



UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION POLICY 2020

**HIGHER EDUCATION
COMMISSION**

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I: INTRODUCTION

1. This document provides the objectives and policy for Undergraduate Education, that is, education programs leading to the Bachelor of Studies Degree (BS), Professional Degrees, and the Associate Degree (AD) (See Paragraph 3).
2. **Objectives:** The overall objective of the policy is to enhance the likelihood of student success. Specific objectives include the following:
 - 2.1. **Competency-Based Learning:** The approach adopted here recognizes the complex outcomes of the learning process, often divided into four components: **knowledge** (disciplinary, interdisciplinary, epistemic, and procedural), **skills** (writing, oral communication, ICT-related skills, quantitative analysis, analytical and problem-solving skills, critical and creative thinking, and learning to learn), **professional behaviour** (self-regulation, time management, integrity, intellectual curiosity, intellectual openness), and **interpersonal attributes** (empathy, self-efficacy, collaboration).
 - 2.2. **Balance between Breadth and Depth:** To ensure that the study is neither too narrowly focused nor too diffuse. On the one hand, those who fail to develop broader skills at an early stage in their lives unknowingly limit their futures. On the other hand, focus is essential for developing intellectual discipline and rigor.
 - 2.3. **Specialization:** To enable students to have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the area of specialisation. However, the purpose is not to force them prematurely into particular occupations or to foreclose their options. So, focus on specialization will start later in their educational streams.
 - 2.4. **Applied Knowledge:** To prepare students to apply the acquired knowledge and skills to life's challenges, rather than merely acquiring narrow skills or pieces of information.
 - 2.5. **Emphasis on Creativity:** To foster exploration, curiosity, discovery, and creativity amongst students.
 - 2.6. **Terminal Degree:** To design all undergraduate degrees, including the AD and BS degrees, to be terminal degrees. In other words, while some students may seek further education in order to become active researchers, or out of personal curiosity, or a desire

to burnish their credentials, no one would feel compelled to do so because of the inadequacy of education.

3. **Types of Degrees:** In Pakistan, there are five categories of undergraduate degrees, which are briefly listed below. Given the variations in the exact titles of some degrees, they are only described generically:
 - 3.1. **Four-Year BS:** These are degrees in arts and sciences. Unlike the practice in some countries, which distinguish between science and arts degrees (BA/BS), in Pakistan there is a single degree called Bachelor of Studies (BS) for both arts and sciences, but with mention of the discipline on the degree.
 - 3.2. **Four-Year Professional Degrees (Requiring Licensure):** Currently these include Bachelor of Engineering (BE); Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS); and Bachelor Studies in Nursing (BSN).
 - 3.3. **Five-Year Professional Degrees (Requiring Licensure):** Currently these include Bachelor of Architecture; Bachelor of Eastern Medicine and Surgery; Bachelor of Homoeopathic Medical Sciences; Doctor of Veterinary Medicine; Doctor of Pharmacy; Bachelor of Laws (LLB); and Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS).
 - 3.4. **Four-Year Degrees in Disciplines with Councils (Not Requiring Licensure):** Currently these include undergraduate degrees in Agriculture, Business Studies, Computer Science, Education, and Technology.
 - 3.5. **Two-Year Associate Degree (AD):** This is a two-year program, taught mainly at affiliated colleges. It has replaced the old BA/ BSc degrees, which were discontinued.
4. **Glossary and Acronyms:** Section IX provides a glossary of acronyms and abbreviations used in this document.

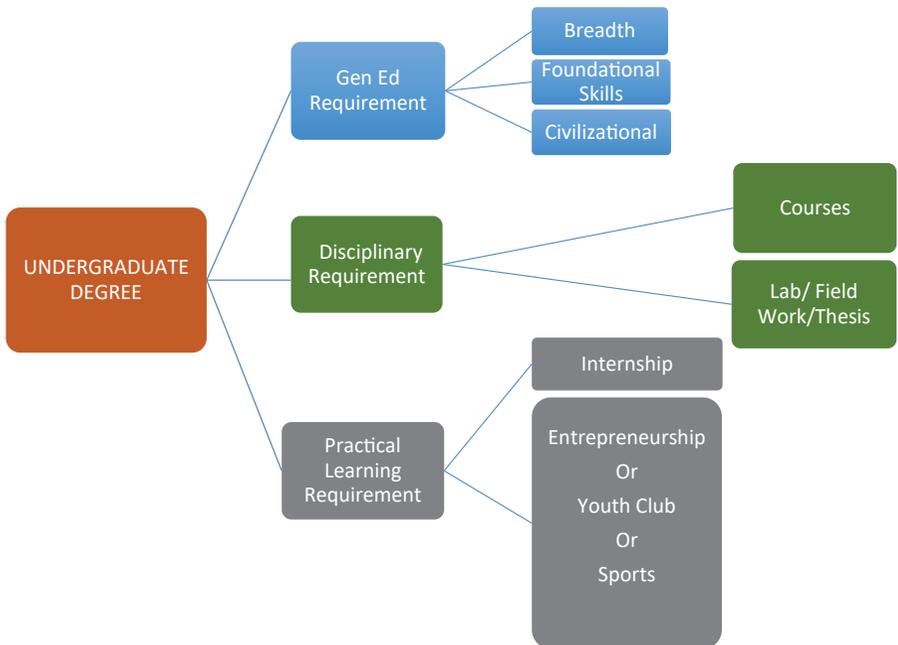
II: FRAMEWORK

5. **Overview:** To enhance the likelihood of student success, the program of study is designed to balance disciplinary or concentration requirements with two other types of requirements, namely general education (Referred to as Gen Ed) requirement and practical learning requirement. All undergraduate programs, including professional degree programs, will have to complete the requirements described below.
6. **Gen Ed Requirement:** The academic program will ensure that every student is acquainted with the broad variety of fields of inquiry and approaches to knowledge in the 21st century. Briefly, this requirement will entail the following. (Details of the Gen Ed requirement are elaborated in Section VI).
 - 6.1. **Breadth:** Students will be required to take two courses each in the three broad domains of knowledge, namely Arts and Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences;
 - 6.2. **Foundational Skills:** Students will be required to take three courses in Expository Writing (EW) and two courses in Quantitative Reasoning (QR); and
 - 6.3. **Civilizational Knowledge:** Students will be required to take one course each in Pakistan Studies and Islamic or Religious Studies.
 - 6.4. **Clarification 1:** Each University has the freedom to design, develop, and decide the courses to meet the Gen Ed requirement. Initially, however, in order to assist universities, HEC will develop model courses for all the requirements listed above (Paragraphs 6.1-6.3).
 - 6.5. **Clarification 2:** It needs to be clarified that Gen Ed courses constitute a minimal education, not a complete one, and represent the least that an educated person should seek to know. They are intended to be starting points, not goals.
7. **Disciplinary Requirement:** Modern knowledge has always been defined by its areas of specialization and focus, that is, its disciplines, and by the recognition that any claim to expertise has to rest upon the mastery of a body of knowledge and the acquisition of a set of skills. While the general education requirement seeks to introduce students to the breadth of modern knowledge, the disciplinary requirements seek to deepen their knowledge of their chosen discipline or Major.

- 7.1. **Four-year BS:** All students would be required to select a Major (See Section III) from one of the three broad domains of knowledge (i.e., Arts and Humanities, Natural Sciences, or Social Sciences). The department concerned will determine, through normal procedures, the disciplinary requirements, including the prerequisites students will need to enrol, the body of knowledge they will have to master, and the skills they will have to acquire in order to obtain a degree in that discipline. Depending on the particular subject, in addition to course requirements, there may be lab requirements, practical or fieldwork requirements, and/or research and thesis requirements.
 - 7.2. **Professional Fields:** For professional fields, the disciplinary requirements will be developed by the departments concerned in collaboration with the professional associations or learned councils.
 - 7.3. **Associate Degree (AD):** The disciplinary requirements for the AD will be determined by the affiliating university of the College.
8. **Level of Knowledge:** In all subjects, including Gen Ed courses, students are expected to advance beyond their secondary school level, and mature and deepen their competences, including in writing, communication, mathematics, languages, analytical and intellectual discipline.
 9. **Practical Learning Requirement:** A third determinant of future student success is practical knowledge of the environment they will face, regardless of whether they choose to join the job market, enter into or start a business, engage in social or political activism, or take up sports or other recreational or competitive activities. The Practical Learning Requirement is aimed at equipping students with skills they will need to succeed in such roles. All undergraduate academic programs shall provide students with a menu of activities that can equip them with such skills, and in order to graduate every student will have to participate in one or more of such activities as specified below. (Details on the Practical Learning requirement are in Section VII.).
 - 9.1. **Internship:** In order to graduate, every student shall have to complete an internship program, of at least 9-week duration, at any time after the completion of their fourth semester, generally during the summer. Universities will collaborate with employers to arrange the requisite number of internship slots.

- 9.2. **Practical Learning Lab (PLL):** In order to graduate every student will have to enrol in at least one non-credit extracurricular program (hereinafter referred to as a “Lab”) for at least 4 semesters. The “Lab” will meet for a minimum of 4 hours per week (e.g., two afternoon sessions every week). Depending on the facilities available at universities, “Labs” would be offered in one or more of the following three areas: entrepreneurship, youth clubs, and sports.

Schematic Representation



III: THE FOUR-YEAR BS DEGREE

10. **Overall:** Within the requirements given in the Framework (Section II above), to obtain a BS degree, students will have to complete the following:
- 10.1. **Credits and Courses:** The minimum credit requirement to qualify for a BS degree is **120 credits**. The actual number of courses will depend on the credit hours for the courses taken. If all courses are of 3 credits, they will have to take a total of 40 courses.
 - 10.2. **Credits per Semester:** Ordinarily, students will complete 15 credits in every semester by taking five courses of 3 credits each, or other combinations. However, a student may take more or fewer courses in a semester with permission in writing of the competent authority as specified in the rules.
 - 10.3. **Gen Ed Courses:** In accordance with the requirement given in the Framework (Section II above), a minimum of 39 credits will be reserved for the 13 Gen Ed courses. (Details of the Gen Ed requirement are given in Section VII below).
 - 10.4. **Majors and Minors:**
 - 10.4.1. **Major:** A Major is the academic discipline or specialized area of study selected by the student as their primary focus.
 - 10.4.2. **Declaration of Major:** Every undergraduate student has to declare a Major (Also see Paragraph 13.2 below). Ordinarily, a Major is associated with a department. The exceptions are interdisciplinary Majors or custom-designed Majors, which are put together by the student and allowed subject to the approval of the academic advisor and any other authority that may be specified.
 - 10.4.3. **Requirements and Prerequisites for Major/s:** The requirements and prerequisites for Majors shall be determined by the departments concerned, subject to the condition that total requirements for a Major shall not be less than 39 credits (equivalent to thirteen 3-credit courses) or more than 54 credits (equivalent to eighteen 3-credit courses).

- 10.4.4. **Minor:** A Minor is optional. It is a secondary concentration of courses, ordinarily in an academic discipline that complements or is in addition to the Major.
- 10.4.5. **Requirements and Prerequisites for Minor/s:** The requirements and prerequisites for Minors shall be determined by the departments concerned, subject to the condition that total requirement for a Minor shall not be less than 12 credits (equivalent to four 3-credit courses).
- 10.5. **Beyond a Single Major:** A student may opt for a single Major or two Majors (i.e., a double Major), or a Major and a Minor, or a Major and two Minors, provided that the departmentally determined credits and prerequisite requirements are met, and the permission of the academic advisor is obtained.
- 10.6. For students pursuing two Majors, the departmental distribution requirement (See Paragraph 11 below) for a Major can be partially fulfilled by courses taken for the other Major.
11. **Distribution Requirement:** At least 18 credits (equivalent to six 3-credit courses) of the requirements for a degree shall be in distribution courses, that is, courses in allied or complementary disciplines or departments, as specified by the department responsible, and as described below:
- 11.1. **Specification of Distribution Courses:** The department responsible for the declared Major will identify and develop a list of courses, with levels, in each of the Allied Disciplines/ Departments, which they consider can fulfil the distribution requirements of their discipline. Students will have the right to choose courses from the list.
- 11.2. **Use of Gen Ed Courses to Fulfil Distribution Requirement:** Departments will determine which of the Gen Ed courses, if any, can be used to meet the distribution requirements. Provided that the same Gen Ed course cannot be used for meeting more than one distribution requirement.
- 11.3. **Treatment of Pass/Fail Courses:** If a university allows some courses to be taken as pass/fail rather than a letter grade, no more than two (2) of those can be used to fulfil the distribution requirement.

12. **The Role of Academic Advisors:** Universities shall assign an Academic Advisor to each student to provide advice on their academic careers, including the selection of their Major(s) and Minor(s), and approve any special requests or waivers. (Also see Section VIII, Paragraph 30 below).
13. **Sequencing:** The recommended course of studies stresses diversity in the earlier years, and moves towards increasing concentration in the major/minor subjects in the later years.
- 13.1. Gen Ed courses will typically be completed in the first three semesters, and definitely by the end of the fourth semester. Those who fail to complete all Gen Ed requirements by the end of the fourth semester will not be promoted.
- 13.2. In order to allow students to exercise maximum informed choice with regard to their future areas of concentration, the selection and declaration of the Major will take place at the commencement of the third (3rd) semester. However, universities will develop rules for dealing with exceptions where students wish to change their Major at a later time.
- 13.3. The following table is an illustration of the progression over the first four semesters:

Semester	Courses					Credit Hours
I	Expository Writing I	Natural Sciences I	Social Sciences I	Quantitative Reasoning I	Arts & Humanities I	15
II	Expository Writing II	Natural Sciences II	Social Sciences II	Quantitative Reasoning II	Arts & Humanities II	15
III	Expository Writing III	Pakistan Studies	Islamiat	Optional*	Optional	15
IV	Major OR Distribution**	Major OR Distribution	Major OR Distribution	Major OR Distribution	Major OR Distribution	15

Note:

*Optional: These are introductory courses in different disciplines that are offered by departments, in which students may enroll. The department will determine how many, if any, course credits earned in the optional course/s can count towards the Major or Distribution credit requirements (see below).

**Major and Distribution: Major courses are in the discipline that the student declares as the main area of study and are offered by a department. Distribution courses are those which the department determines to be allied with the declared Major or discipline and are offered by other departments. Also refer to paragraphs 10.4.1 and 11, respectively.

14. **Practical Learning Requirement:** Every BS student will have to fulfil the Practical Learning Requirement described in Section II Paragraph 9 above, and further elaborated in Section VII below.

IV: PROFESSIONAL DEGREES

15. **Gen Ed Requirement:** In accordance with the requirements specified in the Framework (Section II above), and as further elaborated in Section VI below, 39 credits of Gen Ed courses will be mandatory for all undergraduate students in the professional streams.
16. **Disciplinary Requirement:** The disciplinary requirements for professional education programs will be determined by the relevant departments of the universities in collaboration with professional associations or learned councils.
17. **Practical Learning Requirement:** As specified in the Framework (Section II above) and as further elaborated in Section VII below, every student in a professional stream has either to fulfil practical learning requirements prior to graduation, or through any special provisions for students in their particular stream. Special provisions for students in professional streams are given below:
 - 17.1. **Internship:** Students in professional streams have the option to fulfil the Internship requirement through similar or equivalent components of their regular program of studies, or post-degree licensing requirement of the profession, provided these components have a duration of 9 weeks or more. The list of eligible programs is given below, and additions will be notified from time to time and incorporated into this section.
 - 17.1.1. Currently the list of eligible programs includes:
 - (i) House Jobs for Medical students, and
 - (ii) Apprenticeships for Law students.
 - 17.1.2. Other professional degree programs or students may, with prior approval of their professional councils, apply for their programs to be included in this list.
 - 17.2. **Practical Learning Lab (PLL):** Students of professional degree programs will also have to fulfil the PLL requirement as specified in Section VII Paragraph 27 below.

V: THE TWO-YEAR ASSOCIATE DEGREE (AD)

18. **Transition to Semester System:** All HEIs offering the two-year Associate Degree (formerly BA/BSc) will transition to the semester system per HEC policy and guidelines.
19. **Overall:** Within the requirements given in the Framework (Section II above), to obtain an AD degree, students will have to complete the following:
 - 19.1. **Credits and Courses:** Every AD student will complete at least 60 credits. The actual number of courses will depend on the credit hours for the courses taken. If all courses are of 3 credits, they will have to take a total of 20 courses.
 - 19.2. **Credits per Semester:** Ordinarily, students will complete 15 credits in every semester by taking five courses of 3 credits each, or other combinations. However, a student may take more or fewer courses in a semester with permission in writing of the competent authority as specified in the rules.
 - 19.3. **Gen Ed Requirement:** As specified in the Framework (Section II above), and further elaborated in Section VI below, every AD student will have to take 39 credits of Gen Ed courses.
 - 19.4. **Disciplinary Requirement:** The disciplinary course offerings for AD will be determined by the affiliating university.
 - 19.5. **Practical Learning Requirement:** Students of AD programs will have to fulfil a modified version of the Practical Learning requirement specified in Section VII below. The special provisions pertaining to AD students are as follows:
 - 19.5.1. **Internship:** AD Students shall have the option of completing a 9-week summer internship any time after their first semester, or a work attachment for a total of up to 360 hours during their course duration.
 - 19.5.1.1. A graduate of the AD program who enrolls subsequently in a BS program shall receive credit towards the fulfilment of the internship requirement for the BS program.
 - 19.5.2. **PLL:** AD students will be allowed to fulfil the PLL requirement by signing up for an extracurricular “lab” of

4 hours a week for 2 semesters, in one of the following three areas: entrepreneurship, youth clubs, or sports.

19.5.2.1. A graduate of the AD program who enrolls subsequently in a BS program shall receive credit towards the fulfillment of the PLL requirement for the BS program.



VI: THE GEN ED REQUIREMENT

20. **Overview:** As indicated in Section II above, every undergraduate student, including those in BS programs, professional education programs, or AD programs, will have to complete 39 credits in Gen Ed courses. Ordinarily, these will comprise 13 courses, divided into the following categories: (a) breadth courses in the three domains of knowledge, i.e., Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences; (b) foundational skills courses in Expository Writing and Quantitative Reasoning and; (c) civilizational courses in Pakistan Studies and Islamiyat or Religious Studies. Brief descriptions of the three types of courses are given below.
21. **Breadth Courses:** Every student will be required to take two prescribed courses in each of the three broad domains of knowledge. A general description of each domain is as follows:
- 21.1. **Arts and Humanities (2 Courses):** The purpose of the arts and humanities requirement is to introduce students to the key themes in this domain, including philosophy, history, and the creative arts. These subjects explore how we understand human experience, cultivate an appreciation of the past, enrich our capacity to participate in the life of our times, and enable engagement with other cultures and civilizations, both ancient and modern: Thus providing insight into the experiences of others and as well enabling critical examination of one's own, promoting mutual respect and tolerance, instilling cultural pride and self-confidence, and supporting the development of creative expression. But independently of any specific application, the study of these subjects teaches understanding and delight in the highest achievements of humanity.
- 21.2. **Social Sciences (2 Courses):** Social sciences provide an insight into the analysis of individual and social behaviour, and networks. Social sciences use a variety of methodologies both qualitative and quantitative. Anthropology, economics, psychology, sociology, and political science teach us who we are as social beings and help us appreciate the perspective of the other as well as the particularities of society. Methods in the social sciences test for connections between the familiar and the foreign, the

traditional and the contemporary, the individual and the group, the predicted result and the anomalous outcome. Study of the social sciences prepares students for lives of civic engagement and develops a nuanced sense of the world around them.

- 21.3. **Natural Sciences (2 Courses):** Natural sciences enable an understanding and appreciation of the physical and the natural world through observation and experimentation. The program of studies introduces students to theoretical analyses, experimental methods, and problem solving. They provide insight into what we know as well as what we may learn in the future. The study of physics, chemistry, geology, biology, and ecology helps develop critical faculties for evaluating natural phenomena and expert opinion. It teaches students to appreciate the beauty of the natural and physical worlds often hidden from casual observation but which, once revealed, lends richness to everyday life.
22. **Foundational Skills Courses:** The second component of general education focuses on the development of key skills. This will include courses in Expository Writing and Quantitative Reasoning. A general description of each of these is as follows:
 - 22.1. **Expository Writing (3 Courses):** The ability to write well is one of the hallmarks of an educated person and is indispensable for professional success. The strengthening of writing skills also helps develop intellectual practices that distinguish active from passive learners. The required courses focus on writing clearly and cogently, overcoming prevalent errors in Pakistani English, writing or publishing technical papers, editing or copy-editing of documents, and learning how to translate from one language to another.
 - 22.2. **Quantitative Reasoning (2 Courses):** In the 21st century, an early exposure to quantitative reasoning has become essential for professional success in all disciplines, including the natural and the social sciences as well as many arts and humanities fields, as well as coping with the ordinary challenges of life in a technologically infused environment. More generally, the mental rigor resulting from quantitative study has been celebrated since ancient times. Information technology and the rigorous dissection of logical arguments in any discipline depend on algorithms and

formal logical constructs. An educated person must be able to use quantitative information to make, understand, and evaluate arguments.

23. **Civilizational Courses:** the third component of general education pertains to courses that introduce the students to the history and culture of Pakistan. A general description of these courses is as follows:

23.1. **Pakistan Studies (1 Course):** The course is intended to introduce students to key concepts and milestones in the country's history, including the archaeological and anthropological record going back to the ancient Gandhara and Harappa civilizations, the arrival of Islam in the 8th century, the role of the Sufi saints, the challenges posed by the Industrial Revolution, the impact of colonial rule, the Pakistan Movement, post-independence history, and the current economic, geographic, and social landscape of the country.

23.2. **Islamiat or Religious Studies (1 Course):** This course will aim at identifying the intellectual, philosophical, and spiritual history of the country. This is a survey course to introduce students to the early history of Islam, the contribution of Islamic societies to intellectual, scientific, and political developments in the world, and the economic and social conditions of contemporary Islamic societies.



VII: THE PRACTICAL LEARNING REQUIREMENT

24. **Overview:** An important objective is to make the undergraduate degree a terminal one, for which experience in a practical work environment and engagement in extracurricular activities is an invaluable complement to a student's academic training. The practical learning requirement will be fulfilled as described below.
25. **Non-Credit:** Practical requirements will be non-credit, that is, they will not receive letter grades for these programs.
26. **Internship:** A mandatory component of the practical requirement will be an internship. The purpose of the internship is to expose students to real life work environments before they graduate. In order to meet this requirement, internships will be governed by the following guidelines:
 - 26.1. **Standard Internship:** The standard internship will typically be in the summer and after the fourth semester; it will be at least 9 weeks in duration; and will take place at a designated host institution.
 - 26.2. **Host Institution:** The following may serve as a host institution:
 - (i) A government organization, in any of the three main branches of government, executive, legislative, or judicial, in national, provincial, or local governments, or (ii) an autonomous body or attached department of a government agency, or (iii) a business enterprise, or (iv) an academic institution, or (v) an NGO.
 - 26.3. **Prior Agreement:** Universities will enter into prior agreements with potential host institutions to place students in such internships.
 - 26.4. **Career and Placement:** Universities will establish Career and Placement Offices to serve their student body, including students enrolled in their affiliated colleges.
 - 26.5. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Universities will assign individual faculty members to monitor and evaluate the quality of work of each student-internee (e.g., papers or reports submitted, employers' feedback, or other prescribed indicators of performance), and these evaluations will be made part of the students' permanent record.

- 26.6. **Certification:** On successful completion of the internship, students will be awarded a certificate of completion.
- 26.7. **Special Provisions:** In some cases, students will have the option of fulfilling their internship requirements through other means.
- 26.7.1. BS students are required to complete a standard internship.
- 26.7.2. Students in professional degree programs have the option, either to complete a standard internship, or, if their program requires an alternate form of practical experience, to have that experience counted in lieu of the standard internship (See Paragraph 17.1 above).
- 26.7.3. **Students in AD programs** also have an option, either of completing a standard internship at any time after their first semester; or, to fulfil the requirement in the form of an attachment with a host institution for a total of 360 hours during the course of their studies.
27. **PLL:** The second component of the practical requirement will be fulfilled by participation in an extra-curricular PLL activity. Students will enrol in any one of the following three “labs”: an entrepreneurship lab, a student club (please see below for examples), or a sport program. The labs will operate as follows:
- 27.1. **The Entrepreneurship Lab:** The Entrepreneurship Lab will be under the supervision of the Director ORIC or Director BIC or a faculty member designated specially for this purpose. Students who sign up for the entrepreneurship lab will be required to attend the lab for a minimum of 4 hours per week for at least four semesters. The lab will include lectures, teamwork, proposal writing sessions, competitions, presentation sessions, fundraising events, start-up events, and marketing events. Each student will be expected to propose a project, which he or she will take to completion.
- 27.2. **Youth Clubs:** These may be of different types. The purpose is to expose students to social engagement through participation in group activities. These may include Green Clubs, Drama Clubs, Book Reading Clubs, University Magazines or Newspapers, University TV or Radio Stations, Debating Clubs, or Student Associations. Each Club will formulate its own rules and

procedures; in some cases, the students may need to compete for entering into it (e.g., in the University Magazine), while others may have open admission policies. Each of these clubs will have a faculty advisor, who will keep a record of attendance, oversee financial matters, where needed, and provide advice on university policies or regulations.

- 27.3. **Sports:** Students who wish to fulfil their lab requirements through sports will have to sign up with the Director Sports or other designated officer, and attend regular training and practice sessions, which will be treated as equivalent to “labs”.
- 27.4. **Organizational Provisions:** The following provisions shall govern the organizational arrangements in regard to the practical learning requirement:
- 27.4.1. **Time Commitment:** The time commitment for the PLL activity will be 4 hours a week for 4 semesters for BS students and students in the Professional streams, unless waived for the latter; and 2 hours a week for 2 semesters for AD students.
- 27.4.2. **Lab Structure:** The weekly activity mentioned above will be referred to as “labs”. This is on the analogy of science labs, in which students undertake practical work.
- 27.4.3. **Facilitation:** Students will be facilitated in the labs by faculty or staff assigned to the tasks (e.g. Director ORIC/Director BIC, Director Student Clubs, Director Sports, or other designated faculty).
- 27.4.4. **Evaluation:** Universities will evaluate the quality of work (e.g., papers or reports submitted, patents filed, start-ups initiated, sports medals obtained, club activities promoted, and the like), and these evaluations will be made part of the students’ permanent record.
- 27.4.5. **Certification:** On successful completion of the PLL requirement, students will be awarded a certificate of completion.

VIII: MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

28. **Switching Between Programs:** Students would be allowed to switch between programs provided they fulfil the entry or exit requirements.
- 28.1. **From AD to BS Program:** Associate Degree holders may apply for admission to a BS program. If admitted (based on the University's admissions policies), the university may accord them advanced standing by allowing them to transfer some of the course credits from the AD to the BS program. Further, students may receive partial or full credit, as the case might be, for internships and PLL activities completed during AD.
- 28.2. **Exiting from BS with AD:** A university may have a policy that allows a student admitted to the BS program to exit with an Associate Degree, provided that the university requirements for the award of the AD have been met.
- 28.3. **Switching between General and Professional Degree Programs:** A student admitted to a professional degree program may apply for transfer to a general degree program, or vice versa. The admission to the new program would be based on the overall admission policy of the university. If admitted, the admitting university will determine which and how many of the earned credits can be transferred.
29. **Admissions:** Students will be admitted to the university or professional school on the basis of a consolidated merit list, rather than a specific department.
- 29.1 Universities will develop a centralized and transparent university admissions system in accordance with HEC guidelines on the subject.
- 29.2 Departments will develop rules of admission to the discipline, ensuring that admissions are transparent, merit-based, and based on the fulfilment of pre-requisites, and as well are properly documented.
- 29.3 Where needed, HEC will facilitate the establishment of an admissions system that fulfils the requirements of the admissions policy.

30. **Student Academic Advisement:** Universities will establish an effective student advisory system to ensure that academic advice is available to every student. Key issues to be addressed include advice on: Selection of Major(s)/Minor(s), fulfilling distribution requirements, sequencing of courses, fulfilling practical learning requirements, freedom of speech, academic honesty, and other academic issues that may arise. HEC will provide guidelines on this issue.
31. **Principles of Policy:** Universities are encouraged to develop and announce the broad principles of policy governing the academic environment. In accordance with international best practice, two fundamental principles of policy are the freedom of expression and academic honesty.
- 31.1. **Freedom of expression:** Freedom of expression is of central importance for an academic community, where the search for truth holds a primary value. Although freedom of expression may sometimes make life uncomfortable, it is essential for high quality education as well as innovation or invention. This means the cultivation of a community where all ideas are tolerated regardless of their provocativeness. All individuals are to be treated with respect regardless of the degree of congruence of their ideas with one's own. Freedom of expression thrives only in a civil and respectful community.
- 31.2. **Academic Honesty:** Like freedom of expression, academic honesty holds a special place in a community devoted to the creation, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge. It is important for students to learn how to acknowledge the contributions of others in their own work and to document properly their reliance on others' thinking. Discovering how to use others' work to advance one's own is a key part of learning. Very few scholars ever have completely original ideas, and even the greatest scholars build on their predecessors' achievements. Understanding how to incorporate others' points into one's own arguments, and how to acknowledge those points properly, is one sign of maturing scholarship. It is also important to understand that failure to know or follow the conventions of documentation and citation—even when inadvertent—is considered a grave breach of academic integrity. Academic dishonesty, including cheating as well as plagiarism, includes any misrepresentation of others' work as

one's own, such as unacknowledged paraphrasing or quoting, use of another student's material, incomplete acknowledgment of sources (including Internet sources), or submission of the same work to complete the requirements of more than one course.



IX: ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY

The following abbreviations have been used in this document:

AD:	Associate Degree
BA/ BSc:	Bachelor of Arts/ Bachelor of Science. (Discontinued after 2018).
BDS:	Bachelor of Dental Surgery
BE:	Bachelor of Engineering
BIC:	Business Incubation Centre
BS:	Bachelor of Studies
BSN:	Bachelor of Studies in Nursing
EW:	Expository Writing
Gen Ed:	General Education
HEC:	Higher Education Commission
HEI:	Higher Education Institution (Universities, Institutes, or other Degree Awarding Institutions).
ICT:	Information and Communication Technologies
LLB:	Bachelor of Laws
MA/MSc:	Master of Arts/ Master of Science. (Discontinued after 2020).
MBBS:	Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery
ORIC:	Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization
PLL:	Practical Learning Lab (which is the name given to a bi-weekly meeting on an extra-curricular activity, including entrepreneurship centres, green clubs, or sports).
QR:	Quantitative Reasoning



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