

UNIVERSITY OF NICOSIA

INTERNAL REGULATIONS

CHAPTER THREE: POLICIES FOR PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

24-02-2023

INTERNAL REGULATIONS
CHAPTER THREE: POLICIES FOR PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3.0. POLICIES FOR PROGRAMMES OF STUDY	3
3.1. Policy for the Introduction of New Programmes	3
3.1.1 Preamble	3
3.1.2 Commitment to the Bologna Process Declaration	3
3.1.3 Faculty and Programme Coordinator	4
3.1.4 Guidelines for Introducing a New Programme	4
3.1.5 Criteria for Evaluating New Programmes	5
3.2. Policy for Ongoing Monitoring and Periodic Review Of Programmes	6
3.2.1 Preamble.....	6
3.2.2. The Internal Programme Evaluation Process (IPEP).....	7

3.0. POLICIES FOR PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

3.1. Policy for the Introduction of New Programmes

3.1.1. Preamble

The introduction of new programmes is pivotal to the growth of the institution. On the other hand, due to its impact on resources, it has to be carried out with utmost care and seriousness according to the process and guidelines specified in this document.

3.1.2. Commitment to the Bologna Process Declaration

The process and guidelines for the Introduction of New Programmes, are in line with the Bologna Process Declaration and more specifically with the Tuning Methodology in Developing and Evaluating Programmes. The University is committed to the implementation of the Bologna Process. The development, delivery, evaluation and quality assurance of University programmes should be in line with the guidelines of the Bologna Process. Thus, the following are very important and serve as points of reference for the design and development of a new programme:

- i. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area,
- ii. European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes,
- iii. Standards and Guidelines for On-line programmes,
- iv. National Laws and Policies for Quality Assurance and Accreditation,
- v. National Qualifications Framework,
- vi. European Qualifications Framework,
- vii. Tuning Methodology, and
- viii. Dublin Descriptors.

The following should guide the design and development of programmes of study:

- (a) Student Workload and Learning Outcomes should be an integral part of a programme and course curriculum and syllabi.
- (b) All course syllabi are to be prepared in the ECTS format and thus should take into consideration the aforementioned concepts.
- (c) The Programme Pathway should list all courses and the number of ECTS credits associated with each course.
- (d) A semester of study corresponds to 30 ECTS.
- (e) Each graduate of a programme is entitled to the Diploma Supplement (issued in English and free of charge).
- (f) A student-oriented approach is essential in the development and delivery of programmes.
- (g) All relevant stakeholders (faculty/staff, students, employers, professional bodies) should have an input in the programme development process.

3.1.3. Faculty and Programme Coordinator

The University will have to ensure that when a new programme is offered, there is an adequate number of faculty members with the right expertise to support the delivery of at least the first year of the programme. Each programme should be under the direction of a Programme Coordinator who normally must have the rank of at least Assistant Professor be specialized in the core area of the programme. Normally, no programme Co-ordinator can co-ordinate more than one programme.

3.1.4. Guidelines for Introducing a New Programme

- (a) Proposals for a new programme are accompanied by a supporting document/paper that includes:
 - The proposed name, aims and description of the programme
 - The academic rationale for the programme
 - A programme pathway
 - Evidence of market demand and the target market
 - Synergies with existing programmes
 - Impact on competitive stance
 - Need for additional resources
- (b) After an initial discussion with the relevant Department Head, Dean and faculty members, a proposed programme pathway is prepared.
- (c) A preliminary presentation of the programme is then made to the Head of Department and the Dean at the Curriculum Affairs Committee (CAC) of the Senate soliciting preliminary feedback especially with regards to overlapping and similarities with other existing programmes of the University, and to the extent that the programme adheres to the “Criteria for Evaluating New Programmes” (see next Section).
- (d) Feedback is also solicited from the Head of the Pedagogical Support Unit, the Head of the e-Learning Pedagogical Support Unit, the Registrar, the Director of Library, and the Director of Admissions.
- (e) A more detailed proposal is then prepared. The detailed proposal includes an academic part and a part dealing with the financial, infrastructure and other aspects of the new programme including but not limited to an improved pathway, the programme’s expected learning outcomes, existing and new courses, syllabi for new courses in ECTS format, addressing learning outcomes, as well as the human (faculty) and infrastructure (library, office space, labs, e-learning) resources available or needed for the new programme/courses.
- (f) The proposal is submitted to the Department, the School Council, the University Internal Quality Assurance Committee (UNIQAC) and finally to the Senate.
- (g) The Senate is the highest academic body that approves all new academic programmes. Once the Senate approves a programme proposal, the proposal, together with any comments, is submitted to the Council for final approval.
- (h) The Council reviews all Senate-approved proposal and takes one of the following actions:
 - Approves the immediate submission of a new programme.
 - Decides to postpone the submission of a new programme.

- Rejects the submission of a new programme.
- Refers the programme back to the Senate with questions or comments.

After a new programme is approved by the Council, the Dean of School is responsible to submit to the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs – VRAA (as the Chair of the UNIQAC) the fully completed documents needed for submitting the programme to the Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency.

3.1.5. Criteria for Evaluating New Programmes

In evaluating new academic programmes the following criteria should be taken into consideration:

- (a) Is the need and potential of the new programme clearly identified? Does it aim to satisfy any current and/or future professional and/or social demands? Will there be sustainable market demand for this programme in Cyprus, Europe and internationally?
- (b) Are the learning outcomes and competences of the programme and courses clearly identified? Are these adequately distributed within the various parts of the programme? Can they be measured and assessed? Are they comparable and compatible with the European reference points? Will they be recognized as of an equivalent standard within and outside Europe? Do they correspond to the level of the degree (cycle) foreseen in the European and National Qualification Framework?
- (c) What are the entry requirements for the programme? Are there any special requirements that are over and above the University's general entry requirements?
- (d) Is the programme academically challenging?
- (e) Are the teaching and learning methods clearly identified? How are the learning outcomes and competences addressed in general and in the ECTS syllabus for each course?
- (f) Is the student workload being considered when developing the ECTS syllabi and the content of the programme?
- (g) Are the Bologna Process guidelines and the recommended development process and formats being used in designing and developing the programme?
- (h) Is this programme utilizing existing courses from other programmes and does it link well with other programmes? Does it overlap with any other existing programme? How many of the courses are new courses?
- (i) Have relevant stakeholders (faculty/staff, students, employers, professional bodies) been considered/consulted?

- (j) Does the University have the appropriate faculty? Will it be possible to secure the necessary new faculty? Is there a faculty member at the rank of at least an Assistant Professor with the appropriate expertise, who will be the Coordinator of the programme? What will be the financial implications for hiring new faculty?
- (k) Does the programme utilize available resources? What new resources are needed? What are the financial implications for acquiring new resources?
- (l) Are there sufficient library resources to support the programme? If not, what will the cost be for acquiring the minimum resource?
- (m) Does this programme meet competitive pressures? Does it create a competitive niche ahead of others?
- (n) Are there any similar programmes offered through a Distance Learning mode?
- (o) Do the proposed e-learning programme comply with the currently used standards and guidelines for e-learning?

3.2. Policy for Ongoing Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes

3.2.1. Preamble

Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes are pivotal to ensure that they achieve the objectives that were set, and respond to the needs of students and society, leading to continuous improvement of the programme.

Regular monitoring, review, and revision of study programmes aim to ensure that the provision remains appropriate and create a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

The evaluation should be spherical and include: the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline thus ensuring that the programme is up to date; the changing needs of society; the students' workload, progression and completion; the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students; the student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme; the learning environment and support services and their fitness for purpose for the programme. (ESG, 2015).

Programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders and according to the detailed IPEP process described below in 3.2.2.

Revised programme specifications have to be approved by all academic bodies at the University (Department, School and Senate), and those changes are communicated to the National Agency for Quality Assurance (CyQAA).

3.2.2. The Internal Programme Evaluation Process (IPEP)

The Internal Programme Evaluation Process (IPEP) is conducted in the following steps (1-10):

1. **18 months post accreditation (42 months to re-accreditation):** IPEP is initiated 1.5 years (18 months) after the accreditation of a programme by the Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (DIPAE). It is a 2-year process and is completed 1.5 years (18 months) before the 5-year DIPAE accreditation of the program expires, which is within the timeframe for submitting the programme for re-accreditation..
2. **19 months post accreditation i.e. 1 month after Step 1 (41 months to re-accreditation):** The Department to which the programme belongs will appoint the Internal Team of Reviewers (ITR) and the External Team of Reviewers (ETR):
 - ITR**
 - 2 senior TRF from the programme (excluding the co-ordinator); one is appointed as chair
 - 1 student from the programme
 - ETR**
 - 1 faculty member from another University who is an expert in the programme area
 - 1 industry expert (where applicable)
3. **20 months post accreditation i.e. 1 month after Step 2 (40 months to re-accreditation):** Each Programme coordinator will complete DIPAE's relevant form(s) (those submitted for programme accreditation) and will send them to ITR and ETR.
4. **24 months post accreditation i.e. 4 months after Step 3 (36 months to re-accreditation):**
 - (a) ITR will solicit feedback for the programme from faculty, students, alumni and industry experts and will examine relevant documents, course syllabi, learning and assessment material, human and physical infrastructure, etc.
 - (b) Each member of ETR will evaluate independently the programme and complete DIPAE's External Programme Evaluation form(s) and send it/them to the chair of ITR.
5. **26 months post accreditation i.e. 2 months after Step 4 (34 months to re-accreditation):** ITR will evaluate the programme and complete DIPAE's External Programme Evaluation form(s) incorporating and clearly indicating ETR's comments/evaluation and send the form(s) to the Programme coordinator
6. **30 months post accreditation i.e. 4 months after Step 5 (30 months to re-accreditation):** The Programme coordinator will prepare a report based on the ITR's form(s) and present it to the Department Council and the Dean.
7. **36 months post accreditation i.e. 6 months after Step 6 (24 months to re-accreditation):**
 - (a) Changes to the programme curriculum, requested budget for the programme, hiring (if any) of new faculty members will take place, subject to the approval of the Department, School, Senate and Council.
 - (b) The programme coordinator will amend DIPAE's relevant form(s) (completed as per point 3), under the instructions/in consultation with the Head of Department/Dean and submit it/them to the University Internal Quality Assurance Committee (UIQAC).
8. **38 months post accreditation i.e. 2 months after Step 7 (22 months to re-accreditation):** UIQAC will provide feedback to the programme coordinator.

9. **41 months post accreditation i.e. 3 months after Step 8 (19 months to re-accreditation):**
The programme coordinator will prepare the final form(s) for submission to DIPAE.
10. **42 months post accreditation i.e. 1 month after Step 9 (18 months to re-accreditation):**
Submission of the final forms to DIPAE.