


**ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW POLICY**

APPROVED DURING THE 36<sup>TH</sup> COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2024

  
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CHAIRPERSON, UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

  
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SECRETARY, COUNCIL

DECEMBER, 2024

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Uganda Technology and Management University (UTAMU) is committed to ensuring high quality learning experience for students while maintaining high integrity of its academic programmes. To do this, the university has in place policies and procedures that are consistent with the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) Framework. The university also and promotes quality assurance in the ongoing review and improvement of curriculum and courses, the periodic review of programmes offered, and the development of new programmes.

The establishment and oversight of both the policy and procedural aspects relating to the approval of new programmes, programme revisions/reviews are the responsibility of the UTAMU Senate and Council.

Course and programme development is a meticulous venture which requires a methodical approach if the output is to suit fitness for purpose. In this regard, higher education institutions in Uganda are obliged by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) to develop policy documents that spell out guidelines and procedures for generating marketable courses and programmes. The policy is meant to provide general guidance on the process of course and programme development, review, and implementation.

The purpose of the Academic Programme Development and Review policy is to ensure understanding and a standardized approach of curriculum changes to assure the quality of subject content developed in the various courses. The review process will span recommendations made at departmental; School; relevant committee/s of senate; senate and finally approved by the University Council. Senate shall approve all additions, deletions, and changes (including changes in method of delivery) of courses. It should be noted that where a new programme draws on existing courses, there is need for accreditation by the NCHE.

This policy is intended to provide a framework for the development of new programmes and reviewing the existing ones and their approval by the Senate and Council. The use of this policy is meant to ensure that each programme offered by the University is consistent with the University's vision and mission and addresses critical national human resources requirements.

The following general principles shall be applied in programme development:

- i. Each programme shall be designed by well-qualified staff and the design process shall be based on procedures approved by the Senate;
- ii. The curriculum of the programme must meet the minimum body of knowledge and be relevant to the profession;
- iii. The programme shall be coherently structured with its own regulations and the learning outcomes must be clearly stated;
- iv. The programme shall have physical and human resources to meet the requirements of the programme.
- v. The programme shall meet the requirements for accreditation by the NCHE; and
- vi. The qualification obtained by following the programme shall be clearly stated and be recognized by the NCHE.

## **2.0 REVIEW OF EXISTING ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES**

For existing academic programmes, the following guidelines set out the process for defining and documenting changes/reviews to courses and programmes to facilitate their review and approval process.

### **2.1 Guideline**

Schools shall plan for the development of new and reviewing of the existing programmes and for making major and minor modifications where necessary. These changes may be prompted by feedback from students, faculty and staff participating in the programme, by matters arising through the course of its delivery, external examinations or as a result of a full examination of the curriculum through accreditation or the cyclical programme review process.

The impact of these changes may affect the human, instructional, physical, and financial resources and thus the proposers should provide a plan to address the issues that might arise. In addition, as even minor changes can have implications for students in other courses and programmes, there must be open consultation with those who may be affected by the changes, as well as with those who are key to its implementation, including the office of Deputy Vice Chancellor, the Academic Registrar and other units.

All modifications to existing academic programmes shall be subject to approval by the school Board and subsequent review and approval by the appropriate Senate standing committee, Senate, Quality Assurance Committee of Council and Council.

## **2.2 Procedures**

Modifications to existing Academic programmes range from changes to individual courses and curricular offerings, through minor adjustments to programmes and regulations, to major programme modifications, such as the introduction of new specializations and options.

### **2.2.1 Minor Curricula Changes**

Minor curricula changes are generally defined as those changes to individual courses and curricula offerings that do not affect the overall programme requirements, including:

Changes to course sequencing, such as the re-arrangement or re-ordering of current programme without changing its overall requirements:

- i. New elective courses and the deletion of old elective courses
- ii. Changes to course titles and course descriptions
- iii. Changes to course numbers, credit weighting of elective courses, and contact hours in lecture, lab, tutorial, or other components
- iv. Changes to prerequisites, cross-listed courses, credit restrictions and/or credit exclusions
- v. Changes in the design, mode of delivery, course learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods of an individual course
- vi. Other minor changes to individual course offerings that do not affect the overall programme requirements

### **2.2.2 Minor Programme Adjustments**

Minor programme adjustments are defined as changes to degree requirements and/or learning outcomes that may require a plan for transitioning cohorts of students to meet different requirements over time, including:

- i. The introduction of new required courses
- ii. The deletion of required courses
- iii. Other changes to degree requirements or programme learning outcomes
- iv. New academic requirements or changes to existing requirements

Proposal briefs for minor programme adjustments shall include the following documentation:

- i. Summary of the proposed change, setting out the rationale and context for it
- ii. Description of the ways in which the proposed change will enhance the academic opportunities for students, or the issues or challenges that the proposed change are intended to address
- iii. If the proposed change involves students/school from other programmes or courses, provide an account of the process of consultation with those units and measures taken to minimize the impact of the change on students
- iv. Timeline for the implementation of the proposed change and transition plan for current students if applicable
- v. Analysis of the financial and enrolment implications
- vi. Calendar copy and programme maps for the proposed change that clearly highlight the revisions to be made to the existing curriculum
- vii. Completed templates for all new courses and changes to existing courses that result from the change.

### **2.2.3. Major Programme Modifications**

Major programme modifications are defined as those modifications that constitute a significant change to the design and delivery of an existing programme. Major Programme modifications include the following programme changes:

- i. Requirements that differ significantly from those existing at the time of the previous cyclical programme review.

- ii. Significant changes to the learning outcomes.
- iii. Significant changes to the school engaged in delivering the programme and/or to the essential physical resources as may occur, for example, where there have been changes to the existing mode(s) of delivery (e.g., different campus, online delivery, inter-institutional collaboration);
- iv. The addition of a new field to an existing academic programme.

For greater clarity, the following examples have been provided to illustrate changes that normally constitute a significant change and would therefore be considered a major programme modification:

- i. The merger of two or more programmes
- ii. New bridging options for university diploma graduates
- iii. Significant change in the laboratory time of an undergraduate programme
- iv. The introduction or deletion of an undergraduate thesis or research project
- v. The introduction or deletion of a work experience, cooperative education, internship or practicum, or portfolio
- vi. At the master's level, the introduction or deletion of a research project, thesis, coursework- only, internship or practicum option
- vii. The creation, deletion, or re-naming of a field in a graduate programme
- viii. Changes to the requirements for graduate programme candidacy examinations, field studies or duration requirements
- ix. Changes to courses comprising a significant (i.e., one-third) proportion of the programme
- x. Other changes to programme content that affect the learning outcomes, but do not meet the threshold of a 'new programme'
- xi. Changes to the faculty delivering the programme that alter the areas of research and teaching interests (e.g. a large proportion of the faculty retires, new hires)
- xii. A change in the language of programme delivery
- xiii. The establishment of an existing degree programme at another institution or location
- xiv. The offering of an existing programme substantially online where it had previously been offered in face-to-face mode, or vice versa
- xv. Change to full- or part-time programme options, or vice versa

- xvi. Changes to the essential resources, where these changes impair the delivery of the approved programme

### **2.3. Major programme Modifications– Proposal Briefs**

Proposals briefs for major modifications of academic programmes must include the following documentation:

#### **2.3.1. Introduction**

- i. Brief background on the existing programme and rationale for new programme component Overview of the new programme component, indicating the career and academic opportunities for graduates and other evidence of fit with the mission, mandate, and strategic plans of the university
- ii. Description of how the new programme component fits into the broader array of programme offerings, particularly those areas of teaching and research strengths and complementary areas of study.

#### **2.3.2 Degree Requirements**

##### ***(a) Programme learning outcomes***

Description of the abilities that graduates of the new programme component are expected to demonstrate in the following areas consistent with the national degree level expectations:

- i. Depth and breadth of knowledge
- ii. Knowledge of methodologies/Research and scholarship (Graduate)
- iii. Application of knowledge
- iv. Communication skills
- v. Awareness of limits of knowledge
- vi. Autonomy and professional capacity

##### ***(b) Admission requirements***

An outline of the requirements for admission to the programme component, including additional requirements or procedures, and recognition of prior learning experience should be given among others.

**(c) Programme structure**

Calendar copy and programme maps for the programme component showing courses and/or research components offered each semester, and indicating courses currently offered, new courses, and required courses provided by other units; describe also any experiential or other applied learning opportunities that are part of the programme component.

**(d) Programme content**

Proposed course outlines, indicating calendar level course descriptions, pre-requisites, credit weight, hours of class, labs and tutorials, mode of delivery and teaching methods, assessment of student learning, and intended learning outcomes.

**2.3.3. Resource Requirements**

**(a) Academic human resources**

List of core school associated with the programme component, including appointment status, home Department, areas of teaching and research interests, supervisory experience (graduate programmes only), and any new academic staff requirements and gaps they would be expected to fill.

**(b) Technical Staff and non-academic human resources**

Details of Technical staff, the administrative requirements for the new programme component, including support staff, honorary and part-time staff, supervision of experiential learning opportunities, and any other additional academic and non-academic human resources

**(c) Physical resource requirements**

Details of the physical resource requirements for the programme component including library holdings, information technology support and student services, special equipment, and space

requirements (classrooms, laboratory, graduate student work/study space, other).

#### **2.3.4. Financial Implication/Business Plan**

##### ***(a) Statement of funding requirements***

A summary statement of the funding required to support the programme component, including projected enrolments, start-up, and continuing costs

##### ***(b) Statements of resource availability***

Statements attesting to the adequacy of resources to support the programme from Deans who may have faculty members involved in or are contributing resources to the programme component, the

Academic Registrar or the Director of Graduate Studies, the University Librarian and others units.

### **3.0 PROCEDURE FOR NEW PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT**

The following steps provide a systematic approach with clear decision points and necessary guidelines for the development of academic programmes leading to Senate and Council approval.

#### **3.1 Stage 1: Initiation**

The proposal to introduce a new academic programme may come from staff, students, administration, alumni, government, employers, and members of the public following an environmental or market scan. Based on sufficient evidence to form an initial opportunity assessment, programme ideas deemed worthy of further development shall generally be supported at the school level. The proposer shall consult the Head of Department in which the programme will be offered. The Head of Department shall then bring the programme idea forward to the Departmental Board for consideration and if the idea is accepted, then it is subsequently presented at the school Board. In the case the programme idea being proposed does not fall in any of the existing departments, the idea will skip the departmental scrutiny. The scrutiny at the school Board stage shall include the following considerations:

- i. Suitability of the department to offer the programme.
- ii. Type of programme (qualification descriptor as per NCHE guidelines, length, delivery method).
- iii. Alignment with the school and University Strategic Plan (in relation to national strategic plan).
- iv. Potential student demand.
- v. Economic demand (market/job prospects).
- vi. initial and/or anticipated stakeholder support;
- vii. cost-benefit implications for the University

If the school Board considers that the concept is satisfactory, the Dean, in consultation with the school Board shall appoint an *ad hoc* programme development team to spearhead the development of the programme proposal. The Dean shall designate a chairperson and secretary of the team and provide the terms of reference. The team shall consist of subject matter experts who shall be drawn from academic and non-academic University staff as required. The Dean may co-opt staff from the Academic Registrar's Office, Quality Assurance office and relevant industry to assist in the development. The Head of Department may or may not serve on this team. The team will meet on a regular basis throughout the programme development processes.

### **3.2 Stage 2: Concept Validation**

Stage 2 is carried out under the leadership of the Head of Department. The primary purpose of this stage is to collect sufficient evidence to determine the feasibility of investing further University resources for programme development. The length of time required for this stage can vary substantially depending on the availability of information, implications to the University, and the complexity of the programme concept. In some situations, a discussion with key stakeholders may be sufficient, while in other situations significant resources may be required

to explore the validity of the concept. This stage includes the following considerations:

**(a) Programme description**

- i. potential name of programme;
- ii. type of programme;
- iii. general structure of the programme;
- iv. programme outcomes;
- v. Alignment with the University Strategic Plan;
- vi. relationship to existing programmes at the University; and
- vii. relationship to similar programmes in the country and abroad.

**(b) Anticipated student demand and enrolment**

- viii. enrolment projections and assumptions; and
- ix. student demand and demographic analysis.

**(c) Employer and economic demand**

- i. demand for graduates in workforce; and
- ii. potential related to further education.

**(d) Evidence of stakeholders' support**

- i. support from industry and potential employers; and
- ii. Support from professional and regulatory bodies.
- iii. Government support

**Budget and funding sources estimate**

- i. analysis of revenue and expenses;
- ii. one time implementation expenses
- iii. sources of revenue (e.g. grants, government funds, student sources, private sources)
- iv. Impact on internal resources (e.g. staffing, facilities, curriculum development, etc.).

**(f) Institutional capacity**

- i. personnel (their experience and expertise);
- ii. existing development resources;
- iii. additional development resources required (partnerships, donations, institutional funds);
- iv. capital requirements and facilities; and
- v. Short- and long-term impact on the University.

If the school Board considers that the concept is satisfactory, it shall make a decision to proceed to Stage 3 with the appointment of the task team.

**3.3 Stage 3: Development of the Full Proposal and Departmental Approval**

This stage includes the detailed development of the proposal needed for the department to make an informed decision regarding the proposed programme. This stage ranges from refinement of the concept to a much higher level of engagement such as extensive consultations, programme outcome development, curriculum development, and community/regional consultation. The task team spearheaded by the Head of Department shall identify the appropriate stakeholder groups for the proposed programme. Stakeholder groups may include:

- i. employers or potential employers of graduates of the programme;
- ii. public sector representatives;
- iii. work-site experience hosts;
- iv. community members; and
- v. Personnel from other universities and departments running similar programmes.

The proposal shall continue to be revised based on feedback from stakeholders until the

Department satisfies itself that it is suitable to move to the next stage. The decision to proceed to

Stage 4 shall be determined by the Department.

### **3.4 Stage 4: School Board Approval**

The Head of the Department in which the programme is to be offered shall present the proposal to the school Board. It is essential that the Head of Department liaises with the Head(s) of the other departments within the faculty and in other faculties which are responsible for any components of the proposed programme to be offered by other faculty. This is to ensure that other units are aware of the proposed changes and of the potential implications for their students.

The school Board has primary responsibility for the academic scrutiny and the consideration of resource requirements and academic planning implications. This includes responsibility for satisfying itself that the appropriate scrutiny has been undertaken at departmental level, including consideration of external stakeholders' input. Where unresolved issues are identified, they shall be referred to the departmental board for resolution before a decision to proceed is made. If the Faculty Board considers that the grounds for further consideration are satisfactory, it shall make a decision to recommend that the process proceeds to Stage 5. The decision to proceed to Stage 5 shall be made by the Faculty Board.

### **3.5 Stage 5: Academic Programmes and Appeals Committee (committee if Senate)**

Academic Programmes and Appeals Committee; and Graduate studies board are the Quality Assurance Committees of Senate for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes respectively. The two committees, under the authority and on behalf of the Senate are responsible for validation of programmes and for ensuring that proposals for new academic programmes conform to the University's teaching, learning and assessment practices, and regulatory issues. Through this scrutiny, the committee ensures that programmes also conform to the requirements of the NCHE and other relevant national and international benchmarks.

If the committee considers that the grounds for further consideration are satisfactory, it shall make a decision to recommend that the process proceeds to Stage 6 under the leadership of the Chairperson of the committee.

### **3.6 Stage 6: Senate Approval**

The Senate has overall responsibility for the scrutiny and approval of new and reviewed programmes in the University as specified by the Tertiary and Other Institutions Act (UOTIA of 2011 as amended. Senate will scrutinize and approve the proposals for new programmes. Senate will recommend the programme for the final approval by council and its committees specifically Quality Assurance Committee. After council approval the programme will be ready for submission to NCHE for accreditation.

### **3.7 Quality Assurance Committee (committee of Council)**

Quality Assurance Committee will ensure that all the comments from senate are affected before the curriculum is submitted to council the final approval and thereafter to NCHE for accreditation.

### **4.0 Academic programmes review/development Governance Overview**

The administration of curriculum development and review is conducted by the following

University bodies:

#### **4.1 Department Unit**

Chair: Head of Department

#### **4.2 School:**

Chair: Dean

#### **4.3 Academic Programmes and appeals Committee**

Chair: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) Academic Affairs

#### **4.4 Senate**

Chair: Vice Chancellor

#### **4.5 University Council**

Chair: University Council Chair

**Note:**

- i. The registrars in these units/levels are the secretariats
- ii. Subject Matter Specialists should be invited to attend the review/development meetings

**5.0 Implementation Framework****5.1 The office of the Academic Registrar**

The Registrar will be responsible for ensuring that the course credit values awarded reflect the quality and standards of the University, fall within the requirements of the University's qualification frameworks for that academic level and comply with the requirements of the regional accreditation bodies.

Following the approval of courses and programmes of study by University Council, the Registrar will be responsible for ensuring that:

- Appropriate course codes are assigned
- Credits assigned to a course are indicated in the course description
- Credits are earned only when the course and assessment have been completed successfully

**5.2 Departmental Curricula Development and Review Committee****Composition:**

Head of Department (HOD)/Academic Leader: Chairperson

ii. Departmental Subject Matter Specialists: Members

iii. The Registrar-Secretariat

The roles of this committee shall be to:

- Provide guidance to the department in developing, reviewing and implementing all academic programmes in accordance with NCHE standards, guidelines and requirements.
- To draft new curricula or make proposals for the review of new ones based on needs assessment and course delivery feedback during the course of implementation.
- Make recommendations for curricula before presenting them to the school board or the Curricula Development and Review Committee for consideration.
- Conduct all needs assessment from relevant stakeholders.

**5.3 School Board Committee**

This board must be set up with similar departments have been merged into one school.

**Membership:**

- i. Chaired by the school's dean.
- ii. Members will include the heads of the departments or academic leaders.
- iii. Members: department subject matter experts.
- iv. Registrar-Secretariat

The School Board's responsibilities include:

Making recommendations and offering advice on the produced and reviewed curricula;  
Presenting the proposed curricula to the curriculum development and review committee

#### **5.4 Curricula Development and Review Committee**

**Composition:**

Chair: DVC Academics

**Members:**

- i. Deans of Schools
- ii. Heads of Departments or academic leaders
- iii. Registrar-Secretariat

The role of the DVC Academic affairs shall be to:

Review and recommend the new or reviewed curricula to the Senate for consideration and approval.

Forward the curricula to the Senate

#### **5.5 The University Senate**

The Senate shall


- Approve new and reviewed curricula
- Ensure that the programmes are in conformity with NCHE and the university Council and other regulatory body standards.
- Ensure implementation
- Ensure the integrity of all programmes by making sure that approved programmes are not altered unless in line with laid down procedure.
- The Vice Chancellor shall forward the curricula to council and follow up as required to seek approval.

The Academic Registrar-Secretariat

## 5.6 The University Council

The council received and approved the curricula and made recommendations as required.

Signed this 12<sup>th</sup> Day of December 2024 by:



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**Chairperson University Council,**



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**Secretary,**