

PL-ACADEMIC-009: Program Initiation Policy

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	Effective Date:
	Reviewed by the EMC on:
	Approved by the President on:

Source / Authority

This policy was developed by the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs in close collaboration with the Office of the Vice President for Research, university colleges and academic programs. The office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the implementation of this policy.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish standards and procedures for the initiation of new academic programs.

Who needs to know about this Policy?

- President
- Vice President
- Legal Advisor
- Dean
- Director/ Departmental Head
- Faculty
- Accounting/ Finance Personnel
- Student
- All Employees

Program Initiation

Qatar University supports the development of new academic programs that are aligned to the University's mission and goals. Such programs are seen as a means of enabling the University to meet both the aspirations of society and the changing nature of market needs. Furthermore, it is also a means by which the University may respond strategically to areas defined as 'national priorities'. All members of the academic community may take the initiative and propose a new academic program. Once proposed, a proposal will be subject to a comprehensive review process, which is then followed by an approval process—as outlined below

General Policy Statements

1. New program proposals must be consistent with the College and University's mission, goals, and strategic plan.
2. Two levels of proposals (preliminary and comprehensive) are required for the initiation of new programs.
3. Review of the preliminary proposal by the Executive Management Committee and approval by the president are required before proceeding with the development of the comprehensive proposal.
4. Comprehensive new program proposals must be subject to external and internal review by subject matter experts.
5. New programs that rely upon the resources and/or course offering of other colleges or departments require consultation with and the agreement of the providing unit(s) prior to the review of the new programs by the Executive Management Committee and approval by president.
6. Implementation of approved new programs must be scheduled at the beginning of an academic year.
7. Approved new programs must be included in the version of the University catalog associated with their year of implementation.
8. An implemented new program must undergo a review within one to two years after its initiation, to ensure that it is meeting expectations in relation to enrolment, resources, and educational quality. If the program is indeed meeting these expectations, it will be included in the regular academic program review cycle.

Time-Related Policy Statements

1. Comprehensive proposals shall be submitted no later than one-and-a-half years following the president approval date of the new program's preliminary proposal.
2. New programs approved by the Board of Regents must be implemented no later than two years following the Board of Regents' approval.

Procedure

The program initiation procedure involves two main phases:

- **Phase 1:** Preliminary Proposal Phase
- **Phase 2:** Comprehensive Proposal Phase

Main Steps in Phase 1: Preliminary Proposal

All members of the academic community may take the initiative and propose a new academic program. In all cases, the approved University template must be utilized.

The steps in the first phase include:

1. The preliminary proposal should be submitted to the head of department, who may then initiate a review process by a department/program committee, which in turn will provide feedback and guidance on the preliminary proposal. A recommendation is then made to the head of department. Subject to the approval of the head of department, the preliminary proposal will be submitted to the College Dean for review. (committee or member)
2. The College Dean will then initiate a review process by the relevant college graduate/undergraduate curriculum committee, which will then provide feedback and guidance on the preliminary proposal. A recommendation is then made to the College Dean. Subject to the approval of the College Dean, the preliminary proposal will be submitted to the appropriate AVP for review.
3. The appropriate AVP will have the proposal reviewed through the University's academic planning committee, which is chaired by the Associate Vice President for Academic Planning and Quality Assurance, and will include a standing membership comprising an Associate Dean from each College, in addition to a representative from the Office of the Vice President for Research; the Office of the Vice President for Institutional Planning and Development; the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs; the Building Operations Department; and the Finance Department.
4. The academic planning committee will consider the proposal within the established academic planning framework, and then it will provide a recommendation to the VPAA.
5. The VPAA will then present the findings and give a recommendation to the academic council and executive management committee. If approved by the president, the VPAA will inform the College Dean and the head of department of preliminary approval being given, and that a comprehensive proposal must be submitted within the timeframe listed above.

Main Steps in Phase 2: Comprehensive Proposal

The steps in the second phase include:

1. The comprehensive proposal should be submitted to the head of department, who will then initiate a review process by the department/program curriculum committee.

The head of department will consider the recommendation of the curriculum committee along with all supporting documentation. The proposal and head recommendation will then be submitted to the College Dean for review.

2. The College Dean will then initiate a review process by the relevant College graduate/undergraduate curriculum committee.
3. The comprehensive proposal, in addition to all supporting documentation, should then be considered by the College Council, which will make a recommendation. If approved by the College Dean, the comprehensive proposal will be submitted to the appropriate AVP for review.
4. The appropriate AVP will have the proposal reviewed through the relevant university graduate/undergraduate APRCE committee. The committee will then make a recommendation to the appropriate AVP.
5. The appropriate AVP, upon the relevant curriculum committee concluding that the proposal is satisfactory, will send it to at least three independent external reviewers who are subject specialists in the field. The comprehensive proposal should then be enhanced based on the external reviewers' reports. The committee will consider the reports of the external reviewers, and then make a recommendation.
6. The VPAA will have the proposal reviewed through both the Academic Council and the Faculty Senate. Both committees will then make a recommendation to the VPAA.
7. The VPAA will then present the findings of the review process and make a recommendation to the Executive Management Committee. If recommended by EMC and approved by the president, the proposal will be submitted by the President to the Board of Regents.
8. The Board of Regents will consider the proposal and decide on its adoption. The VPAA will then communicate to the College Dean and relevant head of department the final decision on the proposal.