National Open University of Nigeria

Policy Title	Programme Design and Development Policy
Policy No:	NQSA/POL/TEL/004
Owner:	National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)
Approved By:	The University Senate
Manager/Driver:	Directorate of Academic Planning (DAP)
Date of Approval:	7th October, 2024
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1.0 Introduction

Learning in the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) is guided by the University Senate approved curricula which are developed in line with the minimum benchmark for all universities in Nigeria as directed by the National Universities Commission (NUC). In addition, NOUN goes beyond the minimum benchmark to ensure that the curricula meet international standards, and the needs of the learners, the labour markets, and society. It is mandatory to have the programmes and curriculum developed and made available for use before any programme can be advertised to the public.

The curriculum amongst others determines the quality of learning that the learners will receive in the university. The university is therefore committed to providing quality learning by ensuring standards in the curricula.

2.0   Purpose

This policy will serve as a quality control measure for the design and development of all programme curricula in NOUN. It will help to standardise the learning experiences the learners will receive in NOUN.

3.0   Scope

This policy shall guide the design and development of curricula for all academic programmes in NOUN which include short courses, degree programmes, graduate, and postgraduate programmes with specific attention to the learning needs of the learners.

Definitions

4.1   Programme:

This refers to a set of courses that a student will take to earn a degree. A programme is made up of courses and each attributes a unit value. An award is earned at the successful completion of the required courses in an academic programme. For example, a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry is a programme that consists of several courses such as Introductory Organic Chemistry, and Environmental Chemistry.

4.2   Course:

This refers to a unit of teaching that lasts for one semester in an academic year. It must be derived from the programme objectives. A course is broken into modules andunits.

4.3   Course Code:

This is a unique identifier attached to a course. Codes are used to organise courses within a programme. The codes are assigned by using the convention of:

a. Two (2) to three (3) letters and three (3) Arabic numbers.

b. The letters indicate the programme managing the course. E.g. CHM102. CHM represents Chemistry as a programme. The first number on the Arabic number indicates the level the course will be taken, the middle number indicates the course number in the programme, and the last Arabic number indicates a combination of a number and the semester. For example, CHM102:

CHM - Chemistry programme
1 - 100 Level
0 - The course number in the programme
2 - Second Semester and the completion of the course number making the course number to be 02.

What this means is that the course will be offered by the learners in 100 level and in second semester.

c. Since the last Arabic number in a course code indicates the semester, odd numbers are used to indicate first semester and even numbers are used to indicate second semester when generatingcourse codes.

4.4 Course Title:
This is a brief description of a unit of teaching or subject matter to be covered in a course. It must:
a. provide glimpse of what the course is about.
b. be catchy to motivate learning.
c. not be too long but should be clear, unique and keyword savvy.
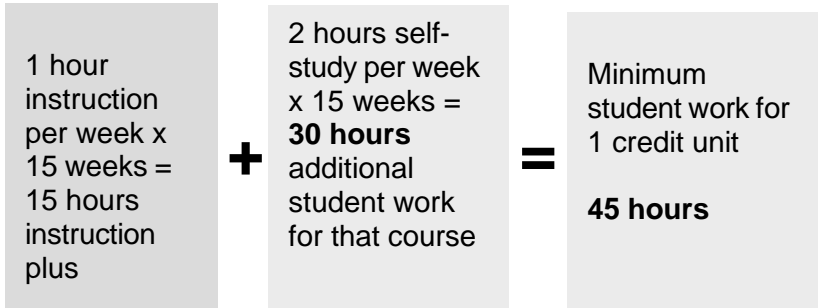d. reflect the content of the course.

4.5   Credit Unit:
This is used to quantify the amount of academic work required to earn a degree. It is determined as the number of hours a learner is expected to spend on average to achieve specific learning outcomes through relevant assessment(s),

Academic learning time includes:
- **Directed learning:** Direct contact with teachers and trainers. Examples are facilitators, participating in course discussion forums, seminars, laboratory practicals, workshops, fieldwork, taking course quizzes and examinations, and so on.

- **Self-Directed**: Time spent doing private self-study. Examples are reading the course materials, watching instructional and pre-recorded videos, doing self-assessment exercises, doing assignments, undertaking practical tasks, working on course feedback searching the internet, private group study (tutorials),
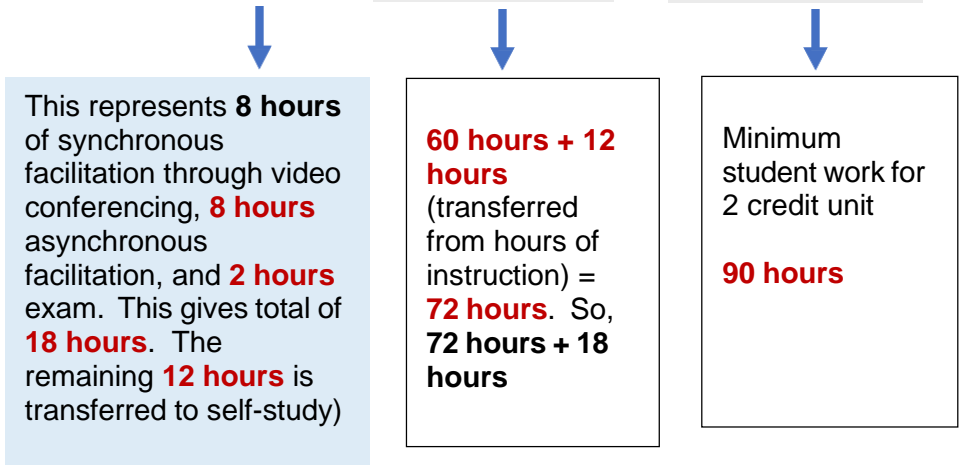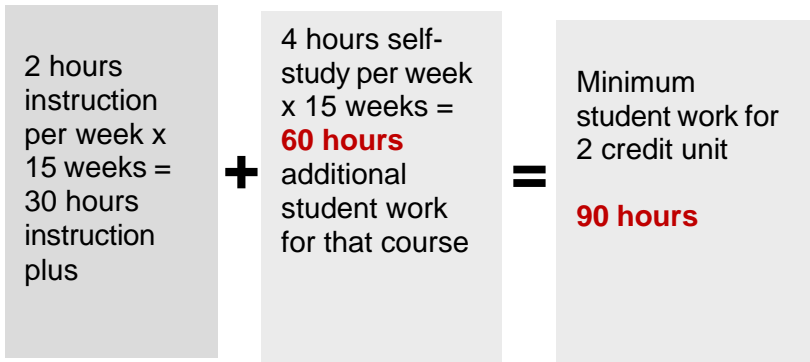
Courses are assigned some credit hours to indicate the estimated average workload in each course. Typically, a student takes 15 credit units per semester.

A credit unit is calculated thus:

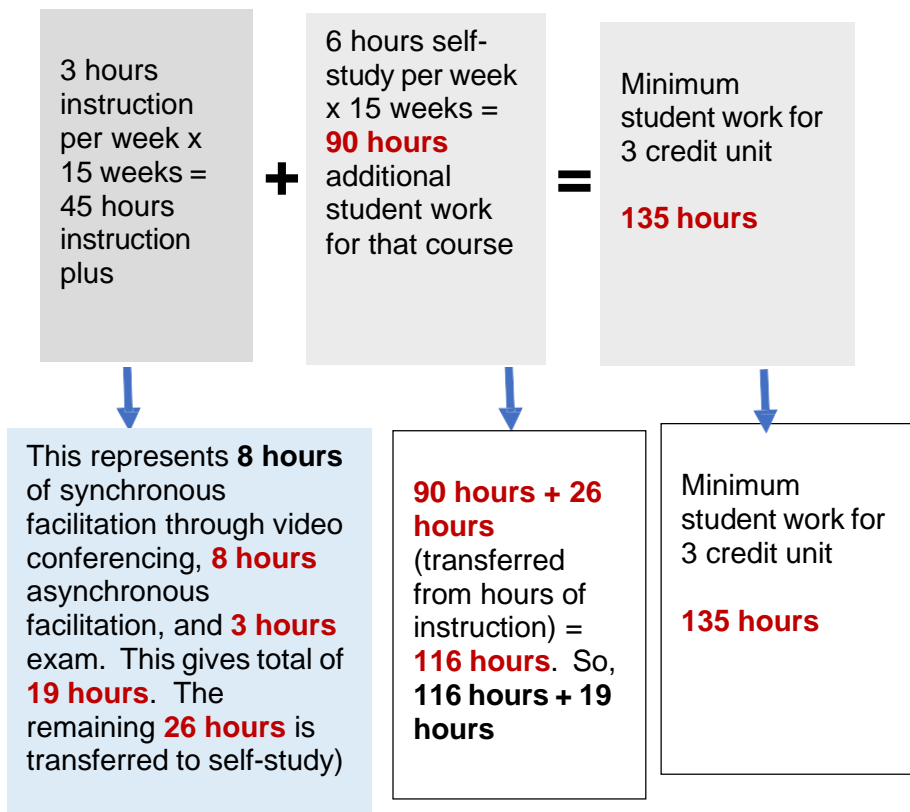| 1 hour instruction per week x 15 weeks = 15 hours instruction plus | **+** | 2 hours self-study per week x 15 weeks = **30 hours** additional student work for that course | **=** | Minimum student work for 1 credit unit **45 hours** |

This represents **8 hours** of synchronous facilitation through video conferencing, **6 hours** asynchronous facilitation, and 1 hour exam.

In NOUN, from a course of two credit units, the total hours for both synchronous and asynchronous facilitation remain **constant**. More time is given to self-study. The total number of hours that instruction per week would have gained is transferred to the hours of self-study. Below are examples for 2 and 3-credit unit courses.

2 hours instruction per week x 15 weeks = 30 hours instruction plus	**+**	4 hours self-study per week x 15 weeks = **60 hours** additional student work for that course	**=**	Minimum student work for 2 credit unit **90 hours**
⬇		⬇		⬇
This represents **8 hours** of synchronous facilitation through video conferencing, **8 hours** asynchronous facilitation, and **2 hours** exam. This gives total of **18 hours**. The remaining **12 hours** is transferred to self-study)		**60 hours + 12 hours** (transferred from hours of instruction) = **72 hours**. So, **72 hours + 18 hours**		Minimum student work for 2 credit unit **90 hours**

For a 3-credit unit course, it would appear thus:

| 3 hours instruction per week x 15 weeks = 45 hours instruction plus | **+** | 6 hours self-study per week x 15 weeks = **90 hours** additional student work for that course | **=** | Minimum student work for 3 credit unit **135 hours** |

| This represents **8 hours** of synchronous facilitation through video conferencing, **8 hours** asynchronous facilitation, and **3 hours** exam. This gives total of **19 hours**. The remaining **26 hours** is transferred to self-study) | **90 hours + 26 hours** (transferred from hours of instruction) = **116 hours**. So, **116 hours + 19 hours** | Minimum student work for 3 credit unit **135 hours** |

4.6 Course Status:
This indicates if the course is a compulsory (core) course or elective course or required course.

4.7 Practical Hour:
This is the number of hours a learner is expected to spend on average to achieve specified learning outcomes through demonstration. There are two forms of practical – indoor and field practical training. The field practical is an important arena for learning which emphasises the connections between theory and practice. Example of indoor practicals is laboratory practical, and examples of field practical are

internships, SIWES, and farm practicals.

One laboratory credit hour represents 1 hour per week contact with the facilitator with 1 hour per week of scheduled or independent laboratory work, and 2 hours of the learner preparation time. This means for 1 credit laboratory work, you have:

Contact hour - 1 hour x 15 weeks = 15 hours per semester
Scheduled or Independent Work - 1 hour x 15 weeks = 15 hours per semester
Learner's Preparation Time - 2 hours x 15 weeks = 30 hours per semester
Total hours for a credit laboratory course - 60 hours per semester

If the laboratory work is 4 credit units, it would appear thus:

Contact hour - 4 hours x 15 weeks = 60 hours per semester
Scheduled or Independent Work - 4 hours x 15 weeks = 60 hours per semester
Learner's Preparation Time - 8 hours x 15 weeks = 120 hours per semester
Total hours for a credit laboratory course - 240 hours per semester

The hours for field practicals are determined by the industry or organisation where the learner is to practice with a minimum of eight (8) hours per day which is the approved national working hours per day. However, the university and accrediting bodies determine the duration of practice. For example, for internship and SIWES is six (6) months butcan be spread.

4.8 Contact Hour:

This means hours of learners' direct contact with the facilitators.

4.9 Core Course:

This means a compulsory course. A learner must take and pass a compulsory course to earn a degree.

4.10 Elective Course:

This is a course a learner may register to complete the number of required credits to earn a degree. A learner can earn a degree even when he/she does not pass an elective course but must meet the required number of credits for graduation. The selection of an elective course is determined by the learner's interest in the course.

4.11 Required Course:

This refers to a course that provides a broad foundation for learners' learning and that would help meet specified learning outcome(s). Though it is not compulsory, a learner must register for the course to meet specific learning outcome(s) but would not deprive the learner from earning a decree if he/she did not pass the course.

4.12 Level of Study:

This means the learner's year of study in an academic programme. For example, in a Chemistry Programme, a learner may be at 100 Level. Years of study are classified according to programmes. Most undergraduate programmes are 4-year maximum to earn a degree, but some have 6-year of study. Therefore, in classifying the year of study for undergraduate programmes, you have:

a.	Level 100	-	Year 1
b.	Level 200	-	Year 2
c.	Level 300	-	Year 3
d.	Level 400	-	Year 4
e.	Level 500	-	Year 5
f.	Level 600	-	Year 6

Six (6) years is the maximum for undergraduate programmes in the university while 4 years is the minimum. Therefore, the post-graduate programmes such as Post-Graduate Diplomas (PGDs), Masters and Doctoral Degrees are classified thus:

a.	Post Graduate Diplomas	-	Levels 700
b.	Master Programmes	-	Levels 800
c.	Doctoral Programmes	-	Levels 900

4.13 Programme Objectives:

These are specific statements of programme intention. What does the programme want to achieve? Why should learners enroll in the programme? What gap(s) would the programme fill the society, industries, and economic

growth? Is the programme within the institution's core values? These are questions that are often considered when stating programme objectives.

4.14 Course Learning Outcomes:

These are clear and measurable statements of what the learners will be able to do after they have completed units of learning in a course. Learners' performances are tested against the stated learning outcomes.

4.15 Competencies:

These refer to the skills, knowledge, and abilities a learner would require in performing a task that would help him/her achieve the stated learning outcomes. The singular of competencies is competency. Competency is different from competence. Competence is the basic ability to do something successfully or efficiently. Competency is more advanced.

4.16 Prior Knowledge:

This refers to the information and skills a learner has already acquired before entering a new educational endeavour or learning experience. It serves as a foundation for new knowledge to build on. Prior knowledge could also be referred to as prior learning.

4.17 Pedagogy

This is the science of teaching and learning that helps coordinate learning activities towards achieving desirable learning outcomes.

4.18 Formative Assessment:

This assessment is used to collect detailed progressive learning information from learners to improve their learning. These include self-assessment exercises, Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs), quizzes, contributions in discussion forums, in-class activities, practical tests.

4.19   Summative Assessment:
This is an assessment that is used to evaluate learners' learning at the end of a specific instructional period. Summative assessment is designed to determine the extent learners have mastered what they have been taught. They help to determine learning progress and achievements. Examples of summative assessments are final examinations, standardised tests, performance-based assessments, portfolios, and projects.

4.20   Interactivity:
This refers to the degree to which learners can engage with the content and the learning environment. In distance learning, interactivity promotes learners' engagement, motivation, and the level to which they can achieve the learning outcomes. Interactivity is built into the learning materials through quizzes, simulations, games, gamification, discussion forums, instructional videos, story-telling, life application examples, and problem-solving, case studies and scenarios, and life-sharing experiences of achievers in different professions and sectors of the economy.

4.21   Course Module:
A course module is a self-contained unit of instruction that is part of a larger course. It is designed to teach a set of related topics and can be used to break down a course into a more manageable part to form units in a course material/learning material. A module is used to represent a broad theme of knowledge in a course. Course modules are derived from the course objectives. Where required, a module can serve as a standalone for a short course such as micro-credential, and where an individual has accumulated all the related modules, it could be counted as a course.

4.22 **Learning Unit:**
A Learning unit is a self-contained unit of instruction that is a part of a module. It is designed to teach a specific topic or a set of related topics. Learning units are derived from course module objectives. A set of learning units must be related to a specific module.

4.23 **Design and Development Team:**
These are individuals from different areas of specialisation required to design and develop a programme or a course. They include Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), Instructional Designers, Learning Technologists, Learners, Personnel from related industries/professionals, and Graphic Designers.

4.24 **Subject Matter Experts (SMEs):**
These are classified as academics in their areas of specialisations in line with their field of study.

4.25 **Employability Skills:**
These are the skills a learner needs to be able to demonstrate the knowledge gained in school after graduation. There are two categories of employability skills – general employability skills and professional or specific employability skills. The general employability skills include communication skills, problem solving skills, creative and innovative skills, and programme or discipline-specific skills.

4.26 **Semester:**
A half-year term in the academic year of the university. NOUN shall run two semesters currently in an academic year and shall be classified as underscore 1 and 2. E.g. 2023_1 and 2023_2. A semester shall last for 16 weeks.

4.27 Learning Activities:
These are instructional measures/actions that are designed to help learners learn and achieve specific learning outcomes. These include facilitations, discussions, assignments, quizzes, readings, group work, practical exercises, simulations, case studies, and games.

4.28 Learning Resources:
These are materials that are designed to help learners learn and achieve specific learning outcomes. Examples are course materials, instructional videos, podcasts, digital textbooks, online resources (textbooks, journals, videos, etc), and Educational Apps/software.

4.29 Learning Environment:
This refers to the various physical and virtual locations, contexts, and cultures where the learners learn. This includes the university culture, philosophy, characteristics, and how the staff and students interact with and treat one another.

4.30 Course Table of Specification (CTOS):
The course table of specification is different from the test item table of specification though both serve the same purpose of ensuring adequate coverage of activities in an instruction. CTOS is the last stage in course design which is given to writers for content development. It maps prior knowledge, learning activities, learning resources, pedagogy, formative assessment, and estimated study time with a unit title in a course.

4.31 Delivery Mode
This refers to the method of delivering the instructional content to the learners. NOUN uses hybrid such that:
- Online is used for course facilitation (remote course facilitation);

- Learners are allowed the option to take their examinations remotely or in person;
- The practical courses are delivered through a combination of in-person and remotely; and
- SIWES, Internship, teaching practice, and practicum are mostly done in-person, but the university allow remote technique where possible.

4.32 Outline Programme Proposal (OPP)
In NOUN, this refers to the highlight of programme structure which includes:
- programme name and code,
- Programme justification, philosophy History, Philosophy, Aim, and Outcomes of the Programme
- The target audience
- Basic Admission Requirements
- Graduation Requirements
- Assessment and evaluation
- Resource requirement
- Delivery mode
- Learner's support
- Language of instruction
- Projection of student enrolment
- Programme Structure

4.33 Detailed Programme Proposal (DPP)
In NOUN, this refers to:
- Programme Structure,
- Course Description, and
- Course Design.

4.34 Programme Structure
This refers to the listing of courses by level, course code, course title, semester, credit unit, status, lecture hour, and practical hour.

4.35 Course Description
This refers to the course introduction, course learning outcomes, and breakdown of course modules, units, and topics within the units in a course.

4.36 Course Design
This refers to the alignment of unit learning outcomes with prior knowledge, learning activities, learning resources, pedagogy, formative assessment, and estimated study time. This is presented as Course Table of Specification.

4.37 Instructional Designer
This refers to an individual who specialises in enhancing learners, learning experiences with the application of educational and learning theories toward achieving defined learning outcomes. An instructional designer'sresponsibility includes leading the development of specific instructional products/contents/materials.

Principles

5.1 NOUN uses the learner-centred strategy and recognises that the learners need self-motivation in their learning. Therefore, the credit unit hours determine the length of content in the course materials that the learners need to cover within a specified time.

5.2 NOUN considers the hours of self-study when preparing the academic calendar.

5.3 There is flexibility in the use of technology when designing and developing academic programmes making it possible to use experts wherever they are without restriction of place and time.

5.4 NOUN recognises the importance of integrating industrial and professional personnel in the team of programme design and development for relevance and to enrich the content.

5.5   NOUN gives attention to prevailing situations in society and industries through research before going into programme design and development.

5.6   NOUN uses stakeholders (learners, facilitators, alumni, employers, accreditors) feedback when designing and developing new programmes.

5.7   In NOUN, learners are allowed to go for remote SIWES and internship practice.

5.8   In NOUN, undergraduate students need a minimum of 120 credit units and must take and pass all compulsory courses, while postgraduate students need a minimum of 30 credit units and must take and pass all compulsory courses.

5.9   Competency is core focus when designing and developing academic programmes in NOUN.

5.10 It is only academic staff in the Senior Lecturer cadre and above that are used to design and develop curriculum and courses in NOUN, but other academic cadres serve as course writers in their areas of specialisation.

5.11 In NOUN, SMEs are assigned to design and develop a programme or a course in their areas of specialisation.

5.12 In NOUN, the learning environment is built around its philosophy of reaching the unreached by creating a learning environment where learners can learn at any place and at their own pace.

Policy Statements

In NOUN, programme design and development will be procedural and will consider:

6.1   Programme Justification:

6.1.1   There will be evidence of need assessment that will show the existing gap that the proposed programme intends to fill, how the programme will fill the gap, the economic/market value of the programme, and enrolment projection.

6.1.2   To stay focused on NOUN objectives, the relevance of the programme to the vision and mission of NOUN will be mandatory.

6.2   Curriculum Design:

6.2.1   The department shall establish a curriculum design team that will include Subject Matter Experts, Instructional designer(s), Industrial personnel, professional(s), Learning Technologist(s), and Learners.

6.2.2   The curriculum intent/purpose shall be defined to show:
- the programme needs, and
- programme objectives.

6.2.3   The target audience will be clearly stated with an analysis on:
   a. Learners' characteristics to show their needs, age, demography, work experience, previous educational background, and other relevant characteristics.
   b. Employers with focus on their needs and required job skills.

  c. The society.

  d. The expectations of the learners.

6.2.4 The content mapping shall:

- state programme learning outcomes.
- map the specific and general required employability skills (what competency is required to meet the programme objectives?) to the learning outcomes.
- map contents that will help to meet the learning outcomes and employability skills (specific and general).
- develop the course and modules for the programme.
- map the courses and modules with appropriate pedagogical approaches.
- provide an assessment plan that will help achieve the Learning Outcomes:
  - Statement of Purpose:
    - ✓ Why?
    - ✓ For Whom?
- decide the aspect of learning to measure:
  - Knowledge - how well has the student mastered the fundamental information.
  - Basic skills – General and Specific
  - Understanding – how well students understood the concepts.
- state the mode of assessment:
  - Formative
    - ✓ Self-Assessment Exercises (SMEs)
    - ✓ Peer support through chats, discussion forums, and breakout sessions during virtual live classes.
  - Summative:
    - ✓ Project work

- ✓ Seminars
- ✓ Fieldwork
- ✓ SIWES
- ✓ Practical
- ✓ Tests/Quizzes or examinations
- state the assessment type:
  - o Pre-assessment – give a diagnostic test to test the entry behaviour of the learner before the class begins.
  - o Norm-referenced – this compares the student's testing results against other students.
  - o Criterion-referenced – criterion-referenced assessments compare the student's knowledge or skills against a standard.
  - o Benchmark: A benchmark assessment is an evaluation given at regular intervals to measure the student's progress regarding a predetermined benchmark or baseline
- integrate interactivity:
  - o Student to Content:
    - ✓ Automated feedback on self-assessment exercises and quizzes/tests
    - ✓ Interactive videos
  - o Student to Student:
    - ✓ Group assignments
    - ✓ Forums
    - ✓ Chats
    - ✓ SlideShare and presentations
    - ✓ Peer review
    - ✓ Collaborations
  - o Student to Facilitator:
    - ✓ Written feedback comments on assignments and examinations.
    - ✓ Presentations
    - ✓ Timely feedback on assessments
- present mode of deployment:

- In-person
- Virtual/Online
- Blended/Hybrid
- Authentic Assessments e.g. practical, seminars, teaching practice, SIWES, farm practice, Internship, etc.
  - state the resources for delivery of the curriculum:
    - Hardware
    - Software
    - Laboratory/Workshop
    - Videos (interactive or non-interactive)
    - OERs
    - Reference texts.

6.3 Curriculum Development

6.3.1 From the curriculum design, the contents will be structured to show the:
   a. courses,
   b. course modules and the module's learning outcomes,
   c. units and the unit's learning outcomes,
   d. juxtaposition of the modules and units' structure with the approved **benchmark (CCMAS).**

6.3.2 The department shall develop the Outline Programme Proposal (OPP)

The OPP shall be presented in the following format:
   1.0 Name of the programme (Programme title and code)
   2.0 Programme Justification, Philosophy, Aim, and Outcomes of the Programme
   3.0 The target audience
   4.0 Basic Admission Requirements
   5.0 Graduation Requirements:
       5.1 Duration of Programme

6.3.3 The department shall develop the Detailed Programme Proposal (DPP). This will show the course description and design.

6.3.4 The OPP and DPP shall guide course design and development. Both shall be presented in a single final document in the following format:
1.0 Name of the programme (Programme title and code)
2.0 Programme Justification, Philosophy, Aim, and Outcomes of the Programme

Policy Implementation

7.1   The department shall initiate a programme. Where the initiation of a programme is coming from an individual or a committee or a group, such persons must go through the department.

7.2 The Programme Head shall present the OPP to the departmental board for critique.

7.3 The Head of Department shall present the OPP to the faculty board for approval.

7.4 The Dean shall present the OPP to the Director of Academic Planning.

7.5 The Director of Academic Planning shall present the OPP to Senate Curriculum Committee for approval to proceed to DPP.

7.6 On approval of the OPP, the department shall develop the DPP and present to the faculty board.

7.7 The Dean presents the DPP along with the approved OPP to the Director, Academic Planning for presentation to Senate Curriculum Committee for approval to be sent for external review.

7.8 The Directorate of Academic Planning shall send the OPP and DPP for external review.

7.9 The Director of Academic planning shall send a copy of the report to the Head of the Department and a copy to the Dean of the Faculty to effect necessary corrections and return a clean copy to the Directorate of Academic Planning within a specified time.

7.10 The corrected copy shall be presented to the Senate Curriculum Committee by the Director of Academic Planning along with the external report for recommendation to go to the Senate for approval.

7.11 The Director of Academic Planning shall present the OPP and DPP to the Senate for approval.

Sanctions on Violating this Policy

8.1 Any Head of Department or Dean that violates the policy shall lose their position as Head of Department or Dean.

8.2 A programme that does not follow due process shall be denied approval.

Policy Alignment

The policy aligns with the following documents:

9.1 NOUN Open Distance and eLearning Policy.

9.2 National Open University of Nigeria: National Open University (No. 6, 1983) CAP N63.

9.3 National Open University of Nigeria: National Open University (Amendment Act, No. 19, 2018).

10.0 Team of Developers

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2. Miss Nora Onwumelu
3. Mrs Blessing Ozukwe
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