Curriculum Review and Development Policy

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Policy Statement

The Institutional Curriculum Committee (ICC) at Fahad Bin Sultan University (FBSU) oversees curriculum review and development under the authority of the University President. All academic and administrative staff involved in curriculum processes must comply with this policy to ensure alignment with FBSU's mission, national standards, and global best practices.

Background and Justification

FBSU is committed to delivering high-quality academic programs that meet local and international standards, address workforce demands, and align with the university's strategic goals. This policy establishes a unified framework for curriculum development, empowering faculty leadership while ensuring consistency, quality, and integrity across all academic programs.

Scope and Purpose

This policy governs the design, review, and approval of undergraduate programs at FBSU. It outlines principles, definitions, responsibilities, and procedures for curriculum development.

Exclusions: Guidelines for curriculum development practices, new degree program establishment (governed by the FBSU New Program Design Policy), and minor/double degree programs (see FBSU Program Amendment Policy) are detailed in separate documents.

Definitions

Certificate: A credential awarded upon completing a non-degree curriculum.

Course: A structured set of instructional and learning activities focused on a specific subject.

Credit: A unit of academic value contributing toward a degree.

Curriculum/Program: The set of educational requirements needed to earn a certificate or degree, encompassing general education, specialized study, or both.

Double Major Degree Program: A program allowing concurrent completion of two existing undergraduate majors.

Exit Degree: An award granted to a student who has not completed a bachelor's degree but has earned:

- Intermediate diploma degree if the student has completed at least 60 study hours from the bachelor's degree program that he/she is enrolled in.

- Advanced diploma degree if the student has completed at least 90 academic hours of the bachelor's degree program that he/she is enrolled in.

Interdisciplinary Degree Program: A program developed by faculty from multiple specialties, with unique learning outcomes unachievable through a single discipline.

Jointly-Registered Program: A single program offered collaboratively by two or more institutions.

Major Degree Program: A degree program for a specialization defined in the Saudi Standard Classification of Educational Levels and Specializations or an interdisciplinary program. The degree could be a Diploma, an Advanced Diploma, a Bachelor's Degree, a Master's Degree, a High Diploma, or a Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) degree.

Minor Degree Program: An 18 to 27-credit-hour degree program, derived from an existing undergraduate major degree program that results in the completion of a secondary degree in addition to the student's major degree that can be completed concurrently.

Off-campus courses: Courses that are offered entirely or partially outside the university campus, which include:

- Blended learning (at least 25% of the number of teaching hours for a course in a non-attendance mode).

- Distance education (teaching hours will be remote).

- Summer training programs.

Program Course Reviews: Internal updates to existing courses.

Program Partial Reviews: Urgent revisions proposed by faculty or department committees that significantly impact learning outcomes, structure, delivery, or accreditation.

Program Comprehensive Reviews: Mandatory reviews conducted every 2–5 years, addressing significant changes to learning outcomes, structure, or accreditation basis.

Program Title: The official name of a degree or certificate, reflecting its subject or major (e.g., Computer Science).

Registration: Ministry of Education approval of a curriculum for general use, professional practice, or credentialing.

 Semester Hour: A credit earned through at least 15 hours of instruction (50 minutes each) and 30 hours of supplementary work, adjusted as per Ministry of Education bylaws.

Principles

FBSU adheres to the following standards when designing, reviewing, and approving academic programs:

- The **Saudi Standard Classification of Educational Levels and Specializations (SCELS)**, as established by Council of Ministers Resolution No. 75, dated 1/27/1442 AH, including any updates or amendments.

- The **National Qualifications Framework (NQF)** of Saudi Arabia, approved by the Education and Training Evaluation Authority Board on 6/16/1441 AH, including any revisions.

- FBSU's internal policies, including the Rules and Regulations of Undergraduate Study and Examinations and this policy.

- Standards set by the Saudi Education & Training Evaluation Commission (ETEC).

Key stakeholders - department faculty, students, employers, alumni, and college advisory boards - play a vital role in shaping degree programs. Their input should be sought and considered as fully as possible during program revisions or the creation of new programs, in line with FBSU's rules and regulations.

Every degree program at FBSU must undergo a thorough curriculum review every 2 to 5 years, as determined by the President Assistant for Academic Affairs (PAAA), to reflect evolving job market demands and advancements in the field. This requirement aligns with ETEC Standard 3.2. In designing and updating curricula, FBSU aims to foster intellectual integrity, cultivate a strong sense of cultural identity, and prepare graduates for regional competitiveness and collaboration.

Responsibilities and Implementation Strategies

1. Policies for course reviews and free electives:

The primary goal is to ensure course materials remain current, pedagogically sound, and aligned with field advancements, without altering program structure. Faculty teaching the course initiate these reviews.

a) Significant changes requiring approval include:
- Course title updates.
- Major revisions to course specifications (e.g., textbook, content).
- Redistribution of credit hours (lecture, lab, recitation).
- Changes to prerequisites or co-requisites.
- Replacing a course's content and title entirely constitutes a partial program change.

b) Reviews must align with the FBSU Course Design Policy.

c) Approval is required from the department curriculum committee, department council, college council, and PAAA.

d) Post-approval, the department head updates the registration office and faculty, ensuring records and the program website reflect changes.

e) The department chair maintains all curriculum change records.

2. Introducing new free elective courses:

Adding a free elective is not a program change unless it replaces a required course or increases credit hours.

a) Proposals must follow the FBSU rules.

b) Design must comply with the FBSU Course Design Policy, including ETEC T5 templates.

c) Benchmarking must align with FBSU's rules.

d) Approval requires review by the department curriculum committee, department council, college council, Institutional Curriculum Committee (ICC), and PAAA.

3. Policies for partial program reviews:

Faculty or department committees may propose partial reviews anytime an urgent need arises.

a) Changes may include:
- Updates to the program mission, title, objectives, or learning outcomes.
- Addition/deletion of courses or concentrations.

- Structural changes (e.g., credit hours, course sequencing).
- Substitution of required courses with electives or credit hour increases.

b) Courses or course content that corresponds to Important Subjects mentioned in SCELS for the degree specialization should not be omitted from the program

c) Ministry of Education/ETEC requirements supersede stakeholder preferences if conflicts arise.

d) The proposing subcommittee seeks approval from the department curriculum committee, department council, and college council.

e) The college dean submits the proposal and meeting minutes to the PAAA and ICC for review.

f) The ICC ensures policy compliance, provides feedback, and meets with a college representative to discuss the proposal. The ICC may recommend minor changes for University Council approval or require resubmission within two months.

g) After revisions, the ICC recommends the proposal to the President for University Council review.

h) Post-approval, the University Council seeks input from external reviewers per Ministry of Education guidelines, submitting the final request to the Board of Trustees and Ministry of Education.

i) External reviewers must be from an ETEC-accredited institution, specializing in the program's field, using the Ministry's designated form.

4. Policies for comprehensive program reviews:

When due, the college dean or department chair forms a subcommittee to submit a proposal to the ICC within two semesters, per the FBSU Curriculum Development Manual.

a) All partial review policies apply.

b) Comprehensive reviews must:
- Align program mission and content with FBSU/college strategic plans.
- Ensure consistency with SCELS and NQF levels.
- Meet ETEC curriculum standards.
- Adhere to relevant FBSU policies.
- Complete ETEC templates) and FBSU forms.
- Address Ministry of Education and accreditation updates.

- Incorporate stakeholder feedback, annual reports, advisory board input, job market trends, and professional standards.
- Include benchmarking and at least one pre-submission external review.

c) Proposals must follow the FBSU template.

Procedures for Handling Policy Violations

The FBSU Compliance committee monitors adherence to the comprehensive review schedule, as set by the PAAA. If a review is overdue, the office notifies the relevant college/department and PAAA, recommending immediate action.

References

1. The Saudi Standard Classification of Educational Levels and Specializations issued by Council of Ministers Resolution No. (75) dated 1/27/1442 AH.

2. The National Qualifications Framework in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, issued by a decision of the Board of Directors of the Education and Training Evaluation Authority in its first meeting for the second session held on 6/16/1441 AH.

3. FBSU Undergraduate Study and Examinations Bylaws and Rules of Implementation.

4. FBSU Bylaw of College & Program Advisory Board

5. FBSU Academic and Intellectual Freedoms Policy

6. FBSU Teaching & Learning Quality Framework Policy

7. FBSU Course Design Policy

8. FBSU Final Examinations Policy

9. FBSU Students with Special Needs Policy

10. FBSU Graduation Policy

Appendices

1. Policies and procedures for establishing new degree programs:

https://fbsu.edu.sa/Bylaws/AA-424-New-Program-Design-Policy.pdf

https://fbsu.edu.sa/Bylaws/AA-424-P01-New-Program-Design-Procedures.pdf

2. Program Amendment policy:

https://fbsu.edu.sa/Bylaws/AA-420-Program-Amendment-Policy.pdf