



**The American University of Kurdistan  
Policy of Curriculum – Program Objectives**

Policy Number: AS023

Effective Date: June 15, 2021

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

- a. **Authority:** The Board of Trustees (herein referred to as “Board”) at The American University of Kurdistan (herein referred to as “AUK” or “University”) 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 guide all degree programs and colleges to develop program objectives and learning outcomes.
- c. **Scope:** This policy applies to all enrolled students, faculty, deans, department chairs, and programs.

**II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a. **Responsible Executive:** Provost
- b. **Responsible Administrator:** Deans and/or Department Chairs
- c. **Responsible Office:** Office of Provost
- d. **Policy Contact:** Office of Provost

### **III. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES POLICY STATEMENT**

The program objectives and measurable outcomes are to be linked to the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) standards and competencies. Such objectives and outcomes are used to guide the program planning and subsequent review of content, forming the foundation of the educational curriculum. The standards and core competencies serve as statements of what students are expected to learn or accomplish during their academic careers at AUK.

The individual program shall also integrate the respective professional accrediting agency standards in developing program educational objectives and student learning outcomes, such as the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) for the College of Engineering, the Accreditation Commission for Education Nursing (ACEN) for the College of Nursing, and the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) for the College of Business.

All degree programs are offered in fields of study consistent with the University's mission. The program goals are derived from the institutional mission. Each course and specialization is aligned to the corresponding program objectives and outcomes in terms of expectations for graduates' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and professional behaviors. The assessment of student performance targeting the competencies and their respective program objectives and outcomes serves as the basis for ongoing feedback to the students, faculty, and administrators overseeing teaching and learning.

### **IV. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES POLICY PROCEDURES**

- a. The University offers academic programs consisting of a curriculum that leads to a bachelor's degree in a recognized field of study.
- b. Each program's learning goals, outcomes, and requirements are published in the University catalog and on the website. Such goals include the knowledge, intellectual and academic skills, behaviors, competencies, and methods of inquiry to be acquired. In addition, and if relevant to the program, goals include creative abilities and values to be developed and specific career-preparation practices to be mastered.
- c. Programs leading to degrees have a coherent design demonstrated through learning goals, structure, and content. AUK students have the opportunity to learn through direct contact with content experts, through problem-based and problem-solving formats, and computer-facilitated independent learning, through laboratory-based practice. The students are held accountable for the core competencies as part of the graduation requirements.
- d. Graduates successfully completing an academic degree program demonstrate proficiency in written and oral communication in English, the ability for scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and logical thinking, and the capability for continuous learning, including the skills of information literacy. They also demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific, historical, and social phenomena and a knowledge and appreciation of humankind's aesthetic and ethical dimensions.

- e. Detailed curriculum planning and development procedures and subsequent curriculum evaluation are stated in the Policy of Curriculum Development and Review.

## **V. PROGRAM EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES (PEO)**

- a. Program Educational Objectives (PEOs) are broad statements that describe what graduates are expected to attain within a few years after graduation.
- b. PEOs are consistent with the University's Mission and are based on the needs of the program's various constituencies, including students, faculty, employers, societies, professional licensure bodies, etc.
- c. There must be a documented, systematically utilized, and effective process involving program constituencies for the periodic review of PEOs that ensures they remain consistent with the AUK's Mission and the program's constituents' needs.
- d. Program educational objectives (PEOs) of the undergraduate programs are to produce graduates who can:
  - Vigorously engage in post-baccalaureate endeavors, whether in graduate study or the pursuit of other fields.
  - Apply their education to address the full range of technical and societal problems with creativity, imagination, confidence, and responsibility.
  - Pursue continued education and professional development through training, engage in research, and contribute to scientific progressions through participation in professional organizations.
  - Actively seek out positions of leadership within their profession and their community.
  - Serve as leaders by exhibiting the highest ethical and professional standards and communicating the importance and excitement of their dynamic field.
  - Retain the intellectual curiosity that motivates lifelong learning and address the complex issues/questions of the 21st century with multidimensional and interdisciplinary approaches.
- e. Program Educational Objectives (PEOs) Development: Defining the program educational objectives should be done with the full involvement of all key stakeholders including faculty members, students, advisory board members, alumni, and employers of graduates. Usually the faculty members teaching in the program, propose a first draft of educational objectives, and then the other stakeholders contribute by bringing their inputs to the first draft. Input from different stakeholders could be collected through various approaches, e.g. meetings (such as the advisory board meeting), focus groups,

and surveys (such as the employer survey). The following is the basic process for the development of PEOs

- Step 1: Program faculty members propose a first draft of program educational objectives (PEOs) considering the mission of the program.
  - Step 2: Proposed PEOs are presented to students in a meeting format. Students can ask questions to understand the PEOs and propose changes/additions to the PEOs. Students should continually have the opportunity to provide their feedback through their representation on the advisory board.
  - Step 3: The PEOs are discussed with the external members of the advisory board; feedback is considered and as appropriate, incorporated into the document.
  - Step 4: The final draft of the program PEOs is presented to the College Curriculum Committee (CCC). The College Curriculum Committee (CCC) reviews the final draft of program educational objectives (PEOs) to ensure that the establishment of PEOs took in consideration the institutional mission at different levels: University, College, Department/Program. Changes can be proposed by initiating program faculty members.
  - Step 5: The CCC will forward its recommendations to the dean. The initiating dean will submit the program PEOs, and supporting document if appropriate, to the Provost for review. The Provost is the final approval officer.
- f. On-Going Evaluation of PEOs: Every 5 years, there should be an assessment of the attainment of the PEOs through different instruments including the advisory board meeting minutes, employers' surveys, and graduate surveys. If the assessment evidences any changes, the PEOs will be revised and updated accordingly.
- Any change to PEOs will have an impact on Student Outcomes, which, in turn, will have an impact on the curriculum itself. Therefore, the impact of updating PEOs on curriculum design and delivery and the resultant student outcomes must be seriously considered - vice versa for the impact on PEOs from any change to Student Outcomes.
  - The assessment process continues every 5 years and incorporates the review of PEOs added or revised during the last cycle. (Refer to the Policy of Academic Program Review for detailed procedures).

## **VI. LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- a. Learning objectives can be program-level and course-level. The objective statements describe what the students should be able to do (or demonstrate) by the end of the program and/or course. These statements represent student performance in a specific, demonstrable (measurable), and student-centered way.
- b. Program-level learning objectives are stated as the End-of-Program Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) or Program Outcomes. SLOs are statements of what faculty expect graduates to achieve upon completing their study programs. They are statements of what faculty expect graduates to do after completing their study programs. Like learning objectives, these statements should be written in specific, demonstrable

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(measurable), and student-centered terms. They relate to students' knowledge, skills, and behaviours as they progress through the program.

- c. The documented program-level SLOs must support PEOs whose attainment prepares graduates to enter the professional environment. Course-level learning objectives must support program-level SLOs.
- d. Example of ABET student outcomes:
  - An ability to function on multi-disciplinary teams.
  - An understanding of professional and ethical responsibility.
  - An ability to communicate effectively.
  - A recognition of the need for, and an ability to engage in life-long learning.
  - A knowledge of contemporary issues.

- e. Student Learning Outcomes Development:

Course-level learning outcomes are collectively developed by the faculty of the course,

Program-level learning outcomes are developed by the department chair of that program in consultation with the faculty and dean. Student learning outcomes are connected to the mission of the program and college.

Course-level student learning outcomes are submitted to the program department chair for approval. The department chair is the final approval officer.

Program-level student learning outcomes are reviewed by the College Curriculum Committee (CCC) to ensure that the (re)design of the program-level student learning outcomes took into consideration the institutional mission at different levels: University, College, Department/Program. Changes can be made by the CCC. The CCC will forward its recommendations to the dean for approval. The dean is the final approval officer.

The College Curriculum Committee (CCC) reserves the right to review any curriculum, the SLOs, and POEs as it deems appropriate

- f. On-Going Evaluation of SLOs: Every 3-5 years, there should be an assessment of the attainment of the SLOs. This should be documented and discussed within the program self-study. (Refer to the Policy of Academic Program Review for detailed procedures).

## VII. POLICY HISTORY

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