

**A short guide to the
Design/Approval/Modification of Study
plans and Courses in Qassim University**

**Prepared by
Deanship of Development and Quality
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Introduction

Qassim University (QU) follows a well-established system for developing/changing new or old academic programs. QU established the Directorate of Academic Programs and Study Plans to undertake the task of supervising preparation, approving of the plans, and following up their periodic development to be in full alignment with the scientific and technical as well as quality requirements, and to maintain its scientific reputation, and obtain academic accreditation for all programs. The directorate has prepared general criteria for establishing the study plans and developing the curricula. These criteria are being developed continuously. The initial setup of these criteria involved the most recent criteria of preparing the study plans in the world and local universities have been reviewed and benchmarked, with consideration of the last decision of the Higher Education Council regarding the system of study and exam regulation for the university stage. Furthermore, these criteria have been prepared considering the NCAAAA standards and the Saudi Qualification Framework (formerly the National Qualification Framework) requirements. Moreover, these criteria are integrated with simple forms and templates (including NCAAAA templates). These criteria constitute the unified frame for QU colleges, guiding the design/change/development of their study plans and curricula. It is a strict policy of QU that the departments and colleges follow this framework (General Frame for Setting-up the Study Plans in Qassim University: <https://:vaa.qu.edu.sa/> when design/re-design/change/develop their existing or new plans, and in particular adhere to the followings:

- 1) Unifying the coding and numbering of the courses for all University colleges.
- 2) University requirements (e.g. IC 101, ARAB 101, ENG 101) which are directly linked to QU's graduate attributes, should be included in all the university study plans.
- 3) Unifying the general structure of all the university study plans.
- 4) Existence of graduation requirements which should be satisfied by all colleges.
- 5) Courses' specifications should be completed and have the same format, style and items all over the University study plans (i.e. NCAAAA templates).
- 6) Method of evaluation of the courses should be the same for all departments.
- 7) New study plans or requests for major changes in existing study plans should include a complete "Establishing/Developing Academic Programs" form. (see p. 15 of this handbook). The form should be approved by Deanship of Development and Quality.

After approving the study plan by the Directorate of the Programs and Study Plans according to the «General Frame for Setting-up the Study Plans», the followings are carried out:

- 1) Specifying all the courses using the NCAAA templates.
- 2) Preparing course reports at the end of each semester using the NCAAA template.
- 3) Preparing program specification for all the University programs using the NCAAA template.
- 4) Preparing the program report annually according to the NCAAA template, and in this regard many surveys are used including the following mandatory:
 - Program Evaluation survey.
 - Graduate students» evaluation survey
 - Alumni survey
 - Employer survey for evaluating the program

General Framework for the Preparation of Study Plans

The topics of interest to the student will be addressed directly from the framework because of the length of the paragraphs of the framework and will address the following:

1. The importance of the general framework of study plans.
2. The foundations used in preparing the general framework of study plans.
3. Standards of study plans.
4. Stages of preparing study plans.
5. Contents of the study plan.
6. The main elements of the study plan.
7. Graduation Requirements.
8. General framework of study plans.
9. General structure of the study plan.

10. University Requirements.
11. Numbering and coding courses.
12. Prerequisites for courses.
13. Symbols of college departments.
14. Course Description.

The Importance of the General Framework of Study Plans

The general framework of study plans is the organizer of study plans within the university on which all colleges are based, both in the preparation of their updated plans or, in the development of existing plans, this framework should serve as the basis for building plans according to the following:

1. Coding and numbering the courses should be done the same for all faculties of the university compatible with the standards followed in the Saudi and international universities.
2. All faculties must include the requirements of the University for all students.
3. The general structure of all university study plans should be the same.
4. The university must have graduation requirements that all faculties are committed to.
5. The description of the courses offered to all departments should be uniform and content.
6. The method of evaluating the courses offered for all departments should be uniform.

Bases of Preparing the General Framework for Study Plans

The general framework of study plans includes the following bases:

1. Determining the objectives of the college and specializations.
2. Identifying human and material cycles.
3. Identify labor market needs.
4. Reviewing the experiences of international, Arab and local universities and applying local and international academic accreditation standards.
5. Developing the initial design of the plan.
6. Benefiting from the views of the relevant authorities, the shadow of the corresponding scientific departments and centers and the labor market on the proposed plan.
7. Determining the graduation requirements based on information survey.
8. Organizing the distribution of graduation requirements and putting them in a general structure (university requirements - College Requirements - Major Requirements - Free Hours).
9. Determining the university's binding requirements for all students.
10. Developing a standardized numbering and coding method for all courses taught at the University.
11. Developing a standardized method for defining prior requirements for decisions.
12. Evaluating and describing the courses in the same form and the same steps for all courses of the university in accordance with the accreditation of local and international.

Elements of Study Plans

Study plans include the following elements:

1. Introduction to the College.
2. Definition of departments.
3. Operational Plan.
4. Mechanisms for the development and innovation of study plans.

1- Introduction to the College:

The introduction includes the following elements:

- o Historical Overview.
- o College vision, mission and goals.
- o Admission requirements.
- o Departments, specializations and degrees offered by the college.
- o Department codes (Arabic and English).
- o The general structure of the study plan.
- o Features of development in the study plans of the College (developed plans).
- o Rationale for the development of new plans.
- o University requirements.
- o College requirements (compulsory and elective).
- o Approval of the department council.
- o Approval of the College Council.

2- Definition of Departments, Specializations and Courses:

The definition of departments includes the following elements:

- o introduction about the department.
- o Define the vision, mission and goals of the department.
- o Specializations and courses offered by the department.
- o Degree obtained by the student after graduation (Bachelor of Diploma, etc.)
- o Admission requirements.
- o Identify graduation requirements including:
 - Passing the required modules for graduation successfully.
 - Preparatory year, if any.
 - Year of concession, if any.
 - Any other requirements.
- o Career opportunities for graduates.

- o Implications of course numbers.
- o Linking the department to the objectives of the college.
- o List of compulsory department / specialization courses.
- o List of compulsory courses from outside the department.
- o List of electives of the department / specialization.
- o credit hours as specified in this range.
- o Course descriptions, including the following elements:
 - Basic course information.
 - Course objectives.
 - Course contents.
 - Course Outcomes (Skills expected from this course).
 - The course textbook.
 - References (reference name - author name - release date - publisher).
 - Distribution of course content to the classroom (optional).
 - Course Calendar.
- o Study plan for the bachelor stage divided into levels.
- o Translation of the plan into English (because it is important for academic accreditation).

1. Operational Plan:

It presents the human, spatial and laboratory capabilities available, as well as the needs needed to implement, evaluate and develop the plan.

2. Mechanisms for the development and improvement of the study plans:

o Faculties are studying the feasibility of creating new departments or specializations in the light of the developments and requirements of the labor market and developments in the disciplines at the most prestigious universities globally and then assess the operational plan that includes the human, financial, spatial and laboratory needs of these programs (see Figure 1).

o Faculties review and evaluate their plans periodically (every five years or after graduating the first batch of the current plan at least) to avoid any shortage in their plans and develop the plan in light of this.

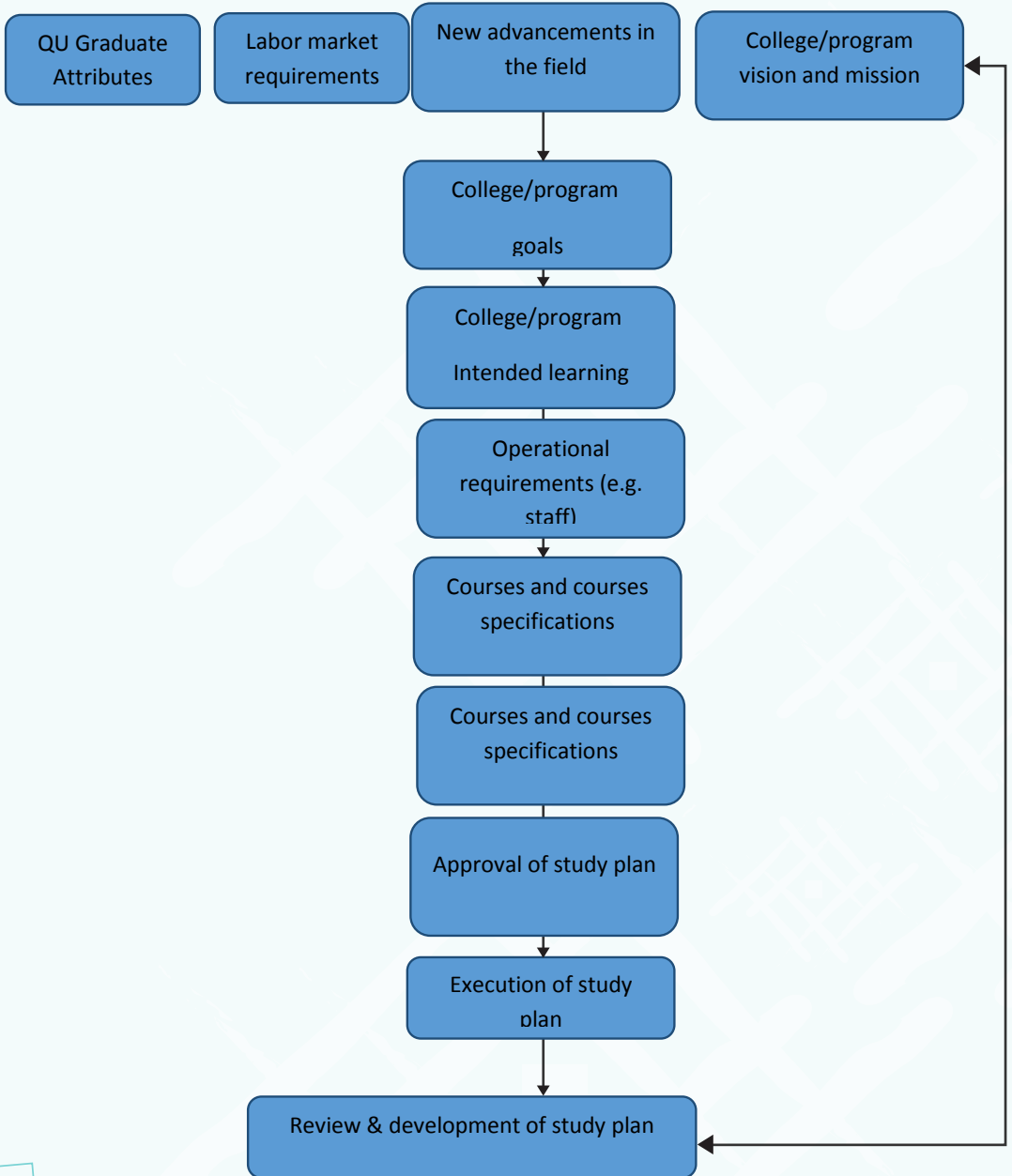
o Faculties complete the procedures for approving plans by presenting new or developed plans to:

- Plans Committee in the department.
- Department Council.
- Committee (plans/academic accreditation) College.
- Linguistic references (Arabic language).
- Language references (English).

o After the College has confirmed the corrections to be implemented by the reviewers, the plan is presented to:

- The College Board.
- The Standing Committee for Study Plans and Regulations.
- The Scientific arbitration if the plans committee deems it.

o Plans are then submitted to the University Council for final approval (see figure 1 below).



1. Figure 1: Procedures of Developing QU Study Plans

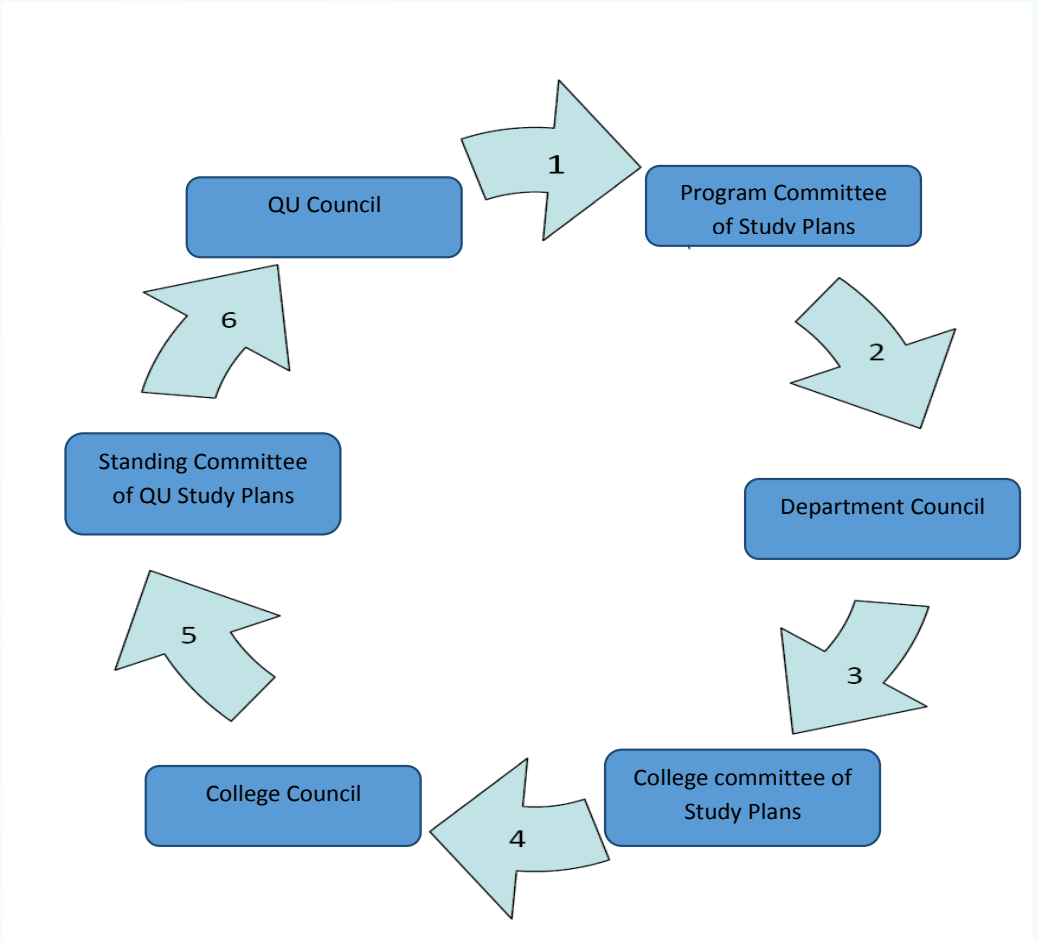


Figure 2: Committees involved in building, validating and approving QU study plans

Stages of Preparing Study Plans

When preparing a new plan or improving an existing plan, the following stages must be achieved:

Phase 1: the information survey consists of two steps:

Step 1: Review the experiences of local, Arab and international universities, including:

1. The number of similar program hours in these universities.
2. Distribution of hours on different requirements (University- College- Specialization).
3. Prepare a report on the work of this phase.

Step 2: Field survey to identify labor market needs including:

1. Identify entities in the public and private sectors that are recommended to be contacted to determine their needs for program outputs.
2. Preparing the necessary survey tools such as scientific questionnaires, meetings, working groups and others.
3. Prepare a comprehensive report on the results of this phase.

Phase 2: Analysis of the information obtained in the first phase, including:

1. Comparison of the objectives of the proposed program with the objectives of similar programs in the universities surveyed in the first phase.
2. Compare the number of hours and their different allocations.
3. Reviewing the accurate descriptions of the contents of the courses in similar programs for the universities surveyed in the first phase to determine the required scientific, technical and skill content and how to integrate them.
4. The initial design of the plan.
5. Benefiting from the views of the relevant authorities, the corresponding departments, scientific centers and the labor market on the proposed plan.

Phase 3: Final design of the study plan including:

1. Distribute the courses at the proposed study levels based on the results of the previous two stages taking into account the requirements of the courses and their scientific and logical sequence.
2. Determine the appropriate training courses to enhance the student's practical skills in order to contribute to the preparation of the labor market.
3. Taking into account that the study plan includes a program of cooperative or summer training in the plan of each section in addition to field training (depending on the nature of specialization).
4. Comprehensive and accurate description of each course, including the objectives of the course and its terms and references.
5. Ensure that the plan is in line with local and international academic accreditation requirements.
6. Final review by the relevant section and preparation of a report containing the recommendation of the section on the plan proposed to be prepared based on the above information.

Phase 4: Approval of the College Council, including:

1. Recommendation by the Department Council.
2. Review the plans committee and the academic accreditation committee in the faculty for the most important features of the plan and its components, making sure that the plan includes the main components and detailed and meet all the previous stages.
3. Present to the College Council for approval of the plan.
4. Submission to the Vice Chancellor for Educational Affairs with the plan approved by the Department Council and the College and a summary of the information and field survey.

Phase 5: Final Review:

The plan shall be submitted to the Standing Committee for plans and study system to ensure that all its elements are met and then submitted to the University Council for final approval.

Phase 6: Continuous Evaluation of the Plan:

It is the responsibility of the scientific department and is based on schedules and models prepared in advance and report to the Dean of the College.

Summary of Procedures for Preparing Study Plans

- o Establishing the plans committee in the faculty.
- o Establishing a committee for plans in each department.
- o Establishing the Academic Accreditation Committee in the faculty.

المسؤولية	المهمة	م
Program Committee of Study Plans	Initial development of Study Plan	1
Program Committee of Study Plans	Department Council Approval	2
College committee of study plans	College committee Approval	3
Dean	College Council Approval	4
Dean	Vice-Presidency of Academic Affairs Approval	5
Vice-President for Academic Affairs	Standing Committee of Study Plans Approval	6
Vice-President for Academic Affairs	QU Council Approval	7

Graduation Requirements in Study Plans

First: The number of units required for each discipline must be within the following schedule (excluding the preparatory program

Table (3): The number of units required for each major in the university

Total credit hours	Credit hours per semester	levels	Program Required Years
144 - 128	18 - 16	8	كليات تحتاج إلى 4 سنوات
200 - 160	20 - 16	10	كليات تحتاج إلى 5 سنوات
200-160	40-32 في السنة	5 سنوات	كليات تحتاج إلى 5 سنوات نظام سنوي

Second: Distribution of the required units of study for each discipline according to the percentages specified as follows:

1. University and College Requirements 30-50%.
2. Compulsory and Elective Department Requirements (45-65%).
3. Free hours of 3- 5%.

Third: University Requirements:

It is a set of obligatory set of courses for all university students. The university requirements are linked to QU graduate attributes (either directly or indirectly) as they are divided into three sections:

Section I: Courses that have specific names and symbols and must be an essential part of each study plan are the following courses:

- a. Islamic Culture: 101 IC, 102 IC, 103 IC and 104 IC (2 hours per subject). The disciplines of the Faculty of Sharia and Islamic Studies and the disciplines of Islamic Studies in other faculties of the University may replace these courses alternative courses, taking into account the number of credits for each alternative course.

- b. Arabic Language: 101 Arab (for language skills) and 103 Arab (Arabic Editing) (2 hours per subject). The specialization of Arabic language may be replaced by these two alternative courses, taking into account the number of units of study for each alternative course.

This brings the total number of obligatory studying units of university requirements for all students to 12 units.

Section II: Requirements established in the preparatory year and accordingly are not included in the plans of colleges that require students to pass the preparatory year.

These courses are English language courses, computer skills, thinking skills and learning styles. Colleges that do not require a preparatory year must specify in their study plans the need for specialization in computer skills and English language subjects. The course of thinking skills and learning methods (101 2 - نفس hours) must be a separate subject within the requirements of the college, and the faculty to teach and provide the appropriate faculty member to teach.

Section III: Communication Skills Course (the plans committee determines the number and symbol) must be within the requirements of each faculty and each faculty develop its vocabulary commensurate with its specializations. The College may distribute the vocabulary of this course and apply its objectives in the decisions of the plan, whether from the requirements of the college or specialization.

Table (4) University Requirements (Section I)

المتطلب	الوحدات الدراسية المعتمدة			اسم المقرر	CODE/NO.	رقم ورمز المقرر
	المجموع	عملي	نظري			
-	2	-	2	ثقافة إسلامية (1)	IC 101	101 سلم
101 سلم	2	-	2	ثقافة إسلامية (2)	IC 102	102 سلم
101 سلم	2	-	2	ثقافة إسلامية (3)	1C 103	103 سلم
101 سلم	2	-	2	ثقافة إسلامية (4)	IC 104	104 سلم
-	2	-	2	المهارات اللغوية	ARAB 101	101 عرب
-	2	-	2	التحرير العربي	ARAB 103	103 عرب
12 ساعة			المجموع			

Table (5) Model of the general structure of the study plan

Total credit%	Credit %	Required courses	
50 - 30 تقريبا	12 وحدة دراسية	QU required courses	
	30-16%	compulsory	College required courses
	5-4%	elective	
65-45	10-5	External Elective	
	40-36	compulsory	internal
	10-4	elective	
5 - 3 تقريبا		Free courses	
100		total	

Note: In applying this framework, it should be taken into account in the department part the faculties that adopt an educational system based on the integration of departments with one another and that does not depend on the department as an independent educational entity.

Table (6): Illustrative example of a study plan with a total of 136 units

النسبة المئوية (%)	عدد الوحدات	المتطلبات	
8,82	12	متطلبات الجامعة	
30,88	42	إجباري	متطلبات الكلية
4.41	6	اختياري	
7.35	10	إجباري من خارج القسم	
39.71	54	إجباري	متطلبات القسم من داخل القسم
4.41	6	اختياري	
4.41	6	المقررات الحرة	
100	136	المجموع	

Fourth: Numbering and Coding the Courses

The numbering and coding of the courses follows the following rules:

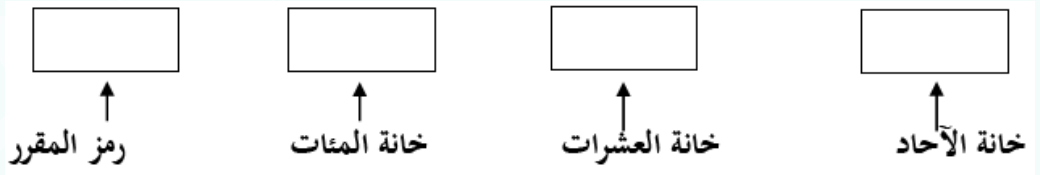
1. Course Code: is a significant set of characters that symbolize the scientific section that offers the course. It ranges between 2 and 3 letters with emphasis on the standardization of coding for similar scientific departments in all faculties of the university compatibility and compatibility with the methods of coding universally recognized. See Table 7 showing some symbols for different sections of the university.

Table (7): Example of coding courses in some sections

الرمز		القسم
باللغة الانجليزية	باللغة العربية	
IC	سلم	الثقافة الإسلامية
ARAB	عرب	اللغة العربية وآدابها
PSYC	نفس	الطب النفسي
CE	همد	الهندسة المدنية
BVM	طبي	الطب البيطري

Note: Each section is given a code of at least two characters and a maximum of four characters (only numbers are not allowed)

2. Course Number: This refers to the course sequence within the courses of a department and consists of three numbers:



a. Hundreds column: denotes the academic year in which the course is taught as follows:

First: Diploma and Bachelor:

- Preparatory Year Courses 1
- First year
- Second year 2
- Third Year
- Fourth year and beyond 4

Second: Masters stage 5

Third: PhD stage 6

- b. Scores box: denotes the field (for the exact specialization) within the section See the example shown in Table 8.

Table (8) Example of interpreting the numbers of dozens in the decisions of the Department of Animal Production and Breeding, Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine

التخصص الدقيق	أرقام العشرات
عام	١
وراثة وتربية حيوان	٢
وراثة وتربية الدواجن	٣
تغذية الحيوان	٤
تغذية الدواجن	٥
فسيولوجيا الحيوان	٦
فسيولوجيا الدواجن	٧
رعاية وإنتاج الحيوان	٨
رعاية وإنتاج الدواجن	٩

Ones: denotes the course sequence in one specialty

Example:

For course: 423 Fiqh writes as follows:

The course “ Fiqh “ indicates that the course is subtracted from the Department of Fiqh.

No. (4) indicates that the course is taught in the fourth year.

No. (2) indicates that the course belongs to the financial transactions field in the Fiqh section.

No. (3) indicates that the course is the third in sequence among the decisions of financial transactions courses.

Fifth: Prerequisite Courses:

The above requirements are an important element in the construction of the study plan. The prerequisite requirement is a key to understanding the course that follows and without it there is a flaw in the knowledge structure.

The prerequisite in the study plans takes one of the following forms:

1. Prerequisite requires success

This means that a course of the plan depends cognitively and skillfully on a prerequisite and must be successful in the student before registering the course conditioned on a previous requirement.

2. A prerequisite that does not require success

This course is helpful in understanding the next course and does not require success in order to register the next course.

3. Co-requisites:

The simultaneous requirement usually includes important subjects for the simultaneous course without having to study it in a previous chapter.

Notes:

1. Requirements shall be within the limits of cognitive necessity to ensure flexibility in recording decisions.
2. The requirement and its type should be mentioned.

“Establishing/developing Academic Program” Form

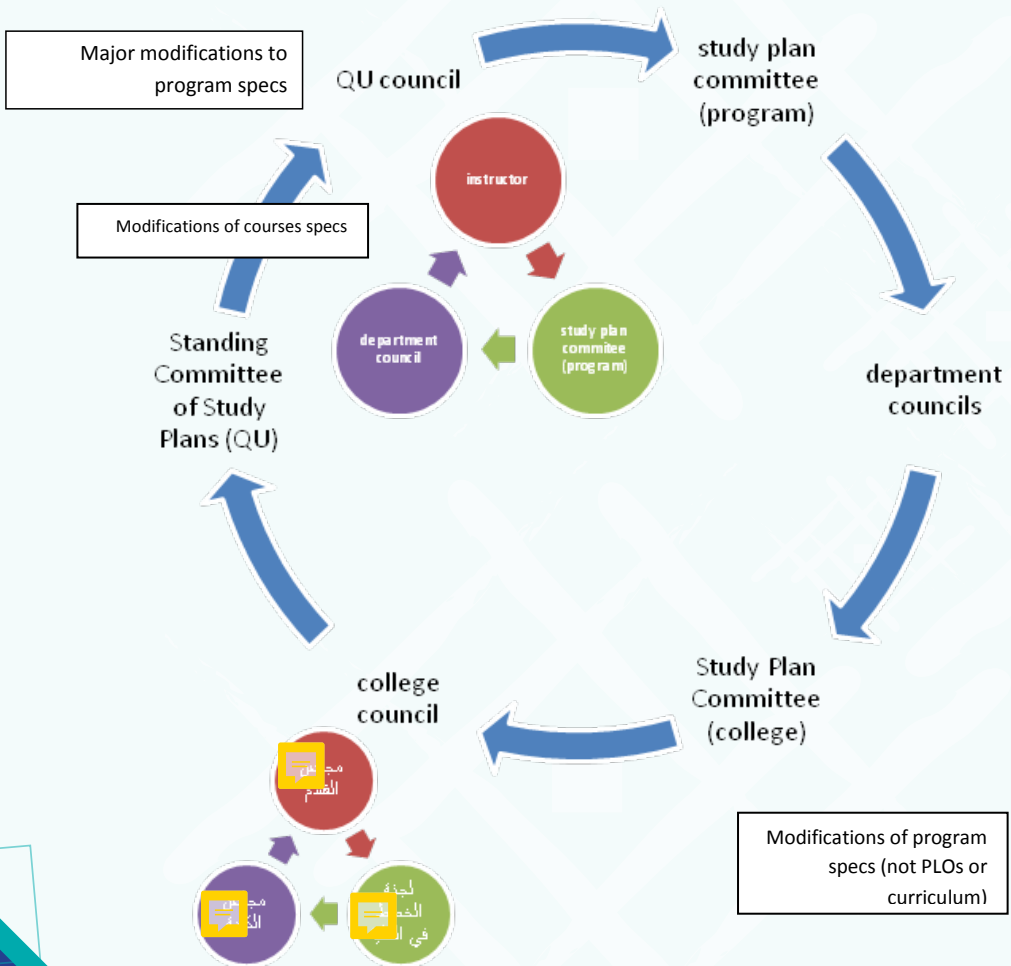
One of the most important documents and requirements when establishing or developing the study plan of a program is the “ Establishing/Development of the Academic Program” form/template. The Standing Committee for Study Plans and Curricula does not consider any request for establishing or developing an academic program unless this template is completed and approved by the Deanship of Development and Quality.

The template contains several parts which should be completed by the college looking for establishing or development of an academic program such as the basic information of the program and its operational plan. Some important parts of this template are the benchmarking with external programs/colleges, survey/analysis of the needs of labor market to the outcomes of the academic program under consideration, and graduates’ attributes and their consistency with QU graduate attributes and the Saudi Qualification Framework. This template can be downloaded from the Deanship of Development and Quality website:

qa.qu.edu.sa/

Levels of changing/developing study plans and relevant terms of reference

Finally, it should be noted here that QU provides sufficient permissions for college councils, departments and program administrations to carry out changes in study plans to the extent that these changes do not affect programs' learning outcomes (PLOs) or the whole curriculum. For instance, modifications of course specifications can be made and approved by department councils, and study plan committees inside programs. Modifications of program specifications can be made and approved by college councils and college study plans committees, given that these modifications do not affect PLOs (or the addition/removal of courses, for that matter). Modifications of program specifications which result in reformulation of PLOs, addition/removal of multiple courses etc. must be approved by the Standing Committee of Study Plans (and QU Council). The following graph explains acceptable levels of study plans changes/modifications and terms of reference





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2030
المملكة العربية السعودية
KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Study Plans Establishment Manual