Quality Manual

Department of Quality Assurance and Accreditation

Document version: 2.0

Contents

1 Introduction:

Al Yamamah University (YU) is strongly committed to continuous improvement through effective quality management, in order to provide high-quality learning, research and community services. At YU, quality assurance processes are practiced at the department, college and institutional levels. Furthermore, the University is committed to a policy of continuous quality assurance leading to quality improvement.

This means robust, accurate and ongoing self-assessment which leads to real improvement in the quality of provision and the learner's experience and success. In addition, YU strongly believes that effective evaluation requires clear, measurable goals, and accurate data to assess progress toward those goals. This has been, and continues to be, a major focus at YU.

YU performance measures are based on internal and external assessment. Their aim is to enhance the quality of students' learning experience, and to identify areas for improvement and put in place actions plans to ensure continuous improvement. The University is utilizing a variety of direct and indirect assessment tools at the courses, programs and institutional levels. The direct assessment tools include the course learning outcomes assessment, the course reports and program reports that are prepared every semester following the templates and recommendations of the National Center for Academic Accreditation and Evaluation (NCAAA). The indirect assessment includes a set of stakeholders' surveys, including the Student Evaluation Survey, the Employers Survey, the Alumni Survey, Course Evaluation Surveys, Program Evaluation Survey, etc. Furthermore, YU conducts regular benchmarking with other higher education institutions, to identify their comparative strengths and weaknesses, and identify areas of improvement.

The Quality management system in Yu is deployed based on YU's strategic Plan, YU's policies and YU's procedures related to quality assurance.

Al Yamamah University (YU) is committed to continuous quality improvement in all educational programs and supportive services. YU has recognized the need for excellence in every aspect of its operations and the requirement to make direct efforts to identify and meet stakeholders' needs. The commitment of senior management, represented by the Al Yamamah University Board of Trustees, the University President, the University Council, and the Vice Presidents, is an essential support for effective planning and implementation of quality.

YU commitment to quality is also demonstrated through an ambitious plan to seek academic accreditations for all its programs from the most reputable academic accreditation agencies.

This University Quality Handbook serves as a comprehensive guide to ensure and enhance the quality of education services within the university. Its main goal is to establish a culture of continuous improvement, compliance with accreditation standards, and alignment with the university's mission and strategic goals.

2 Institutional Commitment to Quality

Al Yamamah University (YU) is committed to excellence in Education, and to the development of high-quality human resources that are capable of leading Saudi business and industry in all sectors of the economy. To achieve this objective YU established a quality assurance system that consists of an integrated set of processes and activities that collectively contribute to achieving the continuous development of university programs and improving the quality and the level of their graduates. Each academic and administrative department in YU contributes to this effort in their area of specialty.

The Quality Assurance (QA) goals are:

1. Maintaining Academic Standards: Ensuring that academic programs, courses, and teaching methodologies meet established quality benchmarks and comply with national and international accreditation standards.
2. Assessment and Evaluation: Developing assessment tools and methodologies to evaluate student learning outcomes, Program learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness. This also includes establishment, periodic measurement, and benchmarking of institutional and programs key performance indicators (KPIs).
3. Providing workshops for faculty members, especially the new faculty, on the university's quality assurance system and the outcome measurement processes.
4. Continuous Improvement: Facilitating continuous improvement processes across academic and administrative units based on stakeholders' feedback, assessment results, and best practices in higher education.
5. Accreditation Compliance: Ensuring that Al Yamamah University adheres to accreditation requirements and standards set by national and international accrediting bodies.
6. Quality Control in Curriculum Development: Ensure the periodic reviewing and updating curricula to reflect changes in academic disciplines, industry trends, and societal needs while maintaining quality and relevance.
7. Student Support Services: Monitoring and enhancing support services such as advising, counselling, tutoring, and career services to promote student success and retention.
8. Data Management and Analysis: Collecting, analysing, and interpreting data related to student enrolment, retention, graduation rates, and other key performance indicators to inform decision-making and improve institutional effectiveness.
9. Stakeholder Engagement: Collaborating with internal and external stakeholders, including faculty, students, administrators, alumni, employers, and community

members, to solicit feedback and foster a culture of transparency and accountability.

10. Promoting Best Practices: Disseminating best practices in teaching, learning, assessment, and institutional management to foster innovation and excellence throughout the university.

By pursuing these goals, the Quality Assurance department plays a crucial role in ensuring that the university maintains its commitment to academic excellence, student success, and institutional integrity.

3 University Vision, Mission, and Values

3.1 Vision Statement

Al Yamamah University vision is:

"To be the first choice for public and private institutions to attract graduates in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

3.2 Mission Statement

Al Yamamah University Mission statement is:

"Providing students with the applied skills necessary for the labor market by instilling leadership skills, self-learning, critical thinking within an attractive educational and research environment under the supervision of professional academic staff and professional partnerships according to the highest standards."

3.3 University Values

- Promote National Values
- Excellence in Performance
- Institutional Sustainability
- Graduate Competitiveness
- Credibility
- Active Participation

3.4 Graduate Attributes:

Graduate attributes, also known as graduate qualities or capabilities, refer to the qualities, skills, knowledge, and dispositions that students are expected to develop by the time they complete their higher education programs. These attributes are intended to prepare graduates for success in their careers, further studies, and contributions to society. Graduate attributes typically reflect the broader goals and values of higher education institutions.

These attributes are expected to constitute the common characteristics of all YU graduates in all majors. To achieve this goal, all academic programs should ensure that their adopted Program Learning Outcomes are consistent with the program's mission, aligned with the specialized academic standards and with these institutional graduate attributes.

The eleven graduates' attributes cover three areas:

The first area: knowledge and understanding:

1. **Depth of Specialized Knowledge**: The possession of in-depth understanding, expertise, and proficiency in a specific field of study or profession.

The second area: skills:

2. **Critical Thinking Skills**: The ability to analyze information, evaluate arguments, and make reasoned decisions.
3. **Effective Communication**: Strong verbal and written communication skills to express ideas clearly and concisely.
4. **Research skills and lifelong learning**: The capability to gather, evaluate, and use information from various sources, and stay updated in their field of study or profession.
4. **Problem-Solving Abilities**: The capacity to identify, analyze, and solve complex problems using logical and creative approaches.
5. **Technology Proficiency**: Proficiency in using technology and adapting to new tools and platforms related to discipline.
6. **Entrepreneurship:** the ability to identify and pursue innovative opportunities, combining creativity, risk-taking, and adaptability to contribute to economic growth.
7. **Teamwork and Collaboration**: The skill to work effectively in a team and lead projects, understanding and respecting diverse perspectives.

The third area: values, independence, and responsibility:

8. **Ethical and Social Responsibility**: A strong sense of ethical behavior and social responsibility, understanding the impact of decisions on society.
9. **Cultural Awareness**: Sensitivity and awareness of cultural differences, fostering inclusivity and understanding, while respecting and valuing the national identity.
10. **Adaptability and Resilience**: Flexibility and openness to change, as well as the ability to learn and adapt in diverse situations and persevere in the face of challenges.
11. **Self-Motivation and Initiative**: The drive to take initiative, set goals, and work independently toward achieving them.

4 YU's Quality Assurance Management

The system of quality assurance and management is under the direct supervision of the university senior management. Quality assurance processes are applicable to all departments within Al Yamamah University and are an essential component of regular management and planning procedures. These processes primarily emphasize outcome-based performance indicators. The primary stakeholders, including the university management, the faculty members, the administrative employees, and students, are dedicated to enhancing their performance and regularly assess their progress through multiple levels of evaluation using direct and indirect assessment methods. Evaluation of quality is conducted by analysing data in accordance with a predetermined set of key performance indicators and external benchmarks. The following structures compose the basis of the University's quality management structure:

4.1 Quality Assurance Council

To ensure the highest commitment and support for quality assurance, Al Yamamah University established a Quality Assurance Council under the chairmanship of the university president. The deans and major actors in Quality Assurance within the colleges and the programs are members of this council. This council meets weekly to discuss all major topics related to quality assurance and accreditation and make informed decisions. It supervises the implementation of the quality assurance policies, reviews the stakeholders survey reports, the KPI reports at takes the appropriate decisions and sets action plans whenever it is needed. The council also supervises the progress of the accreditation at institutional and program levels.

4.2 The department of quality assurance and accreditation (DQAA)

The department of quality assurance and accreditation (DQAA) is directly related to the university president. This strong affiliation offers critical assistance to the Department of Quality Assurance and Accreditation and ensures that senior management is consistently updated on the application of best practices in the university.

The QAA has the responsibility to supervise and manage the implementation of the Quality policies and procedures and to coordinate support for individuals overseeing the execution of quality assurance procedures within their respective departments (e.g., academic programs, colleges, deanships). To this end, quality assurance committees should be appointed in each college and quality coordinators assigned for each academic program.

The QAA department is in charge of:

- Overseeing the implementation of the quality policies and procedures in all the academic programs.

- Ensuring the continuous compliance with the requirements of national and international accreditation.
- Providing support to academic programs and faculty members to perform their duties and promoting the culture of Quality.
- Providing KPIs and data related to quality assurance reports to the different levels of YU management.

4.3 Quality Committees in the colleges

Every college should establish a quality assurance committee. The committee is appointed by the dean. The committee has the responsibility to verify and ensure the Quality policies and procedures requirements are satisfied within their area of accountability. This includes supervising the implementation of the QA processes in the college, reviewing the related reports such as stakeholders survey results, program annual reports. In case any areas of improvement are identifies, the committee should propose corrective actions, set an action plan and submit it the college council for approval. The committee is also responsible for the implementation of the action plans and providing regular reports to the college council.

4.4 Quality Coordinators in the programs

The quality coordinator in every program is the first responsible for the implementation of quality assurance policies and procedures in the academic program. He should ensure the following tasks:

- Provide support to faculty members in preparing their reports related to quality assurance.
- Ensure that the program's course folders are submitted on time.
- Check the program's course reports for completion and accuracy and provide feedback to the colleagues and to the department chair.
- Collect KPIs and useful data about the programs.
- Prepare the Program Learning Outcomes Attainment measurement at least once a year.
- Prepare the Annual Program Report and submit it for approval at a department council.

5 Program Development's Mechanism, Policy, and procedure

5.1 Introduction

The University's procedures for the design and approval of new programs applied to assure that MOE, NQF and NCAAA academic standards are implemented and maintained. The University's procedure will ensure that consideration is given to the availability of resources, the coherence and academic standard of constituent courses, and the standard and appropriateness of awards offered based on NQF and MOE regulation once completion of the proposed program. This procedure aims to ensure that there is careful consideration of the relevance of programs for potential students, compatibility with other programs offered by YU. All new programs in YU must be aligned with the mission of the University and the college in terms of content, design and expected outcomes and within the requirements of NQF. The planning for the development of a new program is based on the needs of the community and a decision from the university council.

5.2 Program Development Procedure

5.2.1 Establishment of a Program Development Committee

For every proposed new program, a Team Leader will be appointed by the Dean or the Vice President if the program will be offered in new college.

The Vice President/ Dean will consider the proposal for a new program within the college to regulate its viability and whether it is in line with the University's mission and University's Strategic Plan. This needs to be undertaken on advice of the Dean assisted by the Team Leader. Sufficient evidences, as a Report, must be submitted to the Vice President for consideration. The report should include a brief discussion of the rationale for the proposed program, the structure of the proposed program, a Business Plan, and information on market research and expected enrolment numbers. If the Vice President approves the new program proposal, the Dean then initiates the formal planning process for a new program and a team will be established as "New Program Development Committee."

The New Program Development Committee will consist of:

- the Team Leader as Chair:
- at least one external member, as an employer representative.
- at least one member of Curriculum Committee from the College.
- one person from each college which may be involved in the program,
- one person from University Administrative Staff.

5.2.2 Phases of the program development and approval

1. The Team Leader recommends planning timetable for the planning process and the membership of the New Program Development Committee to the Dean/ Vice President.

2. A first draft of the program proposal, together with proof of the Vice President's approval for the planning process must be submitted to the Department & College Council Meeting for discussion. The draft proposal must include the following
   2.1. Environmental scanning for the program, cost analyses and need analyses are main components for the environmental scanning.
   2.2. Sufficient evidences that the Program's mission is aligned with University's mission and college's mission.

3. The College Curriculum committee will receive the proposal after the recommendation from college council; the curriculum committee will investigate the appropriateness of the Program Objectives and the student learning outcomes. The Curriculum Committee will assist the New Program Development Team in the development of the program objectives, graduate profile, and teaching methods.

4. The new Program Development Team will prepare program specifications along with the proposal and the Vice President's approval to be sent to external university for review and recommendation.

5. If the proposed program is deemed unacceptable based on the Reviewer's Report and Internal Responses from the Department/ College and Dean or the Vice President, the proposal either returns to the Team Leader for changes or does not move forward.

6. The final program proposal, including the completed Program Specification, Program Documentation, course description and report from the external university together with any supporting documentation, will be submitted to the Department Council, then College Council presented by the Dean, and then Vice President for approval before submitting to University Council for Approval.

7. After Approval from University Council, the proposal along with all supporting documents stated above, will be submitted to the Board of Trustee (BoT)

8. Upon the approval from BOT, the proposal will be sent to MOE for the Final approval.

5.2.3 program planning process and documentation.

The following matters must be considered as part of the program planning process and included in the program documentation which is submitted as part of any program proposal.

- The rationale for the new program and its relationship to the College and University Strategic Plan.
- The requirements of NQF and NCAAA.
- Faculty Members Recruitment plan and other administrative staff for the new program.
- Evaluation of the program by external university, industry and/or professional body representatives.
- Details of the attributes of the graduates of the program.
- How the courses included in the program contribute to the program's objectives.
- The structure of the program including the sequence of courses, Degree or Honors, majors, concentrations, tracks, core courses, and elective courses. The mode(s) of delivery of the program. If it is not on the main campus, campuses and locations where the program will be offered.
- The list of adopted KPIs and their initial target values.
- Any proposed articulation and credit transfer arrangements. The costs involved in mounting and running the program (including a Business Plan)
- Whether the program and courses can be supported within the existing learning resources, library and ITD budgets or the colleges are intending to contribute funding.
- Entry requirements including any special selection procedures and how students with special needs will be accommodated

5.3 Mechanism to develop and approve a new program

5.3.1 Preliminary Preparation

Scanning and benchmarking with other local and international universities.

The components of the preliminary reports are:

1- Program title and code
2- Mission and Vision of the program
3- Award granted on completion of the program
4- Program Objectives
5- Development of Learning Outcomes in Domains of Learning
6- Graduate Characteristics
7- Total credit hours needed for completion of the program
8- Admission Requirements for the program

5.3.2 Identifying Job Market and Community needs

1- Identify the target job market.

2- Surveying the employer to explore the characteristics of the graduates.

3- Student Characteristics based on NQF.

4- Identify two benchmark program from an accredited university.

5.3.3 Information Analyses

1- Design Course learning outcomes matrix based on NQF.

2- Prepare Program outcomes matrix.

5.3.4 Final Design of the Study Plan

1- Prepare the study plan for the program.

2- Identify courses and field experience required to develop the student' skills.

3- Prepare Program Specifications based on NCAAA's template including field experience specification and PLO target values.

4- Prepare Course Specifications including field experience and assign target values to each CLO.

5- Final review by the department/ program

6- Identify the set of KPIs that will be used to measure the program's performance and assign a first target value for each KPI.

7- Review of the Study plan, Program Specification, and course Specifications by external assessor.

8- Approval of the study plan by the Department/ program after the recommendations received from the external assessor.

5.3.5 Administration and Approval Arrangements

1- Completing all templates and forms using NCAAA form and templates.

2- A written approval from the department/ program.

3- Review Report by the Curriculum Committee and the Quality Committee in the College.

4- Approval from the College Council.

5- Approval from the department of Quality Assurance and Accreditation.

6- Approval from University Council

5.3.6 Program assessment.

The program will be continuously assessed and on annual basis using the followings:

1- Annual Program Report.

2- Course Reports.

3- Field Experience Reports.

4- Course Evaluation Surveys, Program Evaluation Surveys, Student Experience Evaluation Surveys, Alumni Surveys and Employer Surveys.

5- Internal and external reviewers.

6- Any assessment occurred in the program like international or local accreditation.
7- Every five years, the program will be reviewed as part of program accreditation.

6 Quality Assurance for Academic Programs:

6.1 Introduction

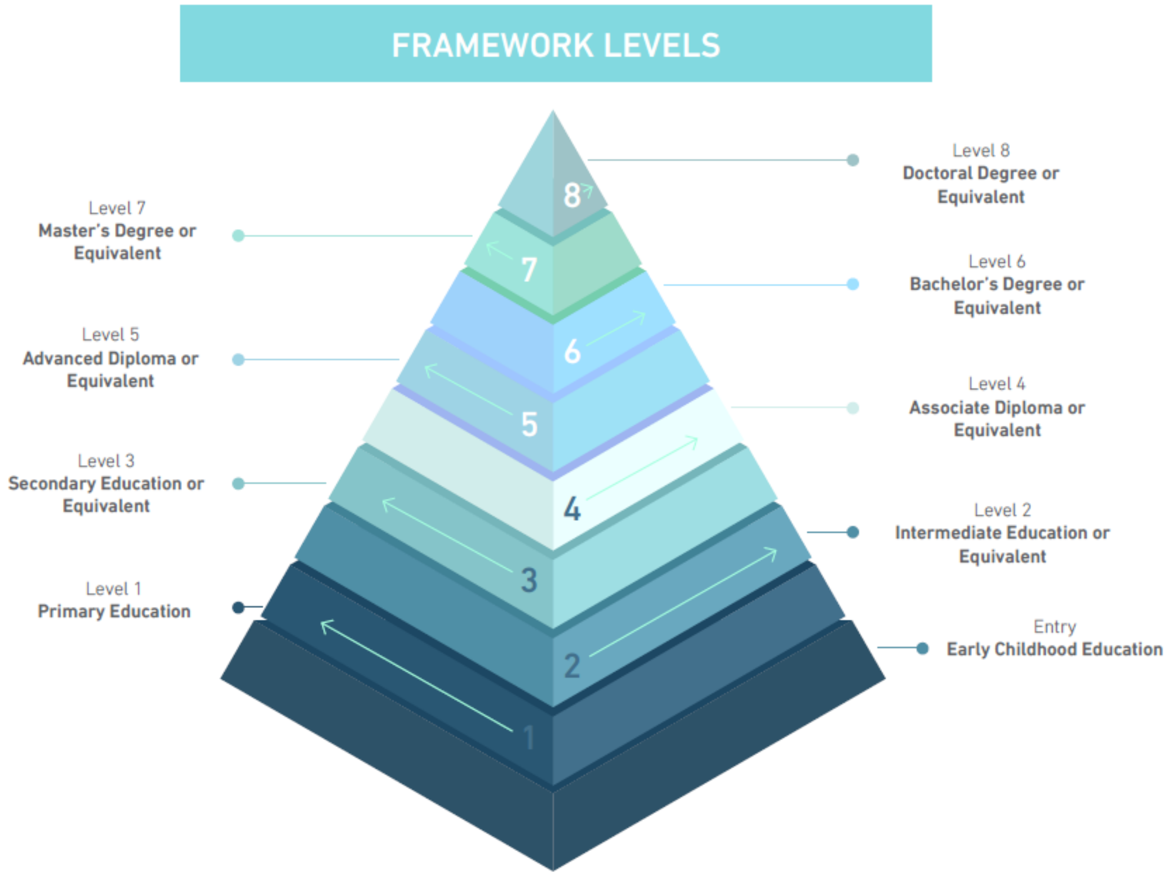
The Quality Assurance processes at YU are in full compliance with the National Qualification Framework (NQF) and the standards by the NCAAA. YU also adopts all the documentation templates recommended by the NCAAA.

Al Yamamah university

6.2 Compliance with the National Qualification Framework (NQF-KSA)

The NQF-KSA constitutes a comprehensive and uniform structure for building, organizing, and categorizing qualifications into levels based on learning outcomes.

The NQF-KSA defines the levels as tiered vertical pathways categorized according to the breadth and depth of learning domains and their accumulation in educational programs.



All the programs at YU are in level 6 (bachelor's degree) or level 7 (Master's degree). As required by the framework, all bachelor's programs in YU must have a minimum of (120) credit hours, that can be achieved after spending (3-4) full-time academic years. All the master's degrees must have a minimum of (24) credit hours (accredited units) of graduate courses in addition to submitting a thesis or minimum of (30) credit hours (accredited units) of graduate courses including submitting a research graduation project.

All academic programs should be aligned with the NQF definitions of the learning domains, the learning outcomes and the expected level of proficiency adapted for each level.

6.3 Outcome-based academic system

Al Yamamah University has adopted an outcome-based learning system at all levels. This approach focuses on defining specific learning outcomes or objectives that students should achieve by the end of a course or program. Instead of emphasizing content coverage or instructional activities, YU places greater emphasis on what students are expected to know, understand, and be able to do as a result of their learning experiences.

The key components and principles of academic system in YU are:

1. Clear Learning Outcomes: Learning outcomes are clearly defined statements that describe the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes that students are expected to demonstrate upon completion of a course or program. These outcomes are typically written in observable and measurable terms to facilitate assessment.

2. Alignment: The curriculum, teaching methods, learning activities, and assessments are all aligned with the stated learning outcomes. This ensures that everything in the educational process is designed to help students achieve the desired outcomes.

3. Focus on Mastery: YU emphasizes mastery of learning outcomes rather than simply covering content. Students are expected to achieve a deep understanding and proficiency in the subject matter rather than merely memorizing facts.

4. Student-Centered Approach: YU shifts the focus from teaching to learning, placing students at the center of the educational process. It recognizes that students have diverse learning needs and abilities and encourages instructors to adopt flexible teaching strategies to support student success.

5. Assessment for Learning: Assessment is an integral part of YU academic system and is used to gauge students' progress toward achieving the learning outcomes. Assessment methods may include quizzes, exams, projects, presentations, portfolios, and performance-based assessments. Feedback from assessments is used to guide instruction and support student learning.

6. Continuous Improvement: YU academic system encourages continuous reflection and improvement of teaching practices and curriculum design based on evidence of student learning. This iterative process helps faculty members refine their approaches to better support student success.

7. Transparency and Accountability: YU promotes transparency by clearly communicating learning outcomes, expectations, and assessment criteria to students. It also holds instructors accountable for ensuring that students have the opportunity to achieve the stated outcomes.

8. Lifelong Learning Skills: OBE aims to develop students' lifelong learning skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and collaboration, which are essential for success in academic, professional, and personal contexts.

9. Feedback from stakeholders: YU incorporates feedback from stakeholders into the assessment process. Stakeholders such as students, faculty, staff, employers and alumni, are regularly surveyed to provide valuable insights into various aspects of the educational experience and the outcomes achieved. The analysis of the surveys' results, provides YU with valuable insights into the effectiveness of the programs, identify areas for improvement, and enables makeing evidence-based decisions to enhance the quality of education and better meet the needs of students and other stakeholders.

YU's outcome-based academic system provides a structured framework for designing, delivering, and assessing education that focuses on student learning and achievement of clearly defined outcomes. It emphasizes alignment, mastery, student-centeredness, and continuous improvement to support student success and prepare learners for future challenges.

This system is in compliance with NCAAA teaching and learning standards and it is implemented through the programs and courses specification documents and the course and program reports that are prepared periodically, as described in the next section.

6.4 Compliance with NCAAA teaching and learning standards.

The NCAAA Teaching and Learning standard, and criteria and recommendation were adopted as the foundation of the quality assurance for academic programs at YU. It follows the Plan-Do-Check Act cycle to ensure continuous improvement at every level.

All programs must have a specification document that defines all the aspects of the program, and a report shall be prepared by the end of the year to evaluate the program's performance through several performance indicators.

Also, all courses must have a specification document that describes the course contents, teaching strategies, teaching material, assessment methods and the outcomes that should be achieved through the course.

At the end of every semester, the course instructor must prepare a course report to assess the course results. In addition to the statistics about the student's grade distribution and the details of the course learning outcome assessment obtained through the students' exams and other assessment activities and the students' perception of learning outcome attainment. The course report should contain an assessment of the teaching and learning in the course, identify the strength areas and an action plan to deal with the areas that require improvement.

Every year the program should prepare the Annual Program Report using the latest NCAAA template. This report summarizes the program activities and achievements during the year, especially the achieved level of the Program Learning Outcomes, and any improvement suggestions to be implemented the following year.

Every five-years cycle, the programs should undergo a deep review to ensure they are still in line with the needs of the stakeholders and the evolution in the field of study. The review is based on the achievement during the previous years, the external stakeholders feedback, benchmarking with similar academic programs and the guidelines of the major accreditation organisms.

6.4.1 Program Specifications

The primary purpose of the program specification is to support the planning, monitoring and improvement of the program by those responsible for its delivery. It should include sufficient information to demonstrate that the program will meet the requirements of the Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs, the National Qualifications Framework, and any specific requirements related to professional accreditation in the field of study concerned. In addition to guiding those teaching in the program, the program specification is a key reference for accreditation processes.

Matters to be included in a program specification are set out in detail in the program specification template together with brief guidelines for completing the template. The specification should include general descriptive information about the program, the external environment affecting it, the learning outcomes expected of students and the approach to teaching and student assessment strategies to develop those learning outcomes in different domains of learning. The emphasis in the approach taken is on the program being an integrated package of learning experiences provided through the sequence of the offered courses. The program specification must include plans for ongoing evaluation of its effectiveness and planning processes for improvement.

The program specification should also demonstrate how does the sequence of courses in the curriculum contribute collectively to the achievement of the program learning outcomes by the program graduates.

6.4.1.1 Learning Domains:

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF), defines the learning domains as the understanding, the skills, and the values, autonomy and responsibility learners are expected to acquire at a specific qualification level resulting in specific learning outcomes.

6.4.1.1.1 Knowledge and Understanding:

This covers the knowledge and understanding of a leaner in the areas of learning,

work, or profession. This includes:

- Extensive deep knowledge, understanding of facts, concepts, principles, theories, processes, and procedures provided for in the area of learning, work, or profession.
- Depth of knowledge which can be general or specialized.
- Breadth of knowledge which can range from a single topic to multi-disciplinary areas of knowledge.
- Kinds of knowledge which range from concrete to abstract, segmented to cumulative.
- Complexity of knowledge which refers to a combination of kinds, depth, and breadth of knowledge.

6.4.1.1.2 Skills:

What a graduate can do in the field of study, work, or profession. Skills are described in terms of the kinds and complexity of skills and include:

- Cognitive skills: Involving the application of knowledge and conceptual understanding of concepts, principles, and theories; and the use of critical thinking, problem-solving skills, inquiry, and creativity.

- Practical and physical skills: Involving motor skills and manual dexterity, and the use of appropriate materials, devices, and tools, along with mastering motor and manual skills.

- Communication and information technology skills: Involving written, verbal, and non-verbal communication, numeracy skills, and the use and production of information and communication technology.

6.4.1.1.3 Values, Autonomy, and Responsibility:

Terms of principles and standards that are oriented towards success in the areas of life, work, or profession. They include:

- Academic and professional values and ethics.
- Continued self-learning and autonomy.
- Teamwork and responsibility.

6.4.1.2 Program Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes are the statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate at the end of a period of learning, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for university programs refer to the specific knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies that students are expected to acquire and demonstrate upon successful completion of their academic programs. These outcomes are designed to ensure that graduates are well-prepared for professional practice, further education, and lifelong learning. They encompass a range of domains including critical thinking, communication, problem-solving, ethical reasoning, and technical proficiency within the discipline. PLOs are aligned with the university's mission and goals, and they serve as a benchmark for assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum and instructional methods.

The Saudi National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) outlines Program Learning Outcomes as the core achievements that students must attain by the end of their academic programs. These outcomes are framed to align with national standards and the needs of the Saudi labor market. They include a balanced mix of cognitive skills, interpersonal skills, psychomotor skills, and affective domain outcomes. The PLOs should be aligned with the institution's graduates' attributes.

The NCAAA emphasizes the importance of alignment with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), ensuring that PLOs promote excellence in education, foster innovation, and support the national development goals. The outcomes also focus on the development of Islamic values, cultural awareness, and the ability to contribute positively to society.

The attainment of Learning outcomes can be measured using evaluation tools consistent with the associated level.

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) defines 8 levels of learning. The Bachelor degree is level 6 and the master degree is level 7. It suggests different levels of complexity for the learning domains and the learning outcomes for each learning level. The suggested outcomes should be adapted to the program's domain.

6.4.1.2.1 Learning Outcomes for Level 6: Bachelor's Degree or Equivalent

6.4.1.2.1.1 Knowledge and Understanding Skills

The graduate at this level will have:

1- Broad in-depth integrated body of knowledge and comprehension of the underlying theories, principles, and concepts in one or more disciplines or field of work,

2- In-depth knowledge and comprehension of processes, materials, techniques, practices, conventions, and/or terminology,

3- A broad range of specialized knowledge and understanding informed by current developments of a discipline, profession, or field of work,

4- Knowledge and comprehension of research and inquiry methodologies.

6.4.1.2.1.2 Skills

The graduate at this level will have a broad range of advanced cognitive, practical and physical, and communication and ICT skills to:

1- Cognitive Skills

- Apply integrated theories, principles, and concepts in various contexts, related to a discipline, profession, or field of work,
- Solve problems in various complex contexts in one or more disciplines or fields of work,
- Use critical thinking and develop creative solutions to current issues and problems, in various complex contexts, in a discipline, profession or field of work,
- Conduct inquiries, investigations, and research for complex issues and problems

2- Practical and Physical Skills

- Use and adapt advanced processes, techniques, tools, instruments, and/or materials in dealing with various complex practical activities,
- Carry out various complex practical tasks and procedures related to a discipline, professional practice, or field of work.

3- Communication and ICT Skills

- Communicate effectively to demonstrate theoretical knowledge comprehension and specialized transfer of knowledge, skills, and complex ideas to a variety of audiences,
- Use mathematical operations and quantitative methods to process data and information in various complex contexts, related to a discipline or field of work,
- Select, use, and adapt various standard and specialized digital technological and ICT tools and applications to process and analyze data and information to support and enhance research and/or projects.

6.4.1.2.1.3 Values, Autonomy and Responsibility

The graduate at this level, within various complex contexts, will:

- **Values and Ethics**
- Demonstrate commitment to professional and academic values, standards, and ethical codes of conduct, and represent responsible citizenship and coexistence with others
- **Autonomy and Responsibility**
- Effectively plan for and achieve academic and/or professional self-development, assess own learning and performance, and autonomously make decisions regarding self-development and/or tasks based on convincing evidences.
- Autonomously and professionally manage tasks and activities related to the discipline and/or work,
- Collaborate responsibly and constructively on leading diverse teams to perform a wide range of tasks while playing a major role in planning and evaluating joint work,
- Actively participate in advancing the discipline and society.

6.4.1.2.2 Learning Outcomes for Level 7: Master's Degree or Equivalent

6.4.1.2.2.1 Knowledge and Understanding Skills

The graduate at this level will have:

- In depth and specialized body of knowledge and understanding covering theories, principles, and concepts in main areas of a discipline, profession, or field of work,
- Critical knowledge and understanding of processes, materials, techniques, practices, conventions, and/or terminology relevant to a certain discipline, profession, or field of work,
- Advanced knowledge and understanding of recent developments in one or more disciplines, areas of practice, or professions,
- Advanced knowledge and understanding of a range of established and specialized research and/or inquiry techniques of in a discipline, profession, or field of work.

6.4.1.2.2.2 Skills

Cognitive, practical and physical, and communication and ICT skills to:

– **Cognitive Skills:**

- Apply specialized theories, principles, and concepts in advanced contexts in a discipline, profession, or field of work,
- Solve problems in complex and advanced contexts in a discipline, profession, or field of work,
- Critically assess, review, and reflect on key concepts, principles, and theories; and provide creative solutions to current issues and problems in complex and advanced contexts, in a discipline, profession, or field of work,

- Conduct advanced research or professional projects using specialized research and enquiry methodologies in a discipline, profession, or field of work.

– **Practical and Physical Skills**

- Use advanced and specialized processes, techniques, tools, instruments, and/or materials to deal with complex and advanced practical activities,
- Carry out complex and advanced practical tasks and procedures in specialized areas related to a discipline, professional practice, or field of work.

– **Communication and ICT Skills**

- Communicate in various forms to disseminate knowledge, skills, research results, and innovations related to a discipline or filed of work to specialist and non-specialist audiences,
- Process data and information quantitatively and/or qualitatively in complex and advanced contexts related to a discipline, professional practice, or field of work,
- Select, use, and adapt advanced digital technological and ICT tools and applications to process and analyze a variety of data and information sets to support and advance leading research and/or projects related to a discipline, professional practice, or field of work.

6.4.1.2.2.3 Values, Autonomy and Responsibility

The graduate at this level, within complex and advanced contexts, will:

– **Values and Ethics**

- Demonstrate integrity and professional and academic values when dealing with various issues.

– **Autonomy and Responsibility**

- Initiate professional planning for learning and/or work, professional development, monitor learning and performance, and participate in academic and/or professional strategic decisions, with high autonomy,
- Effectively manage specialized tasks and activities in a discipline, work, or field of practice with high autonomy,
- Effectively collaborate and participate in research or professional projects or groups, undertake leadership roles, and take high responsibility of the work,
- Contribute to the fostering community quality life.

6.4.1.3 Mapping of courses to PLOs

In the course specification document, align the program learning outcomes with program courses, according to the following desired levels of performance (I = Introduced, P = Practiced and M = Mastered), to produce the Program learning Outcomes Mapping Matrix.

Mapping Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) to Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) involves a strategic alignment process to ensure that the skills and knowledge imparted through individual courses collectively support the overarching goals of the academic program. This mapping is categorized into three desired levels of performance: Introduced (I), Practiced (P), and Mastered (M). At the "Introduced" level, foundational concepts and basic skills related to the PLOs are first presented to students, establishing a groundwork for further development. As students progress, these concepts and skills are "Practiced" through more complex and integrated learning activities, enabling them to refine their abilities and deepen their understanding. Finally, at the "Mastered" level, students are expected to demonstrate comprehensive proficiency and the ability to apply their knowledge and skills independently in realistic and professional contexts. This structured approach ensures a coherent and cumulative learning experience, allowing students to achieve the intended program outcomes systematically and effectively.

This mapping table will also be used to build the PLOs assessment plan using CLOs achievements from the course reports.

6.4.1.4 Updating the program specification:

Any change in the program specification should be approved by the relevant academic department council and by the college council and documented in the meetings minutes. In case the change involves adding or removing courses and/or credit hours, the change should be approved by the university council.

After the modification of the program specification, the latest version should be uploaded on the Quality Assurance repository and shared with the community through the program's webpage.

6.4.2 Course Specifications

Individual course specifications should be prepared for each course in a program and kept in line with the program specification. The purpose is to make clear the details of planning for the course as part of the package of arrangements to achieve the intended learning outcomes of the program as a whole. Consequently, course specifications should include the knowledge and skills to be developed in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework and the course learning outcomes and their mapping to the overall program learning outcomes. Also, it should list the teaching and assessment strategies in sufficient detail to guide individual instructors, as well as the learning resources, facilities requirements, and any other special needs. Course specifications should be prepared for both core and elective courses.

When an instructor is assigned a section of a certain course, the department chair or the program coordinator should provide him/her with a copy of the latest course specification version and the course report for the previous semester. All instructors are required to follow and implement all the program specification aspects.

6.4.2.1 Bloom's Taxonomy:

Bloom's Taxonomy is a widely recognized framework that classifies educational learning objectives into a hierarchy of cognitive complexity. Developed by Benjamin Bloom and his colleagues in the mid-20th century, the taxonomy is divided into six levels: Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating.

These levels represent a progression from basic recall of facts (Remembering) to higher-order thinking skills such as critical analysis and creative synthesis (Creating).

In defining Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs), Bloom's Taxonomy serves as a foundational tool to articulate clear, measurable objectives that reflect the desired depth and breadth of student learning.

By using action verbs associated with each level, instructors can design course objectives that guide instructional strategies, assessment methods, and student activities, ensuring that learning experiences promote cognitive development in a structured and incremental manner.

This approach not only facilitates curriculum alignment and coherence but also enhances the overall effectiveness of teaching and learning processes.

Below is a list of suggested action verbs for each level of the educational learning objectives:

A. **Remembering:** define, list, recall, identify, describe, name, recognize, repeat, state,
B. **Understanding:** explain, summarize, interpret, paraphrase, discuss, classify, compare, exemplify, illustrate, infer
C. **Applying:** use, implement, execute, demonstrate, solve, apply, perform, operate, calculate
D. **Analyzing:** analyze, differentiate, distinguish, compare, contrast, examine, investigate, test, question, break down
E. **Evaluating:** evaluate, judge, critique, assess, appraise, justify, defend, support, argue, recommend
F. **Creating:** create, design, construct, develop, formulate, plan, invent, compose, produce, synthesize

When defining Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs), the instructor must ensure that they start with an action verb objectives that reflects the desired depth and breadth of expected student learning and that that the outcome is clear and measurable.

6.4.2.2 Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) are specific, measurable statements that detail what students should be able to know, do, or value by the end of a course. These outcomes focus on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes students are expected to acquire through their engagement in the course. For instance, a CLO might state that "By the end of this course, students will be able to apply statistical methods to analyze data," or "Students will demonstrate effective communication skills in professional presentations."

The relationship between CLOs and PLOs is fundamental to ensuring that individual courses contribute effectively to the overall goals of the academic program. This alignment is often structured through a mapping process where CLOs are strategically designed to support and build towards the attainment of PLOs at different stages of the student's educational journey.

In this mapping process, each CLO is categorized based on the level of competency it aims to develop: Introduced (I), Practiced (P), or Mastered (M). For example, a course in the early stages of a program may introduce foundational concepts (I), while more advanced courses provide opportunities to practice these skills (P), and capstone courses or projects require students to demonstrate mastery (M) of these skills in complex and professional contexts.

Bloom's Taxonomy is a valuable tool in this process, providing a hierarchical framework to classify educational objectives. By utilizing action verbs from Bloom's Taxonomy, faculty members can clearly define learning outcomes that reflect the desired level of cognitive complexity—from basic recall of information to higher-order skills such as analysis, evaluation, and creation. This ensures that students progressively build their competencies in a structured manner, aligning individual course outcomes with the broader program goals.

6.4.2.3 Learning Material

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) serve as a blueprint for selecting and organizing the learning materials used in a course. The materials should directly support the knowledge and skills specified in the CLOs. For example, if a CLO requires students to "apply statistical methods to analyze data," the learning materials might include textbooks on statistical techniques, datasets for practice, software tutorials, and research articles demonstrating the application of these methods. Learning materials should be diverse and inclusive to cater to different learning styles and ensure that all students have the resources needed to achieve the outcomes.

6.4.2.4 Teaching strategies

Teaching strategies must be aligned with CLOs to effectively facilitate student learning and achievement of the desired outcomes. These strategies include the methods and approaches instructors use to deliver content and engage students. For example:

- **Lectures and Presentations:** Useful for conveying foundational knowledge (Remembering and Understanding levels of Bloom's Taxonomy).
- **Interactive Discussions:** Encourage deeper understanding and critical thinking (Analyzing and Evaluating levels).

- **Hands-On Activities and Laboratories:** Essential for practicing and applying skills (Applying level).
- **Group Projects and Collaborative Learning:** Foster teamwork and problem-solving abilities (Creating level).
- **Case Studies and Simulations:** Help students apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios, enhancing practical skills and critical thinking.

Effective teaching strategies should be varied to address different learning styles and promote active learning, ensuring that all students have opportunities to engage with the material and achieve the CLOs.

6.4.2.5 Updating Course Learning Outcomes

Course instructors must consider the course learning outcomes as they are stated in the course specification document without any change.

In case an instructor sees the need to introduce any modifications in the course CLOs, he/she should follow the following steps:

- formulate a change request document, that explains the needed change and the rationale behind it.
- Discuss and validate the change with the course coordinators and all the other instructors teaching the same course or have delivered the course in previous semesters.
- If the proposal is adopted, it should be submitted to the program quality coordinator. The quality coordinator should review the impact of this change of the mapping between CLOs and Program Learning Outcomes and ensure that change will not have a negative impact on the PLOs coverage.
- If the change was approved by the related faculty members and the program quality coordinator, the course coordinator should update the course specification document accordingly and submit it for approval to the department council. The department approval should be documented in the meetings minutes.
- On approval, the program quality coordinator should check if there is a need to update the program specification document, especially the CLOs / PLOs mapping matrix. In this case, he/she should prepare an updated version of the program specification document.
- If the program specification document was updated, the new version should be approved by the department council, then the college council and and documented in the meetings minutes.
- The program quality coordinator should upload the updated course specification document and eventually the updated program specification document to the Quality document repository.

- The program quality coordinator or eventually the program coordinator or the department chair should inform the Department of Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation of the changes. He should also send the list of new CLOs to the Department of Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation to update the related electronic CLOs attainment survey.

6.4.3 Field Experience Specifications

Field Experience Specification document describes the knowledge and skills that the students should acquire during the filed experience, and what should be done to ensure that learning takes place. This includes the preparation of the students and planning in cooperation with the agencies where the field experience will occur. It must also involve some follow-up activities with students to consolidate what has been learned and generalize that to other situations they are likely to face in the future. The arrangements for these preparatory and follow up activities, and the processes that will take place during the field experience should be included in a field experience specification. A template for the specifications and guidelines for completing it are provided by NCAAA.

6.4.4 Course report

At the end of each semester the course instructor will prepare a course report that describes the results achieved by every section. This report should contain the combined course learning results, including students results, the level of attainment of each course learning outcome and all the difficulties encountered during teaching; The instructor shall comment on the obtained results. In case a course learning outcome attainment is below 70%, the instructor should identify the potential reasons of this results and propose one or more corrective action to be implemented the following semester to ensure continuous improvement.

In case more than one section are offered for the same course, the course coordinator, in cooperation with the other course instructors is expected to prepare a comprehensive course report combining the results obtained from the different sections of the course, and providing combined outcome attainment measurement at course level, and also the corrective action plan at course level. In case there are important discrepancies in the results obtained by the different sections, the report should discuss these discrepancies to try to identify any specific reasons that may have causes these discrepancies, and propose corrective actions.

As the beginning of every semester, when a course is assigned to a faculty member, the department chair or the program coordinator should provide the instructor with the course report of the previous semester to allow him/her to identify the difficulties encountered previously in the same course and to implement the proposed action plan to ensure continuous improvement.

6.4.4.1 *Assessment of CLOs*

To effectively measure the attainment of Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs), instructors need to implement a systematic approach that involves aligning assessment methods with the desired outcomes, using diverse evaluation techniques, providing clear criteria for success, and analyzing student work against these standards. Every CLO should be measured at least in two different assessments. Here's a detailed explanation of how instructors can achieve this:

6.4.4.1.1 Aligning Assessment Methods with CLOs

Each assessment method should be carefully chosen to match the specific CLO it aims to measure. For example:

A. **Quizzes and Exams:** These can assess students' recall and understanding of key concepts (Remembering and Understanding levels of Bloom's Taxonomy).

B. **Assignments and Practical Projects:** These are useful for evaluating students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge in practical scenarios (Applying level).

C. **Essays and Research Papers:** These assess students' analytical and critical thinking skills (Analyzing and Evaluating levels).

D. **Presentations and Portfolios:** These can measure higher-order skills such as synthesis and creation of new ideas or projects (Creating level).

6.4.4.1.2 Using Diverse Evaluation Techniques

To gain a comprehensive understanding of student performance, instructors should employ a variety of evaluation techniques:

A. **Formative Assessments:** Include in-class activities, quizzes, and draft submissions to provide ongoing feedback and help students improve before final evaluations.

B. **Summative Assessments:** Include final exams, major projects, and end-of-course presentations to evaluate overall achievement of CLOs.

C. **Peer and Self-Assessments:** Encourage students to reflect on their own and others' work, fostering a deeper understanding of the learning objectives and criteria for success.

6.4.4.1.3 Providing Clear Criteria for Success

Instructors should develop and share detailed rubrics or grading criteria that outline the expectations for each assessment. These criteria should align with the CLOs and specify the levels of performance required to achieve each outcome. Clear criteria help students understand what is expected of them and provide a transparent basis for evaluation. For example, a rubric for a research paper might include criteria for:

A. **Understanding and Application of Concepts:** Assesses how well students have grasped and applied the theoretical frameworks.

B. **Critical Analysis and Argumentation:** Evaluates the depth and coherence of students' analysis and arguments.

C. **Clarity and Organization:** Measures the structure, flow, and clarity of the writing.

D. **Use of Evidence and Research:** Assesses the quality and integration of sources and evidence.

E. Analyzing Student Work Against Standards

Instructors should systematically analyze student work against the established criteria and standards:

- **Scoring Rubrics:** Use detailed rubrics to assess each component of the assignment, providing scores and feedback based on specific criteria.
- **Qualitative Feedback:** Offer constructive feedback that highlights strengths and areas for improvement, guiding students towards better performance.
- **Comparative Analysis:** Compare student work across different assessments to identify trends and areas where students are consistently excelling or struggling.

F. Reflecting and Adjusting

After assessing student work, instructors should reflect on the overall performance in relation to the CLOs:

- **Identifying Gaps:** Determine if there are gaps between the expected and actual performance of students. This can help identify areas where the teaching methods or materials might need adjustment.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Use the insights gained from assessments to make continuous improvements to the course. This might involve revising CLOs, updating teaching strategies, or providing additional resources or support for students.

G. Summary

Measuring the attainment of Course Learning Outcomes using student work involves a multi-faceted approach that ensures alignment of assessments with CLOs, employs diverse evaluation techniques, provides clear criteria for success, and systematically analyzes student work. By following these steps, instructors can accurately gauge whether students have achieved the desired outcomes and make informed decisions to enhance the teaching and learning process.

6.4.4.2 *Analysis of CLOs attainment*

6.4.4.2.1 Section Level Analysis

6.4.4.2.1.1 Data Collection:

Gather students' performance data for each CLO from various assessments (quizzes, exams, assignments, projects). Record the scores for each assessment, link the assessment with the intended CLO and calculate the percentage achievement for each student and for the whole section. The Department of Quality Assurance and Accreditation prepared an Excel sheet to be used as the CLO Assessment tool.

The CLO Assessment tool exists in two versions, one for the courses where the final exam to be out of 30 and another for the courses with the final exam is out of 40. They are named respectively "Assessment of CLOs_Final 30" or "Assessment of CLOs_Final 40".

Instructors are encouraged to use the CLO Assessment tool from the beginning of the semester to collect their students' achievements and also to monitor the progress in CLOs achievement after each assessment

6.4.4.2.1.2 Categorization of Performance:

The student performance is divided into four categories:

- **Exemplary (85% and above):** Indicates excellent understanding and mastery of the CLO.
- **Good (70% to 85%):** Shows solid understanding and good proficiency in the CLO.
- **Satisfactory (60% to 70%):** Demonstrates basic understanding and acceptable performance in the CLO.
- **Unsatisfactory (below 60%):** Reflects insufficient understanding and poor performance in the CLO.

The CLO Assessment tool will compute for each CLO the percentage of students in each performance category:

6.4.4.2.1.3 Analysis:

The target performance for all CLOs is 70%. This is obtained when 70% of the students in the section achieve 70% or more in the assessment tools associated with a specific CLO. Only the students who in the categories "Good" and "exemplary" are considered to have achieved the CLO. The CLO Assessment tool will compute the attainment of each CLO as the percentage of students in the categories "Good" and "exemplary".

The instructor should:

- Check the attainment level of each CLO, and the results in each assessment tool.
- For each CLO check the percentage of students in each performance category:
- Identify trends and patterns, such as which CLOs have the highest and lowest percentages of students in each category.

The example in Figure 1 shows that the first CLO was assessed using Midterm and final exam and has a global achievement level of 62% which does not meet the target. To further analyse this result, the instructor should consider each one of the used assessment tools. In the example below one can notice that the score of Question1 in the Final exam is 52% and the score in the question 1 in the midterm exam has a score of 71%. This means that respectively 52% and 71% of the student did good or Excellent in the corresponding question.

The results of each question can be further analysed by checking the number of students in each performance category. Considering the example in Figure 1, the students' distribution by performance category is:

Final Exam Q1: 7 Excellent, 4 Good, 1 Satisfactory and 9 Unsatisfactory.
Midterm Q1: 8 Excellent, 7 Good, 3 Satisfactory and 3 Unsatisfactory.

Course Outcome Attainment Level										
Section:	439 M and 313 F									
Course Outcome Attainment Level	*Assessment*	*E*	*G*	*S*	*U*	*Sub %*	*ME*	*Weight*	*Overall ME*
Identify the purpose of database systems	Final | Q1	7	4	1	9	100%	52.38%	6.0%	62%
	MT1 | Q1	8	7	3	3	95%	71.43%	6.0%	
	MT2_Exam	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
	Homework	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
	Quiz	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
	LAB	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
	Project	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	

Figure 1: Excerpt from the Attainment tab of the CLOS Assessment Tool.

From the analysis of the results, it appears that the topic covered in the Final Exam Q1 had the lowest score and caused the drop in the overall CLO achievement. The topic of this question should get the attention of the instructor.

6.4.4.2.1.4 Reflection and Interpretation:

- Reflect on the results to understand possible reasons behind the performance trends.
- Consider factors such as the difficulty of the content, effectiveness of teaching methods, and adequacy of learning materials.
- Based on this analysis propose corrective actions that may help improve the results in the following semesters.

6.4.4.2.2 Course Level Analysis

The course coordinator should aggregate the CLOs attainment results and grades from the different section and do a course level analysis.

6.4.4.2.2.1 Aggregating Data:

- Combine the data from all sections of the course to get a comprehensive view of overall student performance.
- Calculate the overall percentage of students in each performance category for each CLO across the entire course.
- Use the Excel sheet entitled "Calculation for Combined Course Report" provided by the Department of Quality Assurance and Accreditation to combine the results from different sections of the same course. This Excel sheet allows to combine the students grades and the CLOs attainment from different sections of the same course to compute results at course level.

6.4.4.2.2.2 Comparative Analysis:

- Compare the performance data across different sections to identify any inconsistencies or variations.
- Determine if certain sections performed better or worse and investigate potential reasons (e.g., different teaching styles, resources).

6.4.4.2.2.3 Identifying Gaps and Areas for Improvement:

- Identify CLOs where a significant number of students are in the Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory categories.
- Determine specific areas where students struggled the most especially by identifying the questions or the activities where less students had a good or exemplary score.
- Review the course evaluation survey to identify the areas that received the lowest scores from students.

6.4.4.2.2.4 Sharing the analysis and the responsibility between instructors:

- Engage with other instructors to review the course design and share best practices.
- Collaborate on developing new strategies and resources to improve student outcomes.
- Encourage a culture of continuous improvement where instructors regularly reflect on their teaching practices and student outcomes.
- Document changes made and their impact on student performance to inform future course iterations.

6.4.4.2.2.5 Proposed Improvements in the Course Report

Based on the experience in classroom, the students results in the assessment and the students feedback in the course evaluation survey, the instructor should identify the most appropriate action(s) to be implemented in the course in order to improve the CLOs attainment. Here are below some of the improvement actions that can be proposed:

- **Course Content Adjustments:**
  - Revise the content for CLOs where students performed poorly to ensure better understanding.
  - Introduce additional resources or supplementary materials for difficult topics.
- **Teaching Methods:**
  - Implement new teaching strategies that might be more effective for the CLOs with lower performance (e.g., flipped classrooms, interactive activities, group work).
- **Assessment Methods:**
  - Review and possibly redesign assessments to ensure they accurately measure the intended CLOs and are appropriately challenging.
  - Introduce formative assessments to provide ongoing feedback and support to students.
- **Student Support:**
  - Offer extra tutoring sessions, study groups, or review workshops for difficult topics.
  - Provide more opportunities for students to practice skills and receive feedback.

- Encourage students to attend the office hours and seek support.

By systematically analyzing student performance at both section and course levels, instructors can make informed decisions about necessary improvements. These improvements, documented in the course report, should be aimed at enhancing the overall effectiveness of the course, thereby increasing the likelihood of achieving higher levels of student success in attaining the CLOs.

6.4.5 Annual program report:

The Program Annual Report serves as a comprehensive overview of the performance and effectiveness of a university's academic program over the course of a year. Among its various aspects, the report prominently features the attainment of program learning outcomes, which are calculated through the aggregation of course learning outcomes results achieved in the different courses comprising the program. By synthesizing data from individual courses, this approach offers a holistic perspective on the extent to which students have mastered the knowledge, skills, and competencies outlined in the program's learning outcomes. Through detailed analysis and interpretation of assessment data, the report provides valuable insights into areas of strength and areas for improvement within the program, guiding informed decision-making and facilitating continuous enhancement of teaching and learning practices. Additionally, the report incorporates the measurement of the program's key performance indicators, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the program's overall effectiveness. This comprehensive evaluation leads to the identification of improvement areas, which are then addressed through the development of an improvement action plan aimed at further advancing the quality and impact of the academic program.

6.4.5.1 Key performance indicators

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are crucial instruments for monitoring and evaluating the advancement of universities, both at the institutional and academic program levels. KPIs, or Key Performance Indicators, are quantifiable numbers used in higher education to monitor universities' progress in achieving predetermined goals. These indicators can cover a range of areas, including as student achievement, research productivity, financial stability, faculty effectiveness, and operational effectiveness.

KPIs at the institutional level allow university leadership to assess overall performance, detect patterns, and make choices based on data. They assist in ensuring that the university is achieving its strategic objectives, such as enhancing graduation rates, promoting research excellence, augmenting student enrollment, and sustaining financial stability. Some examples of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) at this level could be student retention rates, the ratio of faculty to students, the amount of research funding received, and the rates of employment among alumni.

An important benefit of utilizing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is its capacity to enable benchmarking, both at the institutional and academic program levels. Universities have the ability to assess their performance in relation to other institutions that are comparable to them. This enables them to recognize effective methods, establish achievable goals, and obtain insight into their competitive position. The benchmarking method enables institutions to identify areas of excellence and areas that require improvement, by comparing their standards and performance with those of similar institutions.

6.4.5.1.1 Description of Program KPIs

KPIs are employed at the academic program level to track the performance of the programs. These indicators can offer valuable insights on the efficacy of teaching methodologies, the pertinence of the curriculum, and the level of student contentment within certain programs. Academic leaders can evaluate program competitiveness, exchange improvement techniques, and promote a culture of excellence by comparing these key performance indicators (KPIs) with similar programs at the same institution or at other universities. For example, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) could monitor metrics such as the mean duration for completing a degree, success rates in critical courses, scores from student feedback, and the percentage of graduates who obtain work in their chosen field of study.

NCAAA prescribes the monitoring of a minimal set of 11 KPIs. YU extended this list with additional KPIs (numbered KPI-P-YU-#) to give the programs more insights on some important areas. Table 1 below lists all the KPIs adopted at program level.

Table 1: Key Performance Indicators for Programs

Std	Code	Key Performance Indicators	Description
Teaching and Learning	KPI-P-YU-1	**Students' Evaluation of quality of learning experience in the program**	Average of overall rating of final year students for the quality of learning experience in the program on a five-point scale in an annual survey
	KPI-P-YU-2	**Students' satisfaction with the offered services**	Average of students' satisfaction rate with the various services offered by the program (restaurants, transportation, sports facilities, academic advising, ...) on a five-point scale in an annual survey
	KPI-P-YU-3	**Satisfaction of beneficiaries with the learning resources**	Average of beneficiaries' satisfaction rate with the adequacy and diversity of learning resources (references, journals, databases... etc.) on a five-point scale in an annual survey.
	KPI-P-1	**Students' Evaluation of quality of learning experience in the program**	Average of the overall rating of final year students of the quality of learning experience in the program, satisfaction with the various services offered by the program (restaurants, transport, sports facilities, academic, vocational, psychological guidance...), student

			satisfaction with the adequacy and diversity of learning sources (references, periodicals, information databases... etc.) on a five-point scale in an annual survey.	
	KPI-P-2	**Students' evaluation of the quality of the courses**	Average students overall rating for the quality of courses on a five-point scale in an annual survey	
	KPI-P-3	**Completion rate**	Proportion of undergraduate students who completed the program in minimum time in each cohort	
	KPI-P-4	**First-year students retention rate**	Percentage of first-year undergraduate students who continue at the program the next year to the total number of first-year students in the same year	
	KPI-P-5	**Students' performance in the professional and/or national examinations**	Percentage of students or graduates who were successful in the professional and / or national examinations, or their score average and median (if any)	
	KPI-P-6	**Graduates' employability and enrolment in postgraduate programs**	Percentage of graduates from the program who within a year of graduation were: a. employed within 12 months b. enrolled in postgraduate programs during the first year of their graduation to the total number of graduates in the same year	a. employed b. enrolled in postgraduate programs during the first year of their graduation to the total number of graduates in the same year
	KPI-P-YU-4	**Average number of students in the class**	Average number of students per class (in each teaching session/activity: lecture, small group, tutorial, laboratory or clinical session)	
Teaching Staff	KPI-P-7	**Employers' evaluation of the program graduates' proficiency**	Average of overall rating of employers for the proficiency of the program graduates on a five-point scale in an annual survey	
	KPI-P-8	**Ratio of students to teaching staff**	Ratio of the total number of students to the total number of full-time and full-time equivalent teaching staff in the program	
	KPI-YU-5	**Percentage of teaching staff distribution**	Percentage of teaching staff distribution based on: a. Gender b. Branches c. Academic Ranking	Gender Full Professor Associate Assistant Lecturer
	KPI-P-YU-6	**Proportion of teaching staff leaving the program**	Proportion of teaching staff leaving the program annually for reasons other than	

			age retirement to the total number of teaching staff.
	KPI-P-9	**Percentage of publications of faculty members**	Percentage of full-time faculty members who published at least one research during the year to total faculty members in the program
	KPI-P-10	**Rate of published research per faculty member**	The average number of refereed and/or published research per each faculty member during the year (total number of refereed and/or published research to the total number of full-time or equivalent faculty members during the year)
	KPI-P-11	**Citations rate in refereed journals per faculty member**	The average number of citations in refereed journals from published research per faculty member in the program (total number of citations in refereed journals from published research for full-time or equivalent faculty members to the total research published)

6.4.5.1.2 Computing and analysing program KPIs

The department of Quality assurance collects the data, computes the KPIs for all programs and share the data with the program coordinators. The programs to incorporate and analyse the numbers in their annual program report. The programs should check the evolution of the KPIs from year to year to see if they are progressing towards achieving the set targets. programs can also do internal benchmarking with other similar programs within the institution to identify improvement opportunities and eventually share good practices.

In case the PKIs values are not satisfactory, programs should analyse the reasons behind those results and put in place an action plan to improve the KPIs the following academic year. The analysis and the action plan should be also incorporated in the Annual program report.

6.4.5.2 Assessment of PLOs

The assessment of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) is a crucial process in ensuring the quality and effectiveness of academic programs. PLOs represent the knowledge, skills, and competencies that students are expected to achieve by the end of a program. These outcomes are often broad, encompassing various aspects of a student’s educational experience, and they align with the overall goals of the program.

6.4.5.2.1 Computing PLO attainment

A comprehensive approach to assessing PLOs involves aggregating the attainment of Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) from the courses that contribute to each specific PLO. This process is typically guided by the Program Learning Outcomes Mapping Matrix, which is detailed in the program specification document.

In this matrix, each PLO is mapped to the relevant courses within the program, indicating how specific CLOs contribute to the broader PLOs. The attainment of a PLO is therefore calculated by aggregating the achievement levels of the associated CLOs across these courses. This aggregation can be done using various methods, such as averaging the attainment scores of CLOs, applying weighted formulas to account for the varying significance of different courses, or using a rubric that captures the level of proficiency students have achieved in each outcome.

6.4.5.2.2 Analysing PLO attainment

This method of assessment allows academic programs to systematically measure the effectiveness of their curriculum in achieving the desired educational outcomes.

Moreover, this approach ensures alignment between course-level instruction and program-level goals, creating a coherent educational experience that leads to the successful attainment of PLOs. It also provides transparency and accountability, as the mapping and assessment processes are clearly documented and can be reviewed by stakeholders, including accrediting bodies, faculty, and department, college and university leadership.

The attainment of PLOs should be reported in the Annual Program Report and compared with results from previous years to identify any discrepancies and take the appropriate corrective action.

By regularly assessing PLOs, programs can identify areas where students are excelling or struggling, providing valuable insights that can result into curriculum revisions, instructional improvements, and resource allocation. When a program learning outcome attainment is below expectation, the program should try to identify the source cause of this result and build an action plan to improve it. The action plan should be also reported in the Annual Program Report and implemented the following year.

The assessment of Program Learning Outcomes, through the aggregation of Course Learning Outcomes as reported in the Program Learning Outcomes Mapping Matrix, is an essential practice for maintaining the quality and relevance of academic programs. This process ensures that the educational objectives of a program are being met and provides a framework for continuous improvement in student learning and program effectiveness.

6.5 Stakeholders' consultation:

6.5.1 Introduction

YU values the feedback of its different stakeholders as an important means to monitor the quality of all its activities and to identify areas for improvements. The university identifies the stakeholders as the following:

- The students

- The alumni
- The employers
- The faculty members
- The program advisory board

To collect the stakeholders' opinion YU developed a set of surveys that target a specific objective and are conducted periodically:

a. Course Evaluation Surveys (CES),
b. Course Learning Outcomes Surveys,
c. Program Evaluation Surveys (PES),
d. Student Experience Survey (SES),
e. Employer Satisfaction Survey,
f. Alumni Survey,
g. Faculty Satisfaction Survey (FSS)

The surveys are proposed by the Department of Quality Assurance and Accreditation and approved by the Quality Assurance Council. All surveys are conducted electronically. The QAA Department collects the responses to the surveys and provides them to the concerned entities within the university (college, department, program, …) for review and analysis. Each department analyses the survey results and eventually prepares an action plan to address any issues that arise from the responses.

Below is the description of each survey, its target, its content, and its periodicity:

6.5.2 Course Evaluation Survey (CES)

6.5.2.1 The survey objective:

The objective of this survey is to assess the quality of the course from the students' point of view and contribute to the course's continuous improvement. It is intended to help the course instructor identify the aspects of the course that may need improvement. The results of this survey are also used to assess the faculty performance.

This survey collects the students' opinion about the following axes:

- Course Goals
- Course Context
- Course Content
- Course Instruction
- Course Feedback and Assessment

6.5.2.2 Processing the survey results:

The results of this survey will be made available to the course instructor in Edugate immediately after submitting the course grades through the system.

In case some items in the survey show a low score (3/5 or less), these aspects should be taken into consideration as areas of improvement for the following semester.

6.5.2.3 The survey periodicity:

The CES is automatically available in the student portal (Edugate) every semester, for every section. CES is made available to the students in the last two weeks of the semester. The student must fill in the survey before he can get access to the course results. Also, the course instructor must enter the students grade in the Edugate system before getting access to the CES results.

6.5.3 Course Learning Outcomes Survey

6.5.3.1 The survey objective:

This survey is an indirect assessment of the course learning outcomes (CLOs) achievement. The students are requested to share their impression on the attainment of each one of the CLOs.

6.5.3.2 Processing the survey results:

The results of this survey will be made available to the course instructor in Edugate immediately after submitting the course grades through the system.

The results of this survey are reported in the course report where they are contrasted with the direct CLO assessment through students' work. The existence of a large discrepancy between direct and indirect CLOs assessment may demonstrate a misunderstanding of the CLOs among the students and lead to corrective action.

6.5.3.3 The survey periodicity:

The CLOs surveys of all courses are automatically made available to the students through the Edugate portal at the end of every semester.

The results of this survey are an indirect assessment of the attainment of CLOs. They should be contrasted with the direct CLO assessment. The existence of a large difference between direct and indirect CLOs assessment may be an indication of some area of improvement and should lead to corrective actions in the course report.

6.5.4 Student Experience Survey (SES)

6.5.4.1 The survey objective:

This is intended as a general survey that is distributed to all students who have finished 60 credit hours through their program. SES will be made available to the concerned students automatically in the Edugate System. The objective of SES is to enhance educational quality, modify services and activities to fit the needs of students and ensure student access to campus resources.

This survey collects the students' opinion about:

- The quality of instruction, and particularly the soft skills.
- The administration response to students' needs.
- The different services and facilities provided to students on campus.

6.5.4.2 Processing the survey results:

At the end of the academic year, the DQAA collects the results of the SES and prepares a report for each academic program and a report by college. The SES reports are shared with the quality coordinators in programs and colleges. The quality committee in the college and department should review the SES results, identify the areas of strength and the potential areas of improvement. The Quality committee should prepare an action plan to deal with the areas of improvement. The SES results and action plans should be discussed and approved by the college and department council to be implemented during the following academic year.

6.5.4.3 The survey periodicity:

SES will be made available to the concerned students around the end of each academic year.

6.5.5 Program Evaluation Survey (PES)

This survey is intended for all students who finished 90 credit hours in their programs. As these students are getting close to graduation, they are requested to evaluate their academic programs and their learning experience.

6.5.5.1 The survey objective:

The objective of this survey is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the academic programs and improve their quality and effectiveness. The evaluation process provides an opportunity for faculty and administrators to obtain insights regarding the level of excellence of the program and to suggest recommendations aimed at maintaining or enhancing the quality of programs.

PES is made available to the concerned students automatically through the Edugate System after they have finished 90 credit hours in their respective programs. This survey collects the students' opinion about:

- Program Context, Goals and Content.
- Program Faculty Experience.
- Program Feedback and Assessment.
- Program Support and Environment.

6.5.5.2 Processing the survey results:

At the end of the academic year, the DQAA collects the results of the PES and prepares a report for each academic program and a report by college. The PES reports are shared with the quality coordinators in programs and colleges. The quality committee in the colleges and departments should review the PES results, identify the areas of strength and the potential areas of improvement. The Quality committee should prepare an action plan to deal with the areas of improvement. The PES results and action plans should be discussed and approved by the college and department council to be implemented during the following academic year.

6.5.5.3 The survey periodicity:

SES will be made available to the concerned students around the end of each academic year.

6.5.6 Faculty Satisfaction Survey

6.5.6.1 The survey objective:

The Faculty Satisfaction Survey (FSS) is a vital tool in our commitment to fostering a positive and supportive academic environment. It provides faculty members with the opportunity to confidentially share their insights, experiences, and feedback on various aspects of their roles and working conditions. By participating in this survey, faculty members contribute to shaping the future of our institution, influencing decisions aimed at improving resources, support services, and professional development opportunities. Conducting faculty satisfaction surveys is essential for promoting a supportive and productive work environment, enhancing faculty engagement and retention, and ultimately advancing the institution's mission of excellence in teaching, research, and service.

6.5.6.2 Processing the survey results:

DQAA collects the results of the FSS and prepares a report for each college and one report at the university level. The FSS reports are shared with the deans and should be discussed in the college council. The council can consider adopting an action plan in case the survey results reveal some areas that need improvement. The FSS results are also submitted to the Quality Council for review and action.

6.5.6.3 The survey periodicity:

The FSS is conducted by the DQAA once a year between the 10-13th weeks during the Fall Semester.

6.5.7 Employers Satisfaction Survey

6.5.7.1 The survey objective:

The Administrative Employees Satisfaction Survey (AESS) is a vital tool for gauging the well-being and job satisfaction of our administrative staff. It offers an opportunity for administrative employees to confidentially share their experiences, opinions, and suggestions regarding their roles and working environment. By participating in this survey, administrative staff contribute to the continuous improvement of our institution, influencing decisions aimed at enhancing workplace culture, support systems, and professional development opportunities. The employees' feedback is instrumental in helping the institution identify areas of strength, address challenges, and foster a positive and inclusive workplace where every member feels valued and supported.

6.5.7.2 Processing the survey results:

DQAA collects the results of the AESS and prepares a report for each college and one report at the university level. The AESS reports are shared with the deans and should be discussed in the college council. The AESS is also shared with the Human resource department and with the Quality Council for review and action.

6.5.7.3 The survey periodicity:

The AESS is conducted by the DQAA once a year between the 10-13th weeks during the Fall Semester.

6.6 Benchmarking with peer programs:

Benchmarking of academic programs involves comparing the performance, practices, and outcomes of a program with those of similar programs within or outside the university. This process allows institutions to identify areas of strength, areas for improvement, and best practices that can be adopted to enhance the quality and effectiveness of their own programs. YU has established several agreements with peer universities to exchange institutional and program benchmarking data including all the KPIs adopted by NCAAA and any internally adopted KPIs.

The following sections describe the benchmarking process and the development of an action plan based on the findings:

6.6.1 Identification of Peer Programs:

The benchmarking process begins with the identification of peer programs that share similarities in terms of discipline, size, student demographics, program objectives, and other relevant factors. Each program should select a peer program within the university or within the same college as an internal benchmark.

The Quality assurance Department identifies for each program a suitable external benchmark among the universities with whom there is a data exchange agreement. The program is selected preferably with the exact same major or a close discipline.

6.6.2 Selection of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

Key performance indicators are selected to assess the performance and effectiveness of the academic program. These KPIs may include measures related to student outcomes (e.g., graduation rates, retention rates, student satisfaction), faculty qualifications and productivity, research output, and other relevant metrics. As all universities in Saudi Arabia adopted the list of KPIs recommended by NCAAA, this list will be the basis of data exchange and benchmarking.

6.6.3 Data Collection and Analysis:

Data is collected for each selected KPI from both the benchmark institutions and the program under evaluation. This data may be obtained through institutional records, surveys, interviews, or publicly available sources and direct exchange with the external benchmark program. Once collected, the data is provided to the department chair / program coordinator. The Quality committee in the program should analyze the data to compare the performance of the program with that of its peer institutions.

6.6.4 Identification of Strengths and Areas for Improvement:

The analysis of benchmarking data reveals areas where the program excels compared to its peers (strengths) and areas where it lags behind or has opportunities for improvement (weaknesses). This assessment may also identify emerging trends, challenges, or best practices in the field.

6.6.5 Development of an Action Plan:

Based on the findings of the benchmarking analysis, the program must develop an action plan to address the identified areas for improvement and capitalize on strengths. The action plan outlines specific strategies, goals, timelines, and responsibilities for implementing changes and enhancing the program's performance.

6.6.6 Benchmarking report:

The program should prepare a benchmarking report that contains the data comparison and analysis and the proposed action plan. This report should be discussed and adopted by the department council and submitted to the department quality assurance and accreditation.

6.6.7 Implementation and Monitoring:

The action plan is implemented with regular monitoring and evaluation to track progress, adjust strategies as needed, and ensure that desired outcomes are achieved. This may involve collaboration across departments, faculty engagement, resource allocation, and ongoing communication with stakeholders. At the end of the following academic year, the program should prepare a follow-up report where it describes all the actions implemented and the obtained results.

6.6.8 Continuous Improvement:

Benchmarking is not a one-time process but rather a continuous cycle of assessment, action, and refinement. As the program implements changes and measures their impact, new benchmarking data may be collected to inform further improvements and ensure the program remains responsive to evolving needs and expectations.

This process should be repeated every two years to leverage external insights and internal expertise to enhance program quality, student outcomes, and the program's effectiveness.

7 Annual Program Performance Review Procedures

7.1 Introduction:

Al Yamamah University's academic program review provides a systematic and continuous means of assuring quality and excellence in student learning. It is designed to encourage accountability among all YU' members within the department under review as a self-reflective, continuous process within the broader institutional and discipline-based contexts. The process is meant to assist programs in understanding their distinctive and collaborative roles within the University community and with relevant external constituents. It provides the foundation for assessing student learning and for making evidence-based plans and decisions to foster improvements at all levels of the institution. Program reviews are integral to planning, resource allocation, and other decision-making within the university.

The following procedures describe how the program is reviewed in a closed cycle with fixed interval time which includes the steps, the form and template to be used in the review and development cycle.

7.2 Scope:

All Programs offered by Al Yamamah University

7.3 Responsibility:

The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Department is responsible to monitor the implementation of this procedures, with the close collaboration of the Deans, Department Heads, and college and departments quality coordinators.

7.4 Purpose

Program Review procedure provides an opportunity to review, analyze, and assess the content, direction, and quality of a program with respect to program learning outcomes (PLOs) and the student experience at Al Yamamah University (YU). It fosters academic excellence, helps colleges and departments to determine how to raise the quality of their offered programs, and provides guidance for faculty and administrative decisions in support of continual future improvements.

7.5 Consideration

Several Considerations are taken by YU in the program review process; Regulations and rules of Ministry of Education (MOE) in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), National Center for Academic Accreditation and Evaluation (NCAAA) and the strategic objectives as described in YU Strategic Plan.

7.6 Schedule of Program Review

A) Each College follows a cycle of program performance review, annually each program will undergo 4 reviews within each 5-year curriculum cycle.

B) Each College follows a comprehensive Periodic Program Review Cycle, every Five years and after four continuously annual program review.

7.7 Annual Program Performance Review Cycle

7.7.1 Introduction:

The annual program report is considered to be an on-going assessment and review before the comprehensive 5 years Self-study process. The annual cycle starts with the program specification and ends with the Annual program report.

For each program a specification document is prepared, using the latest NCAAA specification document template adopted by the Department of Quality Assurance and Accreditation. This document sets out the plans for development of the program—its mission and objectives, the courses that will be included, the main learning objectives in the form of intended learning outcomes, what teaching strategies should be used to develop that learning, how learning will be assessed and how the quality of the courses should be evaluated. Program specification, once prepared, is followed on a continuing basis, though it may be adjusted from time to time as a result of experience or changing circumstances. Any change of the program specification document should be discussed and proposed by a department council and approved in a college council meeting. The change decision should be documented in the official meeting minutes and a copy of the updated document submitted to the Department of Quality Assurance and Accreditation to be uploaded on the quality assurance documents repository.

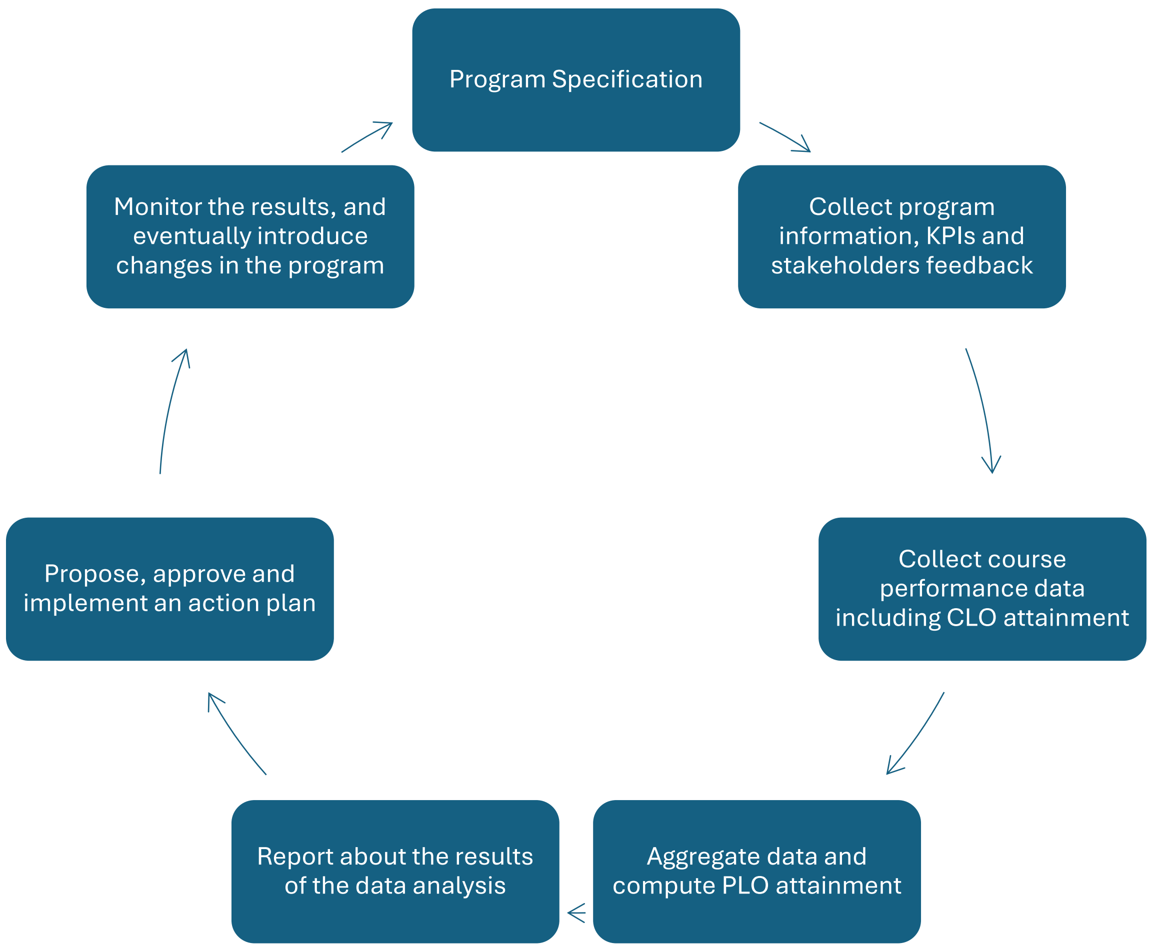


Figure 2: Phases of the Annual Program Performance Review

7.7.2 Stage II: Collecting Information from Courses

7.7.2.1 Introduction:

Course specifications are developed for each course, so those who are to teach the course are clear about what is to be learned, what its contributions are to the overall program, and how its effectiveness should be assessed. The course specification also applies on a continuing basis subject to changes required as a result of experience. In programs with field experience components (such as an internship or cooperative program), a field experience specification is prepared setting out intended learning outcomes, planning and organizational arrangements and processes for evaluation.

When the course reports are received the program coordinator prepares a program report recording key information about the delivery of the program in the year concerned and noting any adjustments in the specifications that are needed. (Program Specifications, Program Report Cycle).

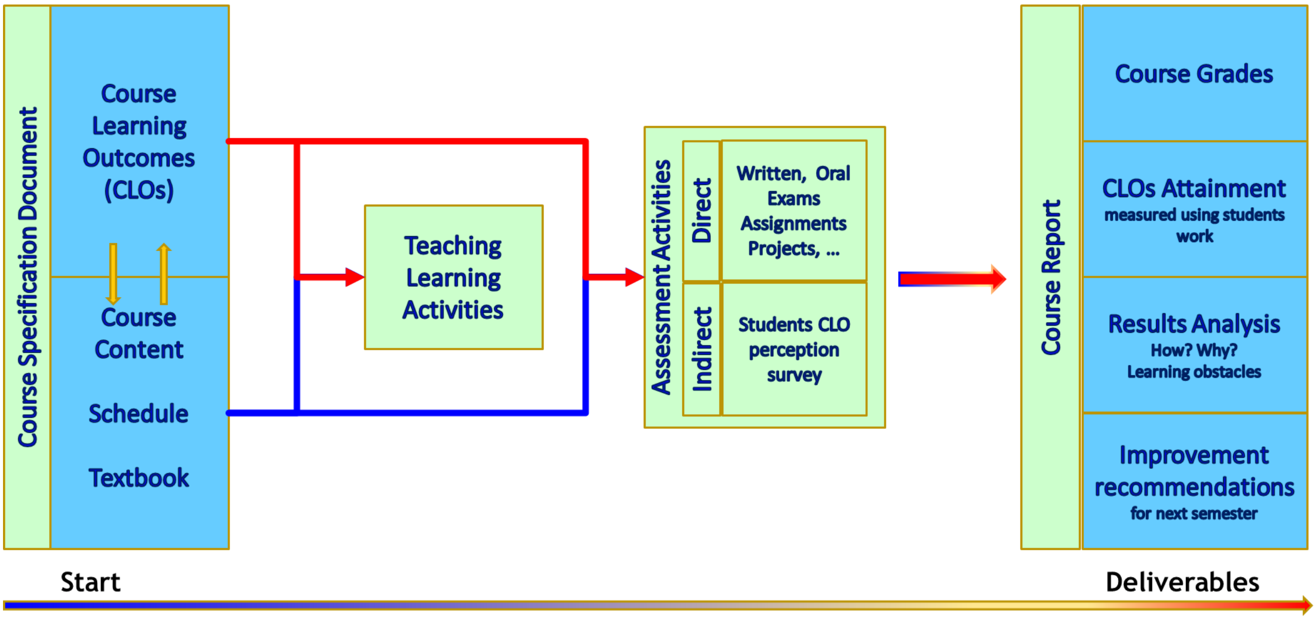


Figure 3- From Course specification to Course Report

7.7.2.2 Course Folder:

At the end of each year (or each time the course is taught) the instructors have to submit a course folder that contains among different items a course report about the course delivery including delivered teaching material, a summary of students' results and course learning assessment and analysis of the observed results. Based on this assessment and analysis the instructor should propose continuous improvement action plan to be implemented in the following semester. The reports should be uploaded to the Course Folders repository and will be available to the program coordinator.

Note: Faculty are involved in assessment and evaluation on almost a daily basis in the classroom and this is clearly an extension to review and improve what they do as a whole, and this using course report.

7.7.2.3 Course Report and Action Plan:

The Course Coordinator will prepare a course report that combines the results of all the sections of the course delivered the same semester. This report should contain the combined course learning results, including students, results, learning outcome assessment and all the difficulties encountered during teaching; Program coordinator will discuss the course report results and adopt the improvement plans at the department council.

The final course report as adopted by the department council should be uploaded into the Quality assurance Repository for archiving and future reference.

7.7.3 Stage I: Program KPIs calculation, analysis and benchmarking

At the end of each academic year, the Information Center at the Department of Quality Assurance and Accreditation will prepare for each program a matrix of statistical information and share it with the program quality coordinator; The information includes all the program KPIs including the number of students who started the program, the number of graduates, the completion rate, and the stakeholders' surveys results. These survey result will include Program Evaluation Survey, Student Experience Survey, Alumni Survey the program quality committee will provide analyses for any Significant changes within the university affecting the program and the implication for the program during the past academic year; And will report also about any Significant changes external to the institution affecting the program (if any) during the past year.

The program should conduct a trend analysis for each one of the KPIs and should benchmark it with the results obtained from similar internal or external programs. In case the KPI target was not reached, the program should put in place an action plan to improve it during the following academic year. In case the target was reached, the program should decide whether it is judicious to set a higher target for the following academic year.

7.7.4 Stage III: Annual Program Report Action & Implementation Plans

Annual Program report should be prepared at the end of each year after consideration of course reports and other information about the delivery of the program including the KPIs and the stakeholders' surveys reports.

Completed annual program report documents should be forwarded to the dean, who will discuss it within the college council.

The report should be based on the program specification and describe the achievements in the program during the academic year and the attainment of the program learning outcomes and the achievement of the program KPIs, and indicate any changes that should be made for future delivery as a part of the continuous improvement process.

The college council will adopt the proposed action plan for improvement and report it in the minutes. The Dean and the department chair will continually monitor the progress in the implementation of action plans.

The final annual program report as adopted by the college council should be uploaded into the Quality assurance Repository for archiving and future reference.

7.7.5 Reports templates and guidelines

Template for annual program reports, Program Specifications, Course Specifications and Course Reports proposed by the NCAAA will be made available by the DQAA ; Also, a separated procedures for course folders and program reports submission are also provided by DQAA, Guideline on how to fill these template will also be provided by the DQAA.

8 Institutional Accreditation:

8.1 Introduction

All academic institutions must obtain an institutional accreditation from the National Center for Academic Accreditation and Evaluation (NCAAA) every 7 years.

University institutional accreditation is a formal process wherein an NCAAA evaluates and verifies the quality and standards of the academic institution as a whole. This evaluation covers various aspects such as academic programs, faculty qualifications, student support services, infrastructure, financial stability, and governance structures. Accreditation ensures that the institution meets certain predetermined standards of quality and integrity, thereby indicating to students, employers, and other stakeholders that the institution provides a credible education. Accreditation involves a comprehensive self-study by the institution followed by an external review conducted by a team of experts appointed by the NCAAA. Successful accreditation demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement and adherence to recognized standards within the higher education community.

The institutional quality assurance is based on the following academic accreditation standards:

1. Mission, Vision, and Strategic Planning
2. Governance, leadership, and Management
3. Teaching and Learning
4. Students
5. Faculty and Staff
6. Institutional Resources
7. Research and Innovation
8. Community Partnership

Each one of these standards defines a set of criteria that should be fulfilled by the academic institution. The quality assurance and continuous improvement of educational institutions are based on the self-evaluation carried out by the institution and its various units based on the quality performance criteria. The evaluation of the quality level is based on the extent to which each criterion meets its elements, and effectively closes the quality loop (planning, implementation, review and improvement).

All the academic and administrative units ensure the correct implementation of the following quality standards and the criteria, each in their area of responsibility under the supervision of the Quality Council.

8.2 Institutional accreditation standards:

In the rigorous process of university institutional accreditation, several key areas undergo comprehensive evaluation to ensure the institution's commitment to excellence and quality education. These encompass the institution's mission alignment, governance efficiency, academic program robustness, faculty expertise, student support services efficacy, resource sufficiency, ethical and legal compliance, continuous improvement initiatives, and external engagement. Through meticulous scrutiny of these critical facets, the university reviews and ascertain its adherence to standards, fostering a culture of excellence and continual enhancement in the pursuit of academic advancement and societal impact.

The main items and aspects involved in university institutional accreditation include:

1. Mission and Goals: Evaluation of the institution's mission statement and objectives to ensure alignment with educational standards and societal needs.

2. Governance and Administration: Assessment of the institution's leadership structure, decision-making processes, and administrative policies to ensure effective governance.

3. Academic Programs: Review of the curriculum, instructional methods, learning outcomes, and assessment practices across all academic disciplines offered by the institution.

4. Faculty Qualifications and Development: Examination of faculty credentials, expertise, teaching effectiveness, scholarly activities, and opportunities for professional development.

5. Student Learning and Support Services: Evaluation of student support services such as advising, counselling, career services, library resources, and accessibility services to promote student success and well-being.

6. Student Success and Achievement: Analysis of student retention, graduation rates, academic progress, and post-graduation outcomes to assess the effectiveness of educational programs.

7. Institutional Resources: Assessment of financial resources, facilities, technology infrastructure, and other resources necessary to support teaching, research, and service activities.

8. Ethical and Legal Compliance: Verification of compliance with legal requirements, accreditation standards, and ethical principles related to academic integrity, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

9. Continuous Improvement: Demonstration of a commitment to ongoing assessment, evaluation, and improvement of institutional effectiveness, academic programs, and student learning outcomes.

10. External Relationships and Community Engagement: Examination of partnerships with external stakeholders, community involvement, and contributions to societal needs, economic development, and regional or global impact.

10. Institutional KPIs: Every year the university computes the values of its adopted Key performance indicators. The DQAA will analyse the KPI achievement and perform a trend analysis and propose an action plan to improve the KPIs that did not reached the expected target. The action plan shall be presented to the Quality Assurance Council for discussion and approval. The DQAA will supervise the implementation of the action plan during the following academic year.

These aspects collectively contribute to the evaluation of an institution's quality, effectiveness, and commitment to providing a high-quality educational experience for students.

8.3 Institutional benchmarking:

Every two years, Al Yamamah University will perform institutional KPIs benchmarking with at least one peer institution.

Benchmarking university key performance indicators (KPIs) with peer institutions involves comparing various aspects of institutional performance, such as student enrolment, graduation rates, research productivity, faculty-student ratios, financial indicators, and other relevant metrics, with those of similar institutions regionally, nationally, or internationally. Here's a description of the benchmarking process and the development of an action plan based on the findings:

8.3.1 Identification of Peer Institutions:

The benchmarking process begins with the identification of peer institutions that share similarities with the university in terms of size, mission, academic programs, student demographics, and other relevant characteristics. Peer institutions should be selected from within the same geographic region and from similar types of universities.

8.3.2 Selection of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

Key performance indicators are selected to assess various aspects of institutional performance, including academic quality, student success, research impact, financial sustainability, and operational efficiency. As all universities in Saudi Arabia adopt the set of KPIs recommended by the NCAAA, this set of KPIs will be used as the primary basis for benchmarking.

8.3.3 Data Collection and Analysis:

For Each KPI, the data is computed within YU and data will be collected for each selected KPI from the benchmark institutions. This data may be obtained by direct exchange, from institutional reports, government databases, rankings, surveys, and other sources. Once collected, the data is analysed to compare the YU's performance with that of its peer institutions.

8.3.4 Identification of Strengths and Areas for Improvement:

The analysis of benchmarking data reveals areas where the university excels compared to its peers (strengths) and areas where it may lag behind or have opportunities for improvement (weaknesses). This assessment may also identify emerging trends, challenges, or best practices in higher education.

8.3.5 Development of an Action Plan:

Based on the findings of the benchmarking analysis, an action plan is developed to address the identified areas for improvement and capitalize on strengths. The action plan outlines specific strategies, goals, timelines, and responsibilities for implementing changes to enhance institutional performance.

8.3.6 Institutional Benchmarking Report:

The Department of Quality Assurance and Accreditation will prepare a report detailing the KPIs benchmarking, the analysis of benchmarking data, and the recommendations and proposed action plan. This report should be discussed and approved by the Institutional Quality Assurance Council.

8.3.7 Implementation and Monitoring:

The action plan is implemented with regular monitoring and evaluation to track progress, adjust strategies as needed, and ensure that desired outcomes are achieved. This may involve collaboration across departments, administrative units, and stakeholders, as well as resource allocation and policy development. The Department of Quality Assurance and Accreditation will be responsible for supervising the implementation of the action plan during the following academic year, and reporting the progress the Quality Assurance Council.

8.3.8 Continuous Improvement:

Benchmarking is an ongoing process that requires continuous monitoring and adaptation to changing circumstances and priorities. As the university implements changes and measures their impact, new benchmarking data may be collected to inform further improvements and ensure the institution remains competitive and responsive to the needs of its stakeholders..

8.4 Institutional accreditation responsibility:

According to the NCAAA rules and regulations, the renewal of the institutional accreditation is due every seven years. The decision to start the process is taken by the Quality Council that plays the role of the steering committee for this project. The Department of Quality Assurance and Accreditation is responsible for the execution of the accreditation process. It is in charge of setting a project plan and its major milestones. For each accreditation standard, the DQAA, in accordance with the academic leaders, creates a committee of faculty members to contribute to the self-study process by documenting the fulfillment of the criteria related to each standard. The self-study process involves extensive data collection, stakeholder input, and analysis to provide a thorough assessment of the institution's performance and readiness for accreditation review.

This collective effort culminates in the writing of a Self-Study Report (SSRI), a comprehensive document that serves as a reflective analysis of the institution's strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement across all the accreditation criteria.

The SSR serves as a foundational document for the external review team and accreditation decision-making process, allowing for an objective evaluation of the institution's quality and effectiveness.

8.5 Institutional accreditation process:

The NCAAA assigns an external review team to conduct the institutional accreditation. The members of the review team often have extensive experience working in higher education, and a thorough understanding of accreditation standards, criteria, and processes. The external review team plays a crucial role in the institutional accreditation process by providing an independent and objective evaluation of the institution's quality and compliance with accreditation standards. The accreditation process executed by the external review team includes:

– Reviewing Accreditation Documentation: The team thoroughly examines the accreditation self-study report prepared by the institution, along with supporting documentation and evidence provided.

- Assessing Compliance: The team evaluates the institution's compliance with accreditation standards and criteria across various areas such as academic programs, faculty qualifications, student services, governance, and resources.
- Conducting On-Site Evaluation: The team conducts on-site visits to the institution to observe facilities, interact with stakeholders, and gather firsthand information about the institution's operations.
- Conducting Interviews and Meetings: The team conducts interviews with faculty, staff, students, administrators, and other stakeholders to gather additional insights and perspectives on the institution's performance.
- Providing Feedback and Recommendations: Based on their evaluation, the external review team provides feedback to the institution, highlighting strengths, identifying areas for improvement, and offering recommendations for enhancing institutional effectiveness and quality.
- Writing Evaluation Reports: The team prepares comprehensive evaluation reports summarizing their findings, conclusions, and recommendations. These reports serve as the basis for accreditation decisions by the NCAAA.
- The DQAA will take the recommendations of the accreditation team into consideration by building an action plan to deal with each one of them. The action plan will be submitted for approval to the Quality Council and put into execution to ensure continuous improvement.