the initiating department should proceed to create the full program proposal, which is a formal proposal.

a. University Curriculum Design Committee (CDC) Consultation: The proposers should seek consultation from the CDC continuously for the specifications for the type of proposal they will be developing. The CDC provides guidance and support on the consultations, market research, and other expectations. The CDC also facilitates the completion of certain pieces of the full proposal, including the Operating Plan, Financial Statements, and Evaluation Plan

b. Market Demand Analysis: A section on market analysis is required in all new program proposals. This section should document the steps that have been taken to judge the extent of student demand and graduate employability for the proposed program. Due to the variety of possible new programs, it is impossible to specify a precise market research regimen that would apply to all new academic program research, but should follow these basic guidelines:

- Describe the target market of students intended to be serviced by the new program. Descriptions might include age, qualifications, career goals, demographics, occupational trends in the target market, etc. How is this target market not being accommodated by the current AUK programs?
- Discuss the various factors (external and internal) that suggest adequate demand for this program (e.g., enrollment and employment trends) and provide 5-year enrollment projections for this program (including the projected negative enrollment impacts, if any, on existing programs).
- Address competitive programs that seek to serve the same target market of students along with their enrollment and graduation data.
- List the programmatic characteristics that demonstrate how the proposed program is distinctive from competing programs (e.g., quality, geography, student resources (including financial/scholarship support, etc.)).
- Provide any evidence of how the proposed program can be positioned in respect to the demand sector of the market.

c. Financial Analysis: All new academic program proposals should include a financial analysis section. In the financial analysis section, budget and justifications are included with a detailed review of the categories of items that comprise Revenues, Expenses, Capital Expenses, and Start-up Costs. A budget projection worksheet must be completed (**Appendix-1**), and the detailed narrative justifying each item must accompany the budget projection worksheet.

Since the new programs will have impacts on current resources, all associated costs with budget additions should be included in the budget projection worksheet for associated expenses, such as faculty hiring, facilities renovation, lab construction, program and

instructional start-up costs, and increases in other direct and support units. At the minimum, there should be positive cash flows over the evaluation period.

d. Generic proposal template: At the most basic level, a new academic program proposal should follow this basic template:

- Executive Summary – (Overview; Purpose; Rationale); not to exceed three pages
 - Program Content – (Scope and Purpose; Appropriateness to University Mission and Strategic Direction; Structure, Curriculum, Program Educational Goals and Student Learning Outcomes; Faculty, Admissions, Advising, Student Affairs and Services; Constituency Served/Intended Student Market)
 - Governance – (Accreditation, Impact on Existing Curriculum and Accreditation; Faculty Oversight; Student Records; Program Delivery)
 - Administration – (Program Director, Department, College, logistics of Applications, Faculty Hiring, Budget, and Policies)
 - Program Launch – (Key dates around launch, applications / marketing opening, and planned approval timeline; Facilities to be used for delivery including indication of any new or modified facilities that will be needed; Timeline and scheduling for the new program initiation; Format(s) in which the program will be offered (e.g., traditional face-to-face, hybrid, online)

 - Operating Model – (define how the program will function (qualitatively and quantitatively)
 - Financial Statements – (3-5-year flow of revenues and expenditures)
 - Evaluation plan – (Exit Plan, Evaluation Metrics, Evaluation Frequency, Growth Plans)
 - Special needs
 - Appendix (will vary by proposal)
 - Detailed support for any proposal content (e.g., faculty bios, course descriptions, market research, etc.)
 - Indication that the appropriate University offices have been contacted (and note the persons contacted). (See **Appendix 2** for suggested contacts)
 - Evidence of requested consultations
 - Library Resource Evaluation
 - Administrative Planning Consultations
- e. The new academic program checklist (Appendix-3) can be used as guidelines to develop a new academic program. The checklist is a set of detailed questions to consider in developing and operationalizing a new academic program. The answers to these questions will be covered in the full program proposal. The answers to these questions can also assist key administrative offices, such as the Office of Provost, Finance, Legal, Admission and Registration Department, Campus Services, and Faculty Senate in optimally supporting these processes.

Step Five: Full Program Proposal Approval Sequence

- a. Once the initiating department faculty approve the full program proposal, the department chair will forward the recommendations and the full program proposal to the College Curriculum Committee (CCC).
- b. The CCC will forward its recommendations to the dean.
- c. The initiating dean will submit the full program proposal and supporting document (s) to the Provost for review. The dean's recommendation should, in all cases, be accompanied by supporting documentation concerning:
 - The need for the proposed curriculum.
 - Supporting statements from the deans and curriculum committees of any other college which 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 (library, facilities, academic/student services, and IT).
 - Other information as articulated, such as the Provost's recommendation and any other supporting documents.
- d. After receiving a confirming recommendation from the dean and the Provost, the CCC, and the originating department will forward all recommendations for the new program to the University Curriculum Design Committee (CDC).
- e. The University Curriculum Design Committee (CDC) will review and make a recommendation to the Faculty Senate. Once the Faculty Senate approves the full program proposal, it then submits to the President, University Cabinet, and Board of Trustees for final approval.

Step Six: On-Going Evaluation After Program Implementation

All new academic programs will be subject to evaluation on an on-going basis in accordance with established policies and procedures.

VI. POLICY HISTORY

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

VII. APPENDIX

- a. 1- Financial Projection
- b. 2- Contacts of University Officers
- c. 3- New Academic Program Checklist

APPENDIX- 1

FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

1. REVENUES:

- 1.1. Net Tuition Revenue: An estimate of the Net Tuition Revenue including a description of the revenue assumptions should be made using the following information:
 - 1.1.1. Enrollment Projections: estimate the number of NEW full-time and continuing students (taking more than 12 credit hours per semester); estimate total number of new credit hours generated at AUK.
 - 1.1.2. Tuition Revenue: If existing tuition rates are being proposed, calculate the tuition revenue by multiplying the estimated number of students/credits times the appropriate current year tuition rate (please contact the Office of Finance if additional rate information is needed). For each successive fiscal year projection use the appropriate tuition with the designated increase.
 - 1.1.3. Fee Revenue: If a new fee is being proposed, calculate the fee revenue by multiplying the estimated number of students/credits times the proposed fee.
 - 1.1.4. Unfunded and funded Tuition Discount: Unfunded discounts are non-endowed, unrestricted scholarships, grants, stipends, and assistantships. For estimates of discount for Undergraduate and Graduate students, contact the Director of Financial Aid.
- 1.2. Contributions: Estimate of the total expected gift revenues; identify the source.
- 1.3. Grants: Estimate of the total expected grants revenue; identify the source.
- 1.4. Other Income: Estimate of the total expected revenue; identify the source.

2. PERSONNEL AND OTHER DIRECT EXPENSES:

- 2.1. Faculty Salaries: An estimate of full-time faculty salaries. Attach documentation listing the number of faculty, rank and status.
- 2.2. Contract Administrator Salaries: An estimate of full-time contract administrator salaries. Attach documentation listing the number of administrators and titles.
- 2.3. Hourly Support Staff: An estimate of full-time support staff salaries. Attach documentation listing the number of support staff and classification.
- 2.4. Part-time Personnel: An estimate of part-time personnel, including faculty, administrators, support staff, and student assistants. Attach documentation listing the number of employees and classification.
- 2.5. Fringe Benefits: An estimate of the fringe benefits using designated rates for all full-time personnel and part-time personnel.
- 2.6. Direct Expenses: An estimate of all expenses including library acquisitions, office and other supplies, advertising, promotion, travel, postage, etc. Provide explanation for expenditures.

3. INDIRECT EXPENSES:

- 3.1. Occupancy and other indirect expenses will be determined by Office of Finance.
- 3.2. Include only direct expenses in program financial projections.

3.3. CAPITAL EXPENSES:

- 3.3.1.1. Capital Equipment: Capital equipment, furniture, or fixtures is defined as any individual item costing \$1,000 or more and having a useful life of at least one year.
- 3.3.1.2. Construction Renovation: A remodeling or renovation project is determined to be a capital project if it improves on the “status quo” of the facility and adds to the value of the facility. The following remodeling and renovation costs are not capital costs but rather treated as direct

POLICY – Policy for New Academic Program Development

expenses: painting, travel related to the project, fixtures and furniture, carpeting and any minor renovations. Contact the Manager of Campus Services for assistance with developing renovation/construction cost estimates.

- 3.3.1.3. Information Technology: Costs associated with new computer hardware or software systems include equipment purchases, administrative systems purchase, outside consulting and related costs. Contact the IT Director for assistance with technology cost estimates and/or equipment specifications.

4. START-UP EXPENSES:

- 4.1. Start-up Expenses: Estimate of the one-time costs associated with the implementation of a new program, major, academic initiative, etc. Examples of one-time costs may include promotion and advertising costs (television, print, radio, etc.), publications, brochures, applications, miscellaneous (signs, etc.). Contact the Manager of Communication for assistance in estimating incremental initial marketing and promotional costs.

Appendix – 2

Contacts of University Officers

As appropriate to the specifics of a particular new academic program proposal, personnel from the following offices may provide valuable input during the development of proposals:

- Marketing and Communications – Office of Communication
- Registrar - Admission and Registration Department
- Admissions – Admission and Registration Department
- Student Scholarship/Financial Aid – Office of Finance
- Library - Director
- Information Technology Department – Director
- Facilities – Campus Services Manager
- Budget – Office of Finance
- Human Resources – Director

APPENDIX - 3

THE NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM CHECKLIST

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
1. What is the name of your proposed program? Program dean’s name and contact information?	
2. How does the program fit within the college and University mission?	
3. What review and approval process has this program undergone at the college, with other colleges, Academic Council of Deans and department chairs, and Provost?	
4. Is this a cross-college or cross-department program? If so, please indicate who you will be partnering with on this program.	
5. What is the administrative infrastructure in place to support this proposed program? a. Staffing b. Space c. Technology (IT support, web development) d. Leadership (e.g. faculty director needs/ requires course release, stipend, etc.) e. Governance (e.g. is there an advisory committee set up)	
6. Which college or department will have primary administrative responsibilities? If responsibilities are to be shared, please specify:	
7. What is the accreditation status and approval requirement for this program?	
8. What degree will result from completion of this program? Will there be a certificate or dual-degree option?	
9. What is the proposed total length of this program? How many units are required to graduate?	
10. What is the proposed start date for students?	
11. Does the program correlate to the degree/program names of the KRG Ministry of Higher Education? What is the high school GPA admission threshold for this program?	
12. Will you allow students to transfer course credits? If yes, who will review and how will it be recorded?	
13. How many students do you anticipate may enroll in this program?	
14. What is the proposed tuition that you recommend be charged for this program?	

POLICY – Policy for New Academic Program Development

15. What are the other student costs for this program (e.g. fees)?	
16. Will this proposed program require student tuition subsidies/scholarships)? Sources for external funding?	
17. Will you have a student handbook? If not, how will you make students aware of the university handbook?	
18. How do you plan to orient your students to campus, the university and the program?	
19. What is your assessment plan for this program? How do you plan to do collect data? Who is responsible for data analysis and program improvement?	