1.4.1 DEGREE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND MODIFICATION POLICY

1. Purpose

ADA University is dedicated to the continuous enhancement of its academic program. This comprises the development of new and the modification of existing degree programs (including the development or modification of individual courses). Both processes are part of ADA University's commitment to quality assurance in teaching and learning and to the academic freedom of its faculty. These processes also allow for an ongoing strategic development of the University, and they ensure its ability to adjust its educational offerings to new demands of students, the economy or the society as a whole.

The purpose of this policy is to outline detailed procedures for the development and modification of degree programs.

2. Scope and Recommendations

This policy applies to the entire academic program at ADA University, covering all the degree programs and courses offered face-to-face or via a blended or online learning format. It outlines the processes of degree program development and modification at the undergraduate and graduate level.

A proposal for a new degree program or for the modification of an existing program can be initiated and submitted by any group of faculty members or by members of the senior management of ADA University. A proposal for a new course or for the modification of an existing course can be initiated and submitted by any faculty member(s) or by any member(s) of the senior management of ADA University.

Modifications of degree programs or individual courses resulting from the Quality Assurance Committee's regular review of ADA University's academic program are regulated by the *Quality Assurance Policy: Academic Program and Learning Outcomes*. Detailed procedures related to the design and development of curricula and courses are outlined in the *Curriculum and Course Development Policy*.

Creating or adapting a degree program is a multifarious process that involves a variety of factors and stakeholders. Members of ADA University intending to design or redesign a degree program are expected to consult widely and to address feedback and concerns throughout the entire process.

3. Definitions

A *Degree Program* is a coherent and structured set of courses, requirements, objectives and learning outcomes, leading to an academic degree at the undergraduate or graduate level.

Entire degree programs or individual courses offered *Face-to-Face* are classroom-based. They make use of the online mode only for additional student support and to share teaching and learning materials.

Entire degree programs or individual courses offered in the *Blended* (*Hybrid*) format combine classroom-based and online teaching and learning activities.

Entire degree programs or individual courses offered in the *Online* (*Distance*) format are based exclusively on remote forms of teaching and learning.

A *Modification* of a degree program may include (but is not limited to) changes in course composition (including the content of individual courses); program objectives and learning outcomes; curriculum structure; the mode of delivery; or in the program's name.

4. **Development of New Degree Programs**

   4.1 **Initiation of the Development of a New Degree Program**
      a. The development of a new degree program can be initiated by any group of faculty members or by senior management members of ADA University.
      b. Before beginning the process of program development, the initiators are required to consult with the Dean of the School that would serve as administrative home for the program. In case of a multidisciplinary program that spans several Schools, the Dean of the School that is most likely to become the administrative home of the program will serve as the initial consultant for the program initiators. The Dean will inform the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs about the development of a proposal for a new program.
      c. The role of initial consultant will be taken over by the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs if the Dean(s) is (are) part of the group of program initiators. The role of initial consultants will be taken over by the Deans of the other Schools if the involved Dean(s) and the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs are part of the group of program initiators.
      d. The initial consultation will help determine the potential of the proposed program, its strategic positioning within ADA University's educational offerings, but also potential risks program developers may face and how these risks can be addressed.
      e. The initial consultation must also ensure that the process of program development incorporates an external perspective, which will usually consist of at least one faculty member and at least one academic support staff member from at least one of ADA University's partner institutions. After having agreed with the program initiators on potential candidates from partner institutions, the initial consultant(s) must obtain the approval of a sufficient number of these candidates.

   4.2 **Preparation of a Proposal for a New Degree Program**
      a. Program initiators are responsible for the development of the new degree program.
      b. If the initiators are part of ADA University's senior management, the new program must be developed in close cooperation with faculty members of the involved School(s). Faculty will have sole responsibility for all academic matters of the program proposal.
      c. The group of proposers (which consists of all program initiators and developers) will develop a first draft of the program, which must detail courses, requirements, program objectives and learning outcomes. It must also outline its curriculum structure and address the issue of diversity.
      d. The proposers will share the first draft of the program with the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, the Dean(s)[1] and faculty of the involved School(s), with relevant Program Directors and the external consultants as defined in 4.1.e, with the ADA Student Government, and with academic

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[1] Sharing with the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs and the Dean(s) becomes redundant if they are part of the group of proposers. This also applies to the following parts of this policy.

support units (such as, but not limited to, ADA Library, Information Technology Services, Office of Admissions and Student Records, Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation), all of whom will give initial feedback on the draft (faculty feedback will consist of one comprehensive report from each involved School).

e. The proposers will address the feedback received in an adequate manner and develop a revised version of the program proposal. The proposers are free to adopt or reject feedback received on academic issues. In case of rejection, they must demonstrate good academic reasons for their decision.

f. The revised version will go through the same processes as mentioned in 4.2.d and 4.2.e, which will result in a final version of the proposal.

g. The final version of the proposal will be submitted to the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation, which will ensure that it fully corresponds to the Quality Standard and Quality Guidelines set forth for ADA University's degree programs in its *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*. Potential adjustments will be implemented in close cooperation with the proposers.

h. After confirmation by the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation, the proposers will share the final version of the proposal with all the stakeholders referred to in 4.2.d, all of whom will supply feedback letters on the proposal (faculty will supply one comprehensive feedback letter for each involved School).

4.3 Requirements for a New Degree Program

a. The proposers must demonstrate the new program's potential to enhance the quality of education at ADA University.

b. The program proposal must correspond to the Quality Standard and the Quality Guidelines as defined for the Academic Program in ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.

c. The program proposal must include a synoptic but comprehensive outline of the curriculum, its course structure and of further program components as defined in ADA University's *Curriculum and Course Development Policy*. All program components must be clearly aligned with the University's mission, with its *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes*, with its *Curriculum Structure and Regulations*, *General Education Regulations* and *Credit Regulations*, as well as with its *Undergraduate Degree Regulations* or its *Graduate Degree Regulations*. The proposal must also indicate how the new program addresses the University's *Equity, Diversity and Non-Discrimination Policy*.

d. All program proposals must include a statement on required resources (such as, but not limited to, financial resources, faculty and staff, classroom space and technology, library resources, LMS support and teaching materials).

e. All program proposals must be accompanied by a market survey or an equivalent document, indicating a demand for the new program and its potential contribution to the public good and the international visibility of the University.

f. All the feedback letters received from members and stakeholders of ADA University must be added to the program proposal. In case of rejected feedback, the proposers must attach a statement which details reasons for each rejection made.

4.4 Proposal Submission and Approval of a New Degree Program

a. After having been submitted to the Dean of the relevant School, the program proposal needs to be approved by the faculty of that School. Approval is granted if the proposal is accepted by a majority of the School's faculty. In the case of multidisciplinary program proposals, the proposal needs to be independently approved by the faculty of each of the Schools involved.

b. If approved by the School (or each of the Schools), the Dean of the School which would serve as the program's administrative home will submit the proposal (together with all the accompanying documents mentioned in 4.3) to the Deans' Council.

c. At one of its next regular meetings, the Deans' Council will discuss and take a vote on the program proposal. Program proposers will be invited in order to present the proposal and address potential questions. Approval by the Deans' Council is granted if the proposal is accepted by the majority of its members.

d. If approved by the Deans' Council, the program proposal (together with all the accompanying documents mentioned in 4.3) will be submitted to the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, who will make a recommendation to the University Senate (this recommendation must come from one of the Deans not involved in program initiation and development if the Vice Rector is part of the group of proposers). The proposal will be placed on the Senate's agenda, who will discuss and take a vote on the program proposal at one of its next regular meetings. Program proposers will be invited in order to present the proposal and address potential questions. Approval by the University Senate is granted if the proposal is accepted by a majority as defined in Article 3 of the Senate's By-Laws. If accepted by the Senate and approved by the Rector, the new program becomes part of the curriculum of ADA University.

4.5 Implementation of a New Degree Program

a. Responsibility for the development of the program's detailed curriculum (including course design and content) rests with the faculty of the School or Schools involved (for details, see the University's *Curriculum and Course Development Policy* and its *Core Competence and Learning Outcome Specification Policy*). The program's curriculum must be aligned with the *Curriculum Structure and Regulations* of ADA University.

b. Those engaged in the process of curriculum and course development must obtain regular feedback from the external faculty consultant mentioned in 4.1.e and consider all feedback received thoroughly.

c. The program's curriculum needs to be approved by the faculty of the School that serves as administrative home of the program. Approval is granted if the proposed curriculum is accepted by a majority of the School's faculty. In the case of a multidisciplinary program, the curriculum needs to be independently approved by the faculty of each of the Schools involved.

d. If approved by the School (or each of the Schools), the Dean of the School which serves as the program's administrative home will submit the proposed curriculum to the Committee of Faculty Affairs. At one of its next regular meetings, the Committee of Faculty Affairs will discuss and take a vote on the proposal. Approval by the Committee of Faculty Affairs is granted if the proposal is accepted by the majority of its members.

e. If approved by the Committee of Faculty Affairs, the proposed curriculum will be placed on the agenda of the Deans' Council, who will discuss and take a vote on the curriculum proposal at one of its next regular meetings. Approval by the Deans' Council is granted if the proposal is accepted by the majority of its members. If accepted by the Deans' Council, the new program and its curriculum will be made public on the University's website and as part of the Academic Catalogue. The new degree program will be launched in the academic year following the Deans' Council's approval.

f. If the proposed curriculum or any of its courses should be rejected at any stage of the approval process, the proposal will be returned to the faculty of the involved School or Schools, to be updated and resubmitted according to the procedures detailed in 4.5.a to 4.5.e. Faculty must thoroughly consider the reasons stated for the rejection of their proposal during this process.

5. Modification of Degree Programs

5.1 Initiation, Preparation and Submission of a Proposal for Program Modification

a. Major modifications of a degree program can be initiated by any group of faculty members or by senior management members of ADA University. Major changes include (but are not limited to) changes in the program's curriculum and course composition; the program's requirements, objectives and learning outcomes; the mode of delivery; or in the name of the program.

b. Minor modifications of a degree program can be initiated by any faculty member(s) or by any member(s) of the senior management of ADA University. Minor changes include (but are not limited to) the content or requirements of Core Courses and Technical Electives, or the sequence of courses.

c. Before beginning the process of program modification, the initiators are required to consult with the Dean of the School that serves as the program's administrative home. In case of major changes, the Dean will inform the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs about the proposal for program modification. The former procedure becomes redundant if the Dean is part of the group of initiators, the latter if this is the case with the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs.

d. If applicable, the initial consultation will help determine the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed changes to the degree program, but also potential risks that may be faced in the process of program modification and how these risks can be addressed.

e. Initiators of a program modification are responsible for its preparation and submission. If the initiators are part of ADA University's senior management, they are required to closely cooperate with faculty members of the involved School(s) throughout the process of program modification. Faculty will have sole responsibility for all academic matters.

f. The proposer or group of proposers, which consists of the initiator(s) and developer(s) of the program modification, will develop a detailed description of all proposed modifications. All modifications must be aligned with the University's relevant policies, statements and regulations. Depending on the changes envisaged, proposers are strongly recommended to pay particular attention to the procedures outlined in ADA University's *Curriculum and Course Development Policy* and in its *Core Competence and Learning Outcome Specification Policy*. All changes proposed must furthermore correspond to the Quality Standard and Quality Guidelines as defined for the Academic Program in ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.

g. The proposer(s) must consult with the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in order to ensure that their proposal fully corresponds to the Quality Standard and Quality Guidelines mentioned in 5.1.f.

h. In case of major changes, the proposers will share the draft of their proposal with the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, the Dean(s) and faculty of the involved School(s), with relevant Program Directors, with the ADA Student Government, and with relevant academic support units, all of whom will supply feedback letters on the draft (faculty will supply one comprehensive feedback letter for each involved School).

i. After thorough consideration of all feedback received, and after having finalized the proposal, the proposers will submit it to the Dean of the School that serves as the program's administrative home (together with a description of the rationale behind the proposal and all feedback letters received). The latter step becomes redundant if the Dean is part of the group of proposers.

5.2 Approval and Implementation of Program Modification

a. The proposal for program modification needs to be approved by the faculty of the respective School. Approval is granted if the proposal is accepted by a majority of the School's faculty. In

the case of a multidisciplinary program, the proposal needs to be independently approved by the faculty of each of the Schools involved.

b. In case of minor modifications, the School's (or Schools') approval or rejection is the final decision.

c. In case of the approval of major modifications, the Dean of the School which serves as the program's administrative home will submit the proposal to the Committee of Faculty Affairs (together with a description of the rationale behind the proposal and all feedback letters received). At one of its next regular meetings, the Committee will discuss and take a vote on the proposal. Approval by the Committee of Faculty Affairs is granted if the proposal is accepted by the majority of its members.

d. If approved by the Committee of Faculty Affairs, the proposal for program modification (together with a description of the rationale behind the proposal and all feedback letters received) will be placed on the agenda of the Deans' Council, who will discuss and take a vote on the proposal at one of its next regular meetings. Approval by the Deans' Council is granted if the proposal is accepted by the majority of its members.

e. If approved by the Deans' Council, the proposal for program modification (together with a description of the rationale behind the proposal and all feedback letters received) will be placed on the University Senate's agenda, who will discuss and take a vote on the proposal at one of its next regular meetings. Approval by the University Senate is granted if the proposal is accepted by a majority as defined in Article 3 of the Senate's By-Laws.

f. If accepted by the School(s) (minor modifications), or if accepted by the Senate and approved by the Rector (major modifications), the modification will come into effect in the academic year following the School's (or Schools') or the Senate's approval, and it will be made public (as part of the degree program) on the University's homepage and in the Academic Catalogue.

g. Responsibility for the implementation of program modifications rests with the faculty of the School or Schools involved.

6. Termination of Degree Programs

6.1 Proposal of and Decision on the Termination of a Degree Program

a. The termination of an existing degree program can be proposed by senior management members of ADA University or by the majority of the faculty of the School that serves as the program's administrative home (in the case of a multidisciplinary program, termination can be proposed by the majority of faculty of any of the involved Schools). Proposers are expected to consult widely before submitting a proposal for degree termination.

b. The proposers must provide a detailed statement on the rationale behind the proposal and attach the most recent enrollment reports as well as a market survey (or an equivalent document) that clearly indicates a lack of demand for the degree program and/or its growing insignificance in the public and/or economic sphere. Their proposal must also include feedback letters from the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, the Dean(s) and faculty of the involved School(s), from relevant Program Directors, from the ADA Student Government, and from academic support units (faculty will supply one comprehensive feedback letter for each involved School). Feedback letters are only required from those stakeholders that are not part of the group of proposers.

c. After appropriate consideration of the feedback letters received, the group of proposers will decide whether they will uphold, modify or withdraw the proposal.

d. Modification of the proposal will result in an updated statement on the rationale of the proposal and/or in the compilation of additional supporting documents, all of which must be submitted to

the stakeholders mentioned in 6.1.b, who will either uphold or adapt their previous feedback letters. After appropriate consideration of the feedback letters received, the group of proposers will make a final decision on whether they will uphold or withdraw the proposal.

    e. In the case of a multidisciplinary program, and if the group of proposers uphold their proposal as detailed in 6.1.c or 6.1.d, the proposal needs the approval of the majority of each of the involved Schools in order to proceed.

    f. If the proposal of program termination is approved by the faculty of the involved School(s), the Dean of the School which serves as the program's administrative home will submit the proposal to the Deans' Council (together with the latest description of the rationale behind the proposal, the most recent enrollment reports, the market survey or an equivalent document, any additional supporting documents, and the latest versions of the feedback letters received). At one of its next regular meetings, the Deans' Council will discuss and take a vote on the proposal of program termination. Proposers will be invited in order to present the proposal and address potential questions. Approval by the Deans' Council is granted if the proposal is accepted by the majority of its members.

    g. If approved by the Deans' Council, the proposal of program termination (together with the documents mentioned in 6.1.f) will be submitted to the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, who will make a recommendation to the University Senate (this recommendation must come from one of the Deans not involved in the proposal for program termination if the Vice Rector is part of the group of proposers). The proposal will be placed on the Senate's agenda, who will discuss and take a vote on the proposal at one of its next regular meetings. Proposers will be invited in order to present the proposal and address potential questions. Approval by the University Senate is granted if the proposal is accepted by a majority as defined in Article 3 of the Senate's By-Laws. If accepted by the Senate and approved by the Rector, the termination of the program will come into effect and be implemented as described in 6.2.

6.2 Implementation of the Termination of a Degree Program

    a. Student admission to a suspended degree program will terminate with immediate effect.

    b. The program will continue to appear on the University's website and in its Academic Catalogue, followed by the notation "program will terminate, admission has been suspended".

    c. As soon as the number of students remaining on the program is decreasing, program offerings can be reduced.

    d. Full consideration is to be given to the needs of those students that are still enrolled in the program, who must be allowed enough time and course offerings to complete the program. Students who wish to transfer to another (and comparable) program will be allowed to do so.

    e. As soon as there are no students left, the program will be permanently removed from the University's website and Academic Catalogue.

7. Online and Blended Degree Programs

7.1 Procedures for the development of new online or blended degree programs or for the modification or termination of existing online or blended degree programs follow the same procedures as described above.

7.2 In addition to the procedures described above, the group of proposers shall include one of ADA University's *Blackboard* Course Facilitators.

7.3 During the development or modification of an online or blended degree program or course, particular attention must be paid to the attainability of program objectives and/or stated learning outcomes via an online or blended teaching, learning and assessment format. Proposers are

strongly recommended to consult ADA University's *Online Education and Assessment Regulations* during the process of program or course development or modification.

8. Joint Degree Programs

8.1 Procedures for the development of new joint degree programs or for the modification or termination of existing joint degree programs follow the same procedures as described above.

8.2 In addition to the procedures described above, the development of new joint programs or the modification or termination of existing joint programs require the consultation with and the approval from the respective partner institution.

8.3 During the development or modification of a joint degree program or course, proposers must ensure that their proposal is fully aligned with ADA University's *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes*, *Curriculum Structure and Regulations*, *General Education Regulations*, *Credit Regulations*, as well as with its *Undergraduate Degree Regulations* or its *Graduate Degree Regulations*.