



UNIVERSITY OF BAHRAIN

Annual and Periodic Academic Programs Review Policy

Authority / Owner of Policy: Competitiveness and Organizational
Development Directorate

Effective: 31/03/2022

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Policy Information

Title: Annual and Periodic Academic Programs Review Policy

Policy Description: This policy specifies the mechanism that the University of Bahrain follows to systematically review all academic programs and determine strength and weakness of the programs in order to articulate action plans for further development of the academic program, on a regular basis.

Policy Scope: ☒ Academic ☐ Administrative ☐ Research
☐ Student ☐ General

Policy Status ☐ New policy ☒ Revision of existing policy

Approval Authority: University of Bahrain Council

Authority/ Owner of Policy: Competitiveness and Organizational Development Directorate

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Related Documents: Regulations for Offering/Developing Academic Programs and Courses at the University of Bahrain, Student Outcomes Assessment Policy, Policy for University Services Quality Evaluation Surveys, Assessment Moderation Policy, Quality Manual, The National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

Policy Stakeholders

☒ President

☒ Vice President

☐ Legal Advisor

☒ Deans

☒ Directors

☒ Faculty members

☐ Students

☐ Admin Staff

☐ All University Affiliates

1 Definitions

ADRI Framework

A structured evaluation model used to assess and enhance academic programs, ensuring alignment with quality assurance and institutional goals. It consists of four key components:

- **Approach:** Establishing clear objectives, strategies, and methodologies to achieve desired academic and quality outcomes.
- **Deployment:** Implementing planned strategies and processes effectively across academic programs and operational units.
- **Review:** Measuring and analyzing outcomes based on key performance indicators, feedback, and assessment data.

- **Improvement:** Identifying areas for enhancement and implementing evidence-based refinements to ensure continuous progress and alignment with evolving academic standards and stakeholder expectations.

Academic Program Lifecycle

A structured framework consisted of six stages established to oversee quality assurance and compliance activities within the University's academic programs ensuring regular review of the programs. It adopts the ADRI framework to integrate both internal and external quality assessments, involving annual reviews and periodic reviews throughout all stages, tailored to the specific duration of each program.

Annual Program Review

A series of procedures that the department follows to ensure continuous improvement of its academic programs, through development of the annual self-evaluation report.

Periodic Program Review

Is a process undertaken by each program by the end of the program lifecycle that reviews the quality and educational experience offered by the University, every five years.

External Reviews

A program lifecycle stage where the program is subjected to external review, nationally through Education and Training Quality Authority, and or internationally, through accreditation agencies in case the program is accredited.

Programmatic Accreditation

Is a process designed to ensure that an academic program has undergone a rigorous review process and found to meet international high standards for educational quality.

BQA

Bahrain Education and Training Quality Authority

NQF

The National Qualification Framework in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

2 Policy Purpose

The Policy specifies the mechanism that the University of Bahrain follows to evaluate the status, effectiveness, and progress of academic programs in order to articulate action plans for their further development.

3 Policy Scope

- 3.1 This Policy concerns all academic programs offered at the University of Bahrain.
- 3.2 Each program undergoes an Annual Program Review to monitor its ongoing implementation, ensuring smooth operation, continuous quality assurance, and alignment with university standards.
- 3.3 Each program undergoes a Periodic Program Review at the end of its lifecycle, involving a comprehensive evaluation that typically leads to program development and enhancements while ensuring continuous quality assurance and alignment with university standards.

4 Policy Statement

- 4.1 The University is committed to offer academic programs that provide high-quality learning experiences for students and meet the needs of the stakeholders.

- 4.2 The University is committed to collecting and analyzing program-specific data and learning assessment data to evaluate the status, effectiveness, and progress of academic programs, making informed decisions and providing recommendations to ensure continuous quality improvement.
- 4.3 Annual and period reviews of academic programs is the mechanism through which sections 4.1 and 4.2 are implemented.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Head of Department

The Head of Department shall be responsible for enforcing the Policy through the Curriculum Committee, the Quality Assurance Committee, the Postgraduate Committee, and any other relevant committee.

5.2 Quality Assurance Office Directors

The Quality Assurance Director shall collaborate with various departments to ensure compliance with this policy and to develop internal procedures that enhance its awareness and effective implementation.

5.3 Competitiveness and Organizational Development Directorate

The Competitiveness and Organizational Development Directorate shall schedule and monitor the implementation of the program lifecycle, annual and periodic reviews across all colleges.

6 Policy Procedures

6.1 Academic Program Lifecycle:

6.1.1 The Academic Program Lifecycle is a structured framework designed to govern the quality assurance and compliance activities associated with the University's academic programs.

6.1.2 The programs lifecycle at the University of Bahrain consists of five years (Figure 1):

- a. **Year Zero – Pre-Offering:** The new or existing program is developed in accordance with comprehensive regulations, tools, and guidelines that align with national standards. It is also Placed on the NQF to ensure compliance and alignment with national academic standards.
- b. **First Year – Program Offering:** The approved program, that is placed on the NQF, is launched by admitting students and initiating preliminary quality assurance procedures. This includes forming key advisory committees such as the Student Advisory Committee and the Program Advisory Committee, as well as launching the program's annual review, which continues throughout its lifecycle through the submission of the Self-Evaluation Report at the end of each academic year.
- c. **Second Year – Program Progression:** The program continues in its second operational year with a focus on enhancing learning outcomes to ensure continuous improvement in educational quality. A development plan is established to address the observations from the Self-Evaluation Report findings, which can be met within the program's lifecycle without the need for redevelopment.
- d. **Third Year – Internal Quality Review:** The program continues in its third operational year, and in addition to what is stated in item (c) of this section, a comprehensive internal quality review (IQR) is conducted to simulate external review processes. The aim is to ensure that the program meets the required standards and to identify areas for continuous improvement before undergoing external review or accreditation.
- e. **Fourth Year – External Review and Accreditation:** When the program reaches an advanced stage of implementation, it undergoes a comprehensive external review by the BQA, along with academic accreditation from relevant accrediting entities – if

- available – to ensure its alignment with labor market requirements and academic quality standards.
- f. For Programs with five years duration, the program continues as outlined in item (c) of this section for two academic years. The internal quality review, as stated in item (d) of this section, is carried out in the fourth year, while the external review and accreditation, as detailed in item (e) of this section, take place in the fifth year of the program's lifecycle.
 - g. After Completing the fourth year (or fifth year depending on the program duration), feedback from relevant stakeholders and all recommendations collected during the program's lifecycle are utilized to optimally develop the program, revisiting Year Zero and offering an enhanced version of the program.

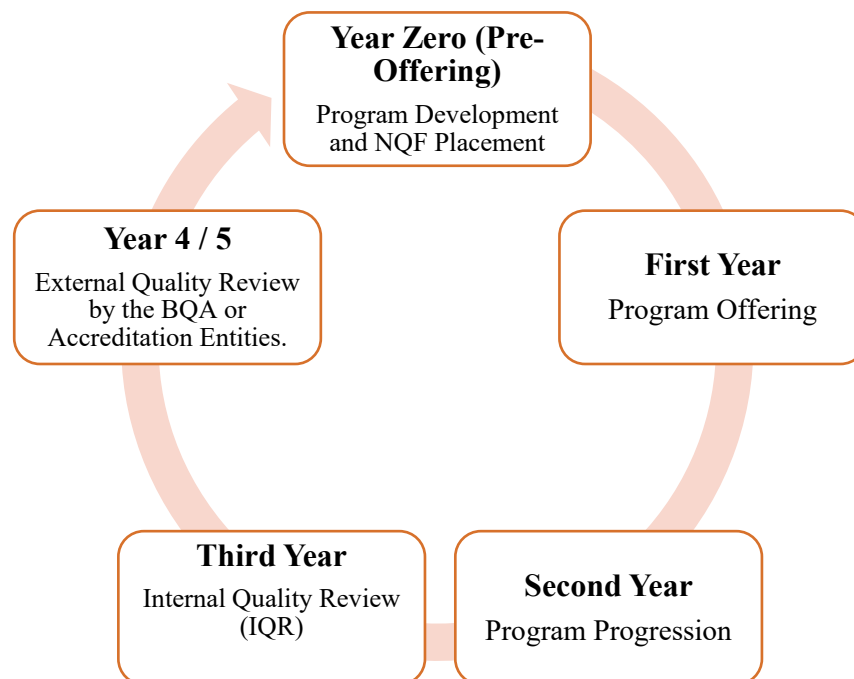


Figure 1: University of Bahrain Academic Program Lifecycle

6.2 Annual Programs Review

- 6.2.1 The academic departments, through the annual review of academic programs, assess the effectiveness of the programs using the quality assurance tools outlined in (Figure 2) of this policy and any other available evidence. This includes the possibility of making minor adjustments aimed at improving the program's quality, which do not require approval from the University Council, in accordance with the academic program offering and development regulation at the University of Bahrain. This review begins in the first year of the program's lifecycle.
- 6.2.2 During the annual program review, the evidence collected through various quality assurance tools is examined and audited to identify the program's strengths and weaknesses, as well as any other issues that need to be addressed.

Examples of quality assurance tools:

- a. Assessment of Learning Outcomes (according to the Student Outcomes Assessment Policy).
- b. Stakeholders' surveys (Senior Exit Survey, Alumni Survey, Employer Survey, Course Evaluation Surveys ...etc.)
- c. Meetings with the Program Advisory Committee and Students Advisory Committee.
- d. Internal and External Assessment Moderations.

- 6.2.3 During the annual program review, the current and future priorities of the program are discussed and approved based on the analysis of available evidence. This process is conducted through a series of discussions where the required data is presented, allowing for the identification of appropriate actions and the agreement on priorities to ensure program development and quality enhancement.
- 6.2.4 The annual program review process must be documented in the minutes of the department council meetings. Additionally, each department is required to prepare an annual self-evaluation report for each program, including review findings and recommendations for improvement.
- 6.2.5 The annual self-evaluation report for each program should focus on data from a single academic year, with a separate report prepared for each program. The report should also include a suitable improvement plan to address any shortcomings identified during the review process, ensuring continuous program improvement and quality enhancement.
- 6.2.6 After the annual self-evaluation report is discussed and approved by the department council, it must be submitted to the College Quality Assurance Office Director, who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of necessary program modifications. The College Quality Assurance Office Director must also submit all reports annually to the Competitiveness and Organizational Development Directorate.

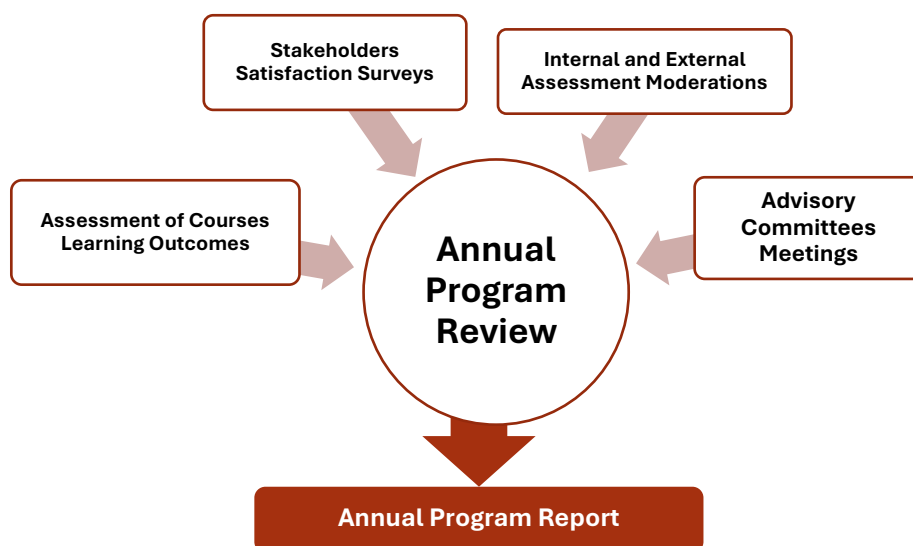


Figure 2: The tools used to write the program self-evaluation report.

6.3 Periodic Programs Review

- 6.3.1 The regulation for offering and developing academic programs and courses at the University of Bahrain specifies the timeframe required for periodic program reviews. This policy outlines the mechanism for conducting both annual and periodic reviews of academic programs at the University of Bahrain.
- 6.3.2 The periodic review of the program is carried out by the academic departments, under the supervision and follow-up of the Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation Office in the college, in accordance with the program's lifecycle as determined by the Competitiveness and Organizational Development Directorate.
- 6.3.3 The Quality assurance tools outlined in (Figure 3) of this policy are used during the periodic review process of academic programs. The review aims to assess the quality of the programs, their continued relevance, and the alignment with the job market requirements. Additionally, it includes making essential modifications and recommendations arising from annual reviews, internal quality reviews, external reviews, as well as recommendations from accreditation bodies, if applicable.

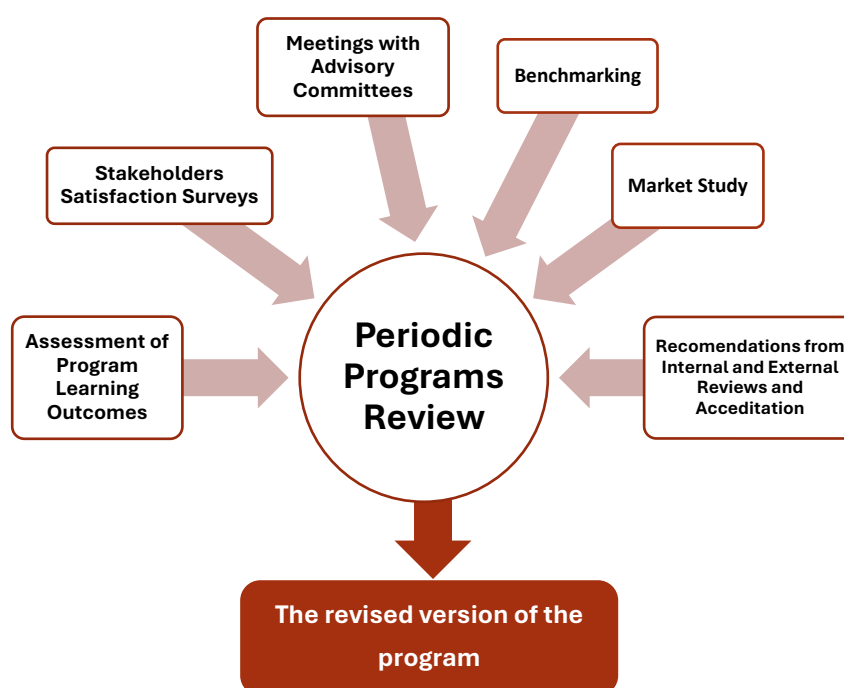


Figure 3: The tools used for program development

7 Contact Information

To provide further assistance in implementing this policy, or any related questions can be directed to the Competitiveness and Organizational Development Directorate:

Email: qaac@uob.edu.bh