Kurdistan Region – Iraq
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Presidency of Soran University
Correspondence Office

Policy Name: Departmental Academic Programs Advisory Board

Strategic Plan Implementation Assurance Committee (SCSP)

Steering Committee for Strategic Plan

Related Office: DQA, SUPO
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Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of establishing policy for the advisory board for academic programs at Soran University is to scientifically coordinate with stakeholders to strengthen the Program Educational Objectives (PEOs) and ensure they align with the university's foundation, labor market needs, societal expectations, and national and international quality standards. This policy defines the structure, membership, roles and responsibilities, meeting procedures, decision-making, and recording processes of the board affairs. Through this policy, Soran University assures relevant stakeholders that they participate and play a role in ensuring the suitability of its study programs, increasing graduates' employability, and academic quality.

Policy Statement

Soran University is committed to establishing and maintaining high-quality academic programs that are relevant, purposeful, and responsive to the needs of the community and labor market. To this end, the University establishes a Departmental Academic Programs Advisory Board as a formal advisory body within every academic department. These advisory boards provide guidance on the development, review, and improvement of Program Educational Objectives (PEOs), and contribute to the program's continuous improvement, quality assurance, and the preparations required for the accreditation process. Advisory boards are expected to operate with transparency, inclusiveness, stakeholder participation, and evidence-based recommendations.

Policy Summary

This policy establishes the Departmental Academic Programs Advisory Board at Soran University as a body incorporating stakeholder participation, with the purpose of supporting departments in the design, review, and continuous improvement of Program Educational Objectives (PEOs). The policy further defines the formation of the board, its membership structure, term of service, frequency of meetings, documentation requirements, mechanisms for submitting recommendations, and follow-up and reporting procedures. The Advisory Board operates through a defined mechanism to ensure that academic programs remain aligned with institutional priorities, external expectations, and accreditation standards.

Responsible Office

The Institutional Effectiveness Office (IEO) works in coordination with the relevant academic units.

Implementation Oversight

President of Soran University.

Policy History

Approval Date:

Amendment Date:

Parties Responsible for Implementing the Policy

This policy shall be implemented by the following:

- All members of the Departmental Advisory Board.
- Academic departments and program-related committees.
- Faculty deans and heads of department.
- The Institutional Effectiveness Office (IEO).
- The Directorate of Quality Assurance (DQA).
- External stakeholders, including employers, alumni, and community representatives.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all scientific departments and academic programs at Soran University. It covers the formation and management of departmental advisory boards and applies to all academic and administrative staff involved in academic program planning, program review, evaluation of Program Educational Objectives, and the departments' quality-assurance processes. This policy is likewise relevant to heads of department, deans, program coordinators, quality-assurance personnel, and external stakeholders participating in the Advisory Board.

Formation of the Departmental Advisory Board

Every scientific department at Soran University must establish a Program Advisory Board to participate in the development and review of the Program Educational Objectives (PEOs) and to strengthen stakeholder participation in program planning, as set out below:

First: Membership Composition

A. Internal Members (3–5 members)

- Head of Department — Chair of the Advisory Board.
- Program Coordinator or Departmental Quality Assurance Coordinator — Secretary/Coordinator.
- Faculty Representatives (1 or 2 members) — representing the various scientific specializations.

B. External Members (4–6 members)

- Employer/Industry Representatives (2–3 members) (must be related to the specialization).
- Alumni Representatives (1–2 members) (preferably working within their field).
- Internship, field-training, or professional practicum supervisor (1 member) (for departments where applicable).

- A representative of the community, government, or professional organizations (optional, 1 member).

Second: Chair of the Advisory Board

The Advisory Board is chaired by a member designated by the department in consultation with the dean.

At the current stage of implementation, the head of department serves as chair of the Advisory Board in order to ensure institutional coordination of the board's work.

In future stages, subject to institutional development and with the dean's approval, the chair may be selected from among experienced faculty members or experienced external advisory members, provided that the individual possesses relevant expertise and experience consistent with the program's objectives and quality-assurance requirements.

Third: Eligibility and Professional Conduct

External members must:

- Possess professional or academic experience relevant to the program.
- Act in an advisory capacity and remain free of personal interest.
- Commit to confidentiality and to the University's principles and code of conduct.

Fourth: Term of Membership

All members of the Advisory Board, with the exception of the head of department (who serves ex officio), serve for a term of two (2) years, which may be renewed based on performance, participation, and departmental needs. Membership is reviewed on a biennial basis to ensure the continued suitability and effectiveness of the board.

Fifth: Appointment and Replacement of Members

Internal members are nominated by the departmental council and approved by the dean; external members become formal members of the Advisory Board once officially designated.

Objectives of the Advisory Board

The principal objectives of the Advisory Board are to:

1. Assume responsibility for formulating the Program Educational Objectives (PEOs); following their formulation and approval by the advisory boards, the PEOs must be submitted to the Quality Assurance Development Committee for final approval.
2. Enhance the relevance of programs in line with labor-market needs.
3. Strengthen stakeholder participation.
4. Support the quality-assurance process and the preparations required for accreditation.
5. Encourage and oversee continuous progress and improvement.

Role of the Advisory Board

This Advisory Board is responsible for presenting recommendations to the scientific departments regarding the Program Educational Objectives and program improvement. The board does not replace the administrative structure of the scientific departments; rather, through continuous reporting and feedback, it conveys the perspectives of internal and external stakeholders to the scientific departments.

Responsibilities of the Advisory Board

The Advisory Board is responsible for:

- Preparing the board's annual report.
- Reporting on the review of the Program Educational Objectives (PEOs).
- Collecting stakeholder feedback regarding the relevance of programs to the labor market.
- Submitting recommendations related to program improvement.
- Follow-up and reporting.

Responsibilities of the Department / Advisory Board Coordinator

The Advisory Board coordinator must:

- Prepare the meeting agenda and circulate it to members.
- Send related documents to all members one week in advance.
- Arrange the venue and time of meetings.
- Draft and circulate the minutes of meetings.
- Maintain records.
- Ensure that confidentiality is preserved.
- Record and archive (tracking log) departmental proposals and responses.

Channels of Communication

All communications of the Advisory Board, and the transmission of correspondence and documents, must be conducted through Soran University's official communication channels and official university email addresses.

Meetings and Agenda

Meetings shall be conducted as follows:

First: Frequency and Timing of Meetings

The Advisory Board must meet at least once each academic semester.

Second: Approval and Circulation of the Agenda

The Board Chair approves the agenda; the coordinator sends it to members two weeks in advance.

Third: Notification of Attendees

Notice of regular meetings must be sent to members two weeks in advance; ad hoc meetings require notice of at least 48 hours in advance.

Attendance

Members must confirm their attendance within 48 hours. Any member who, without excuse, fails to attend two consecutive meetings may be replaced. Requests to withdraw from membership must be submitted by way of an official memorandum.

Quorum and Decision-Making

A meeting is considered valid only when more than 50% of both the internal and external members are present. Recommendations are approved by a simple majority of the members present.

Minutes of Meetings

Minutes must be recorded using the University's approved template and retained on file, and must include the essential information of the meeting. Minutes must be approved and signed by the members of the board.

Distribution of Meeting Minutes

Minutes must be distributed within one week. Members are given one week to submit any comments. The final version of the minutes is archived and made available to the relevant units and stakeholders.