



DOHA INSTITUTE
FOR GRADUATE STUDIES

Academic Policies

New Degree Program Approval Policy

Version	Title	Date Produced	Produced by
1.0	New Degree Program Approval Policy	October, 2015	Dean of Student Affairs
Revision Date	Revised by	Date Adopted	Adopted by
October, 2015	Rev. 1: Dean of Student Affairs	October, 2015	Board of Trustees, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (conditional on amendment)
October, 2015	Rev. 2: Office of the Dean for Student Affairs	October, 2015	Revisions and edits applied. Policy approved and adopted for implementation

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Introduction:

The development of a new degree program in any academic institution is a significant initiative in the life of an institution and its academic direction. Therefore, the DI recognizes that the process of approving any new degree program must be deliberate and broadly consultative to ensure that the new program meets the needs of the students, the faculty, the academic program, and the overall mission and strategic goals of the DI. The aim of this policy is to set out the procedures, explained below, for approving a new degree program in the DI and the input required from the academic and administrative units at different levels. The procedures include the following:

1. The *proposal process* including guidelines for developing new degree program proposals
2. The *review process* including the criteria for assessing the proposal
3. *Program Implementation* in the event of program approval

DI defines a “new degree program” as a new degree program at the Master’s level. The program must be brand new in the sense that it has substantially different program requirements and learning outcomes from those of any existing approved programs offered by the DI.

Policy Statement:

Proposal Process and Guidelines:

As a first step, the head of an already existing program and/or a group of faculty should typically notify the Dean of their School of the plan to develop a proposal for a new degree program. The Dean can also initiate the process of developing a new degree program. In either case, the same policy and procedures apply.

The proposal will need to contain the following information comprehensively:

- **An abstract.** Anticipated date of program implementation; projected number of students and life cycle of the program; instructional delivery methods and whether the new program will be offered in cooperation or partnership with other academic or non-academic entities or institutions.
- **Background information.** A clear description on the nature and purpose of the new program in the context of the DI’ mission, goals, and strategic plan.

- **Rationale for the degree.** Presentation of assessment of need for the proposed program (see the next two related bullet points), its prospects for growth, and the uniqueness of the program in terms of its characteristics to ensure that the proposed program is not duplicated elsewhere in Qatar. Demonstrate the support the proposed program has received from faculty members, if applicable.
- **Student demand.** Evidence of student interest and demand in the proposed program and the target market.
- **Workforce demand.** Evidence of workforce need/demand in Qatar in the light of the 2030 Vision and, more broadly, the Arab region for graduates in the field of the proposed program
- **Program details.** Description of the program’s aim, specific objectives and learning outcomes with a proposed structure for the content of the program such as course offerings. An explanation of the differences in admissions, curriculum or graduation requirements, and the administrative oversight needed to ensure a quality program is offered.
- **Student and program assessment.** Description of how students will be assessed as well as their progress, and how the program will be evaluated to ensure that it is meeting its objectives and learning outcomes.
- **Faculty.** Provision of a roster of existing faculty and new ones to be hired (if needed) who will be teaching the new program with a description of their academic qualifications, teaching, research capabilities and other relevant experiences, in addition to the courses each faculty member will be teaching. Include also the number of full-time and visiting faculty members needed.
- **Library and learning resources.** Description of the library and information resources – specific to the proposed program– that are in place or needed.
- **Physical resources.** Description of the physical facilities and equipment needed for the new program and the impact the program will have on other services such as student support services.
- **Financial support.** Provision of a business plan that includes a description of the budget needed for the first three years with a breakdown of the expenses and anticipated revenues and expenditures.
- **Cooperation with other entities.** Description in the event that the new program would require collaboration or partnership with other academic or non-academic entities or institutions, and explanation of the type of collaboration or partnership.
- **Accreditation requirements.** Description of the proposed program would require specific new accreditation requirements.

- **Appendices/other relevant information.** Include, if applicable, items such as letters of support from faculty members, course descriptions or any other documentation to support the content of the proposal.

The Review Process

Institutional Review:

Once the proposal for the new degree program has been developed, approval from the constituencies below is needed. Moreover, where relevant, a statement of endorsement of the new program will be sought from academic support and administrative units indicating that the program's requirements can be fulfilled.

- **Review by the Dean of the School.** The proposal needs to be reviewed by the Dean of the School before it is sent to the Academic Affairs committee.
- **Review by the School's Academic Affairs Committee.** The proposal is sent through the dean's office to the Academic Affairs Committee for their review and approval. The Committee may ask for the proposal to be amended if needed. The Committee must refer to the preset criteria (see next section) to adequately assess the new program proposal and make a careful decision. If the proposal is approved, the Committee will send back to the dean's office the proposal with their review and recommended amendments, if applicable, within a month of receiving the proposal.
- **Review by the School's Dean.** In his/her review, the Dean may amend the proposal if needed before it is further considered but he/she must resort to the preset criteria (see next section) to adequately assess the new program proposal. If the Dean approves the proposal, he/she will need to draft an endorsement letter supporting the establishment of the new degree program including his/her review comments. The dean's office must then submit the proposal, the dean's endorsement letter and review, within a month of receiving the proposal, to the Provost.
- **Review by the Provost.** The Provost will review the proposal, the dean's letter and review, determine that all information has been included, and, in turn, provide his/her own review comments within 15 days of him/her receiving the proposal. He/she may suggest possible changes to be made on the proposal before it is further considered.
- **Review by the DI Council.** As the highest executive body in the DI, the DI Council will review and decide on the proposal, taking the Provost's recommendation into consideration, within 30 days of receiving the proposal.

- **Review by the Board of Trustees (BoT).** As the highest entity overseeing the DI, the BoT will ratify, if it sees fit, the DI Council's decision in its next annual meeting.
- **Review by the Supreme Education Council (SEC) of the State of Qatar.** The BoT's decision, with supporting information, will be submitted to the SEC for their final approval. The SEC's decision will be communicated to the BoT and the Provost who, in turn, will notify the School's dean.

Criteria for Assessing Program Proposal:

Each of the above constituencies will examine the proposal according to a set of criteria to ensure consistency in the review process and that all main elements have been considered before a decision is made. The set criteria, outlined below, are not exhaustive but are meant as guidance.

- The proposed program's name and degree description accurately reflect the program's content and structure.
- The new program is consistent with the DI's mission, strategic goals, academic plans and also matches the goals and the teaching and research strengths of the academic program(s) concerned, if applicable.
- The new program has specific educational goals and learning outcomes that differentiate it from other existing programs within DI and Qatar. Innovative characteristics of the program must be highlighted.
- The admission and graduation requirements are appropriate for the new program's learning outcomes.
- The new program's structure and curriculum are appropriate for the program's learning outcomes.
- The teaching methods are suitable for the program's learning outcomes.
- The methods for student assessment and evaluating student progress and the overall program match the goals of the program.
- The human, library, physical and financial resources available or to be invested adequately support the program.
- The quality and expertise of the teaching staff in the field of the proposed program are demonstrated and there is a sufficient number of full-time faculty.
- The program meets Qatar's and the region's student interests and workforce and societal needs.
- Accreditation needs, if any, are highlighted and explained.

Program Implementation:

New degree programs approved by the DI must be created within two years of approval or the approval shall expire.