



Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Manpower
Directorate General of Technological Education

Curriculum Development and Review
Framework
for Colleges of Technology

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Abbreviations & Acronyms Used

AAD	Academic Affairs Department at DGTE
ADAA	Assistant Dean Academic Affairs at CoTs
CDRC	Curriculum Development and Review Committee
CDRF	Curriculum Development and Review Framework
CoTs	Colleges of Technology
DGTE	Directorate General of Technological Education
GAs	Graduate Attributes
LOs	Learning Outcomes
LT	Long-Term
MoM	Ministry of Manpower
MSpC	Main Specialization committee
OAAA	Oman Academic Accreditation Authority/Oman Accreditation Council
QAD	Quality Assurance Department, Colleges of Technology
QAO	Quality Assurance Officer
QD	Quality Department, Ministry of Manpower [formerly, Quality Assurance Department ,QAD]
SAR	Self-Assessment Report
SpC	Specialization committee
ST	Short-Term
V & M	Vision & Mission

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW FRAMEWORK

SECTION 1.0 Introduction

The Ministry of Manpower is responsible for seven Colleges of Technology (CoTs) which were established to provide technological education in the Sultanate. These colleges are monitored by the Directorate General of Technological Education (DGTE) and regularly audited by the Quality Department (QD), formerly known as Quality Assurance Department (QAD).

The Programmes currently offered by the CoTs were designed through a consultative process involving both internal and external stakeholders, and have been implemented since September 2003. The various programme and curricular offerings are aligned to the Vision, Mission, Values and Graduate Attributes. The curriculum has been revised by the Specialisation Committees periodically, based on the surveys conducted at the CoTs and the feedback received from internal and external stakeholders. The purpose of this Curriculum Development and Review Framework (CDRF) is to systematize the processes of curriculum development and review for the various programmes and curricula offered by the CoTs.

The Curriculum Development and Review processes are carried out within the parameters of the CoTs Vision and Mission, which are as follows:

Vision

We will be a leading technological institution providing high quality teaching and learning to prepare and empower the Omani professionals of the future to contribute to national socio-economic development.

Mission

To deliver high quality student-centred education that produces competitive graduates who enter the labour market with confidence, strong technological and personal skills, prepared for a life of contribution and success.

1.1 Overview

What is a Curriculum?

In formal education, a curriculum is a set of courses, and their content, offered at a school or university. It specifies:

- Content: What a student should know (course of study) and be able to do (learning outcomes)
- Context: How the educational system is organized
- Methodology: How it is to be taught (i.e., the instructional methods and teaching strategies of lecturers)
- Assessment: How students' learning is measured based on set criteria and assessment tools.

A quality educational program must ¹

- be consistent with its institution's mission,
- have clearly defined outcomes it intends to produce,
- use the best combination of learning experiences to help each learner achieve these outcomes,
- include an assessment process that shows whether the outcomes are being achieved, and
- use the findings of assessment to improve program effectiveness.

The programs and curricula offered at CoTs are unified across the CoTs in terms of program design, content, objectives, learning outcomes, assessment and pedagogy. Program Objectives state what each program aims to achieve. Each Program comprises several courses as deemed necessary by the DGTE to achieve the program objectives, each course having a syllabus with course objectives and learning outcomes. The syllabi are outcomes-driven, so academic departments and colleges may choose their own teaching materials and teaching methodologies as mentioned in the Common Pedagogical Framework (CPF) for CoTs to suit the needs, level and interests of the students. For some courses books have been prescribed and/or provided by the DGTE, MoM.

In the light of the rapid growth and developments in science, technology and other fields of study, it is necessary to review curricula from time to time. It is also necessary to put in place effective curriculum and program development and review mechanisms.

1.2 Definition of Curriculum Development and Review

It is a process of developing, reviewing and revising the existing curriculum of the colleges by evaluating and assessing it in terms of context, content, methods, and assessment by involving stakeholders in order to meet the expectations and the changing demands of the market and the wider environment.

1.3 Aims of the Curriculum Development and Review Framework

The aims of the curriculum development and review framework are:

- To provide a clear procedure for the Colleges of Technology (MOM) to follow, in order to allow for focused evaluation of the current curriculum.
- To ensure continuing quality and relevance of courses, with the ultimate needs of graduates and the local work environment (industry) in mind and also to keep abreast of the emerging trends in the educational system.
- To unify the curricula thereby ensuring consistency across all the CoTs.
- To provide a basis for benchmarking curriculum nationally and internationally

1.4 Rationale for Review:

Programs and curricula should be relevant, up-to-date and aligned with the Mission and Vision. Current programs and curricula should be reviewed to:

- meet socio-economic changes,
- address new knowledge and skills required in the subject area,
- keep pace with the rapid changes in technology and the market,

¹ Robert M. Diamond and Lion F. Gardiner, Curriculum Review, The National Academy for Academic Leadership. (<http://www.thenationalacademy.org/readings/curriculum.html>).

- rebalance the curriculum (curriculum overload or thinness),
- meet national and international standards, and
- address the feedback from stakeholders.

1.5 Scope of the Curriculum Development and Review Framework: The following areas will be considered while reviewing and developing curricula:

- 1 Vision and Mission of CoTs
- 2 Graduate Attributes
- 3 Programme Goal & Objectives
- 4 Course Learning Outcomes
- 5 Program & Course Duration
- 6 Student Entry Requirements
- 7 Progression Requirements
- 8 Course Delivery Plan
- 9 Teaching Strategies
- 10 Assessment of Student Learning
- 11 Programme & Course Evaluation
- 12 Staffing & Other Resources

1.6 Reasons for publicising the working mechanism for Specialisation Committees:

The CDRF/working mechanism has to be transparent and communicated to all stakeholders to:

- Ensure consistency of practices and procedures among all specialization committees.
- Encourage internal and external stakeholders' participation in program and course evaluation.

1.7 Curriculum Review and Development Cycle²:

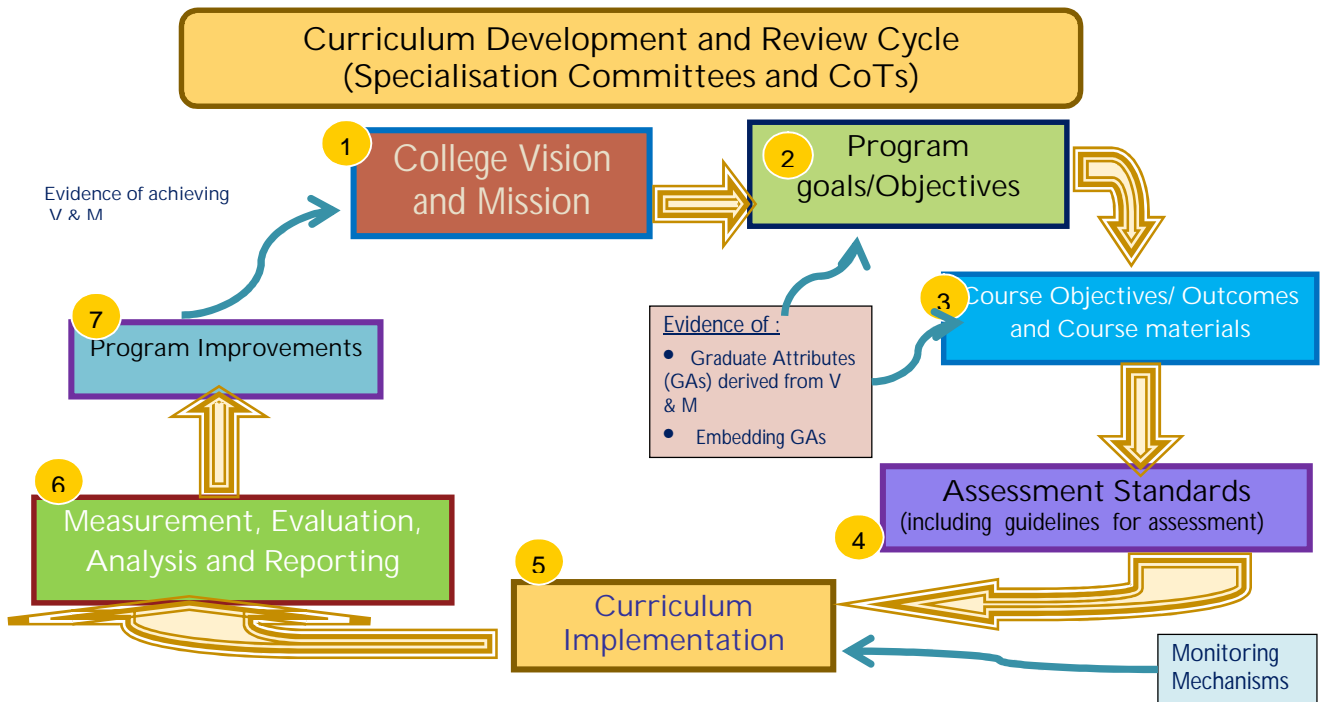


Figure 1

Figure 1 depicts the Curriculum Development and Review Cycle (CDRC), which comprises seven stages and entails specific roles and responsibilities for the specialization committees and the CoTs. Details are discussed in the following paragraphs:

Stages 1-4: Curriculum Development and Review:

1. The Vision and Mission statements as well as the intended Graduate Attributes (GAs) of the CoTs are developed and reviewed through a collaborative process involving key external and internal stakeholders.
2. Program goals/objectives are developed or reviewed taking into account the achievement of the Vision and Mission and inculcation of intended graduate attributes which are supported by demonstrable evidences.
3. Course objectives and course learning outcomes are derived from the program objectives. Course materials are either prescribed or developed in-house.
4. Developing or reviewing assessment standards taking into consideration the components of the assessment system in assessing student learning and the courses under each program.

² Source: QAD Presentation at the Workshop for Specialization Committees, "Addressing OAAA Recommendations", 17 October 2012.

Stages 5-7: Implementation of Revised/Modified Curriculum:

5. The approved curriculum changes are implemented in all CoTs with each academic department/centre monitoring its own implementation. It is important for the governing and management bodies of the college to provide adequate infrastructure and academic support services to staff and students (e.g. course delivery plans, textbooks and reference materials, fully-equipped labs and workshops) for the smooth implementation of the curriculum. Implementing the Common Pedagogical Framework (CPF) of the CoTs helps to maintain consistency of teaching and learning practices among all colleges.
6. Monitoring mechanisms, such as class observations, student evaluation of teaching, checking teachers' course files and student portfolios, collecting feedback from stakeholders on programs and courses, should be utilized to check the effectiveness of the curriculum. The collected feedback is evaluated, analyzed, and reported in Self-Assessment Reports (SARs) by the Quality Assurance Department (QAD) at the CoTs.
7. Suggestions for improvement based on the analyses of feedback and/or results of benchmarking is sent to the Specialization Committees through proper channel and the approved changes are disseminated to and implemented by the CoTs (More details for stages 6 and 7 can be found in Section 2 of this document)

1.8 Categories and Timeframe for curriculum development and review

Table 1: Showing Categories and Timeframe for curriculum development and review*

Short-term (1 -2 academic years)	Long-term (3-5 academic years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that Graduate Attributes (GAs) are in alignment with program and course objectives/learning outcomes • Reviewing course learning outcomes in relation to national standards • Changing of delivery plan – altering content coverage, time allotted for coverage of a particular unit • Writing a common delivery plan for each course (common for all the CoTs) • Changing parts of course materials to suit learning outcomes (e.g., re-writing parts of published textbooks) • Revising the selection of text and reference books for each course • Revising common blueprints (test specifications) for the exams • Amending assessment guidelines such as changing continuous assessment formats/scheme to evaluate student achievement of learning outcomes • Reviewing benchmarking activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing Graduate Attributes for each strategic planning cycle • Revamping program objectives and learning outcomes • Changing the course materials/ course books used • Changing credit/contact hours (theory/practical) • Proposing changes to student entry and progression requirements • Phasing out of courses/programs • Introduction of new courses/ programs • Rebalancing the no. of specialized courses with the general requirement courses for each level of study • Major changes to the educational plans/designs – length of semesters, program duration, number of courses in a program • Changing electives • Changing prerequisites for a course/program • Changing the whole assessment scheme

*These are some illustrative examples for each category and are by no means exhaustive.

SECTION 2.0 Responsibility for Curriculum Development and Review

This section outlines the roles and responsibilities of the bodies involve in the Curriculum development and review work.

Some of the process mentioned in figure 1, page 7 are elaborated in Figure 2 below. Figure 2 describes the respective roles of individual colleges, specialization committees and the Directorate General of Technological Education with respect to curriculum development and review.

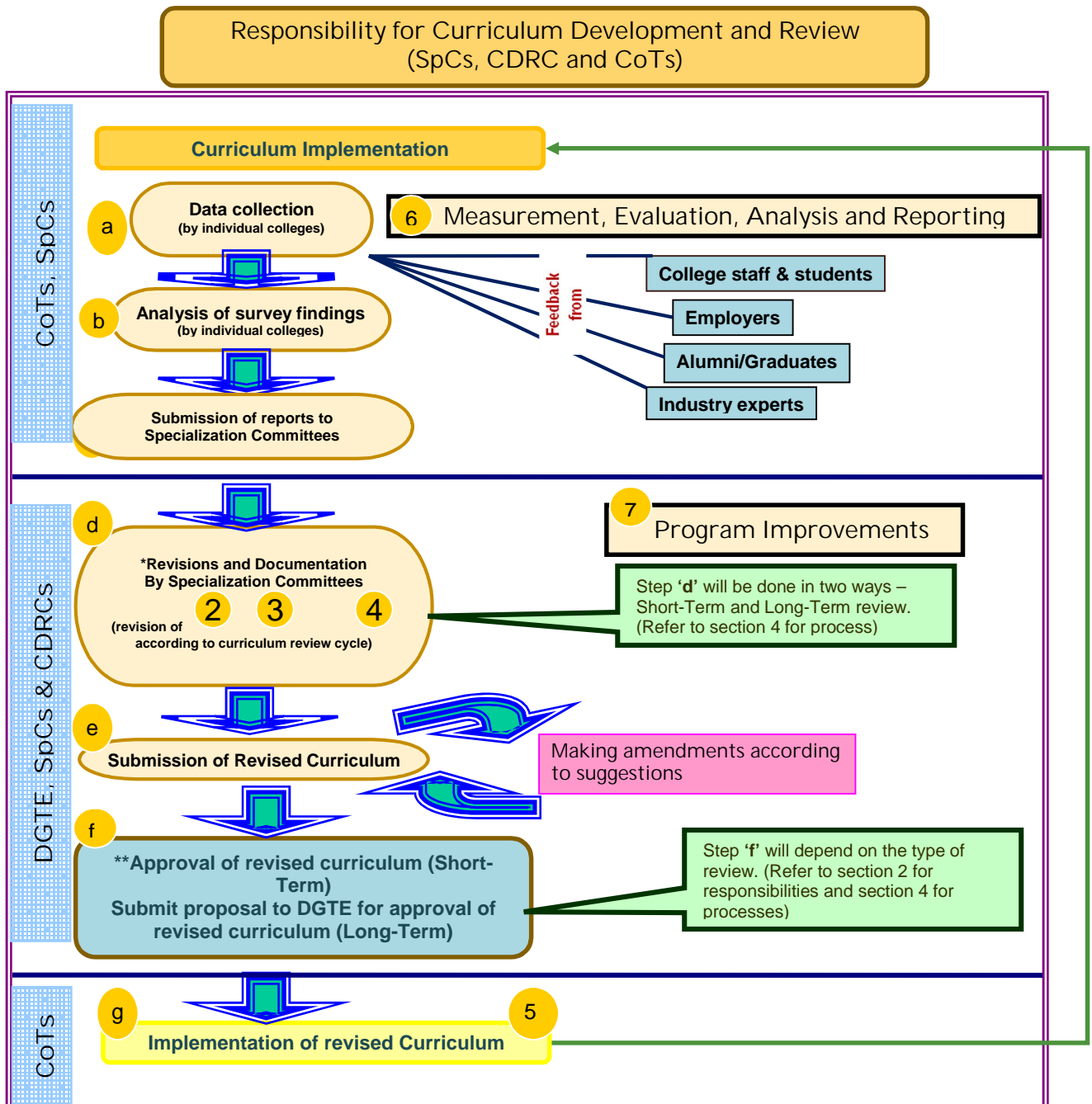


Figure 2

The responsibility for the Curriculum Development and Review (CDR) is carried out by different bodies at two levels as follows:

Level 1: Ministry level:

- Board of Trustees (BoT): The BoT is responsible for approving the colleges' educational system and specifying their levels of study, educational and training curricula as well as certificates and academic degrees awarded.
- The Undersecretary: The Undersecretary will call for periodic meetings with the college Deans to discuss college affairs, policies, curricula and other issues that are deemed necessary for the smooth running of the colleges.
- Technical Committee (TC): The Technical committee/Dean's Council will be responsible for overseeing the functions of the SpC and provides the overall direction for the Curriculum Review Processes. The TC is the approval authority for the long term changes made to the curriculum. In addition the TC also decides on the offering of new programs and/ or specialisations and courses.
- Academic Affairs Department at the MoM: The Academic Affairs Department at the Directorate General of Technological Education will liaise closely with the Heads of Specialization Committees for Curriculum Development and Review and will be responsible for implementing the relevant recommendations from the Board of Trustees and the Technical Committee, through the Specialization Committees. Together they will provide the specialisation committees with the plans and tools required to carry out the curriculum development and review processes. (see Appendix A, for the structure, membership and Terms of Reference of the specialisation committees)
- Specialisation Committees (SpCs): These are the committees instituted by the Office of the Undersecretary for Technological Education and Vocational Training (MoM) according to a Ministerial Decree (No.: 3/2011 dated 6th February, 2011) and its amendments thereof. There exists a SpC for each specialisation offered by CoTs which is responsible for attending to systematic changes in the programs that are being offered and also to attend to the introduction or proposing the need for introduction of new programs. The members of this committee are the Heads of the Departments of the relevant specialisation. One of them will be the Chairperson elected/ nominated by H.E the Under-Secretary. The coordinator may be a Head of Section of the relevant department in any of the CoTs, who may be elected from among the members/nominated by Under-Secretary. This committee's responsibilities with respect to curriculum development and review are more fully listed in Table 2. The specialisation committees are responsible for the approval of the short term changes proposed by the CDRC.
- Curriculum Development and Review Committees (CDRCs): These are committees (already existing) for each sub-specialisation within each specialisation committee required to perform continuous and specified tasks, such as needs analysis and carrying out surveys. Each college should have at least one member representative in the committee. Members should include one subject specialist for each specialization from any department/centre such as a senior lecturer/Head of Section/a testing coordinator. The number of members will depend on the sub-specializations offered by each department. This committee can also have industry representatives/ external subject specialists nominated by the specialisation committee according to the needs of each program. The members will choose their Chairperson and Coordinator. The responsibilities of the members of this committee are listed in Table 2.

Level 2: Colleges of Technology:

- Heads of Departments and Centres (HoDs/HoCs): They are responsible for collating and forwarding the reports from the Department Quality Assurance Offices (QAOs) to the College Dean and the respective Specialisation Committees. They are also responsible for the implementation of revised programs and courses.
- Department/Centre QAOs: They are responsible for the following :
 - Data collection based on the forms received from the SpC/CRDC
 - Analyse feedback received from the internal and external stakeholders
 - Consolidation of reports based on analysis of feedback
 - Submission of consolidated reports to the HoD/HoC and Head of College Quality Assurance Department

Table 2: Activities involved in Curriculum Development and Review

Activities	Responsible Body
1. The Department QAOs collect feedback from stakeholders , liaise with their HOD/HoC , and forward the Self- Assessment Reports (SARs) to the college QAD. 2. College QAD forwards the reports to the College Dean, who in turn will forward the SARs on Domain 2 (Student learning by coursework programs) to the Specialisation Committee.	Colleges of Technology –Departments/ Centres
3. All the members deliberate on and approve the summary of recommendations from the CDRC for short-term curriculum review. 4. Short-term revisions to the curriculum should be approved by a majority vote within the SpCs. 5. The Head of SpCs forwards the CDRC recommendations/revisions for long-term curriculum review to the AAD – DGTE. 6. The Head of SpCs and the coordinator follows up the matter with the AAD – DGTE for speedy approval of long-term recommendations/revisions. 7. The Head of SpCs ensures the systematic, uniform implementation throughout the CoTs of the approved short-term and long-term recommendations, new programs or any other recommendations made by the SpC or DGTE.	Specialization Committees
8. The Coordinator prepares action plans which includes the timeframe for activities from receiving feedback from all the colleges up to the implementation of the approved recommendations (refer to Tables 5.1, 5.2 & 5.3). 9. The members nominated by the Chairperson summarize and analyze the reports received from all the CoTs and prepare a detailed summary of recommendations under two categories, i.e. short-term and long-term.	Curriculum Development and Review Committee (CDRC)

Activities	Responsible Body
10. The short-term and long-term review recommendations/ suggestions are forwarded to the specialization committee for approval then sent as proposals to the SpCs and AAD – DGTE. 11. After approval from the SpCs (short-term), TC / Deans Council (long-term), the members nominated by the Chairperson review and revise the changes to curriculum according to the recommendations and forward the changes/revised curriculum to the SpC for dissemination.	
12. The DGTE, through the Academic Affairs Dept., agrees with the Heads of Specialization Committee on the deadlines, Action Plans and the appropriate tools to conduct curriculum review and development. 13. SpCs approve/revise the short-term changes proposed by CDRCs. 14. The DGTE through the AAD and Heads of Specialisation Committees should authorise the implementation of the revised curriculum.	DGTE – Through the Academic Affairs Dept. and the Heads of Specialisation Committees
15. The TC/Deans Council deliberates on and approves the long-term review recommendations/revisions to the BoT for timely implementation. 16. The TC ensures the provision of required resources for implementing and monitoring the revised curriculum through the regular meetings held with H.E the Undersecretary. 17. The TC ensures that the curriculum is implemented consistently across all the CoTs.	Technical Committee (Deans' Council)

Note:

- The SpC members, College QAD, HoDs/HoCs, Department QAOs, should meet the deadlines according to the Action Plan.
- The HoDs/HoCs should implement the Specialization Committee's recommendations/the revised curriculum.
- All the SpC members should meet at least once a month to discuss the issues related to curriculum review/development, or as and when deemed necessary

SECTION 3.0: Communication Channel:

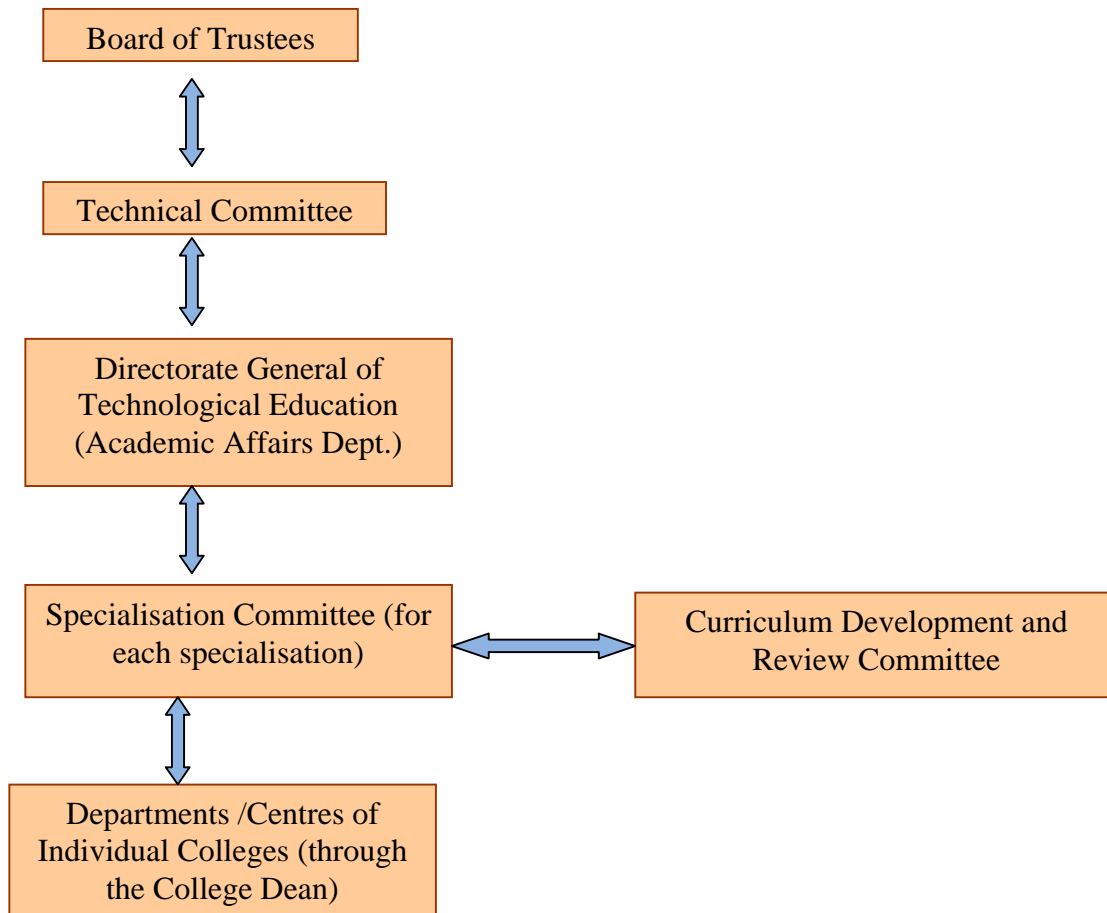


Figure 3

Figure 3 shows the communication channels between and among all the parties involved in curriculum review/development. For the CoTs all the communication to and from the Specialisation Committees should be through the College Dean. The Specialisation Committee is the authority to approve short-term changes to the curriculum and the Technical Committee is the highest authority responsible for approving the long-term changes recommended by the specialisation committees.

The details pertaining to the frequency of meetings, modes of communication, procedures for decision-making and documentation and so on should be agreed upon by the respective committees as part of the procedures for their functioning/operation.

SECTION 4: Curriculum Development and Review Processes

The Curriculum Development and Review process consists of the following steps:

Step 1: Collection of Feedback

A) Collecting feedback from stakeholders:

The AAD with the heads of Specialisation Committees will prepare the overall Action plan for the process of curriculum development and review, and disseminate the Plan to all the CoTs. Each QAO of department/centre within the CoTs should collect feedback on programs and courses preferably during the 2nd semester of every academic year from stakeholders. Feedback on programs and courses and results of benchmarking should cover aspects, such as learning outcomes, content, and assessment for each course taught, and relevance and appropriateness of the programs and courses, as well as the attainment of graduate attributes.

The AAD with the heads of Specialisation Committees should unify the tools for collecting feedback from the stakeholders. The department/centre QAO (at college level) should consolidate all the feedback in Forms 1A & 1B (Course Evaluation and Program Evaluation respectively) and submit it to the Specialization Committee as per the deadline in the Action Plan.

B) Mapping and Gap Analysis:

Each department/centre should consolidate the gap analysis in Form 1C and submit it to the Specialization Committee as per the deadline in the Action Plan.

Step 2: Summarizing and analyzing the feedback

- Each Specialization Committee will constitute an ad hoc committee (Curriculum Development and Review Committee – CDRC) to summarize the feedback reports and gap analysis reports submitted by the CoTs. The ad hoc committee will synthesize the reports and propose recommendations for short and long-term changes in the curriculum in the given format (Forms 2A, 2B, 2C & 2D) and send them to the Specialization Committee for action.
- The Specialization Committee will review the recommendations of the ad hoc committee for long-term changes and forward their proposals to the TC for approval

Step 3: Approving and Revising the Curriculum

- Short-Term Revisions in the Curriculum: The Specialization Committee will review the proposed changes and decides on the appropriate course of action.
- Long-Term Revisions in the Curriculum: The TC is ultimately responsible for approving Long-term changes in the curriculum based on the recommendations of the specialisation committees and they will decide on the appropriate course of action.

- After approval from the Specialisation Committee/TC, the CDRC should consolidate the changes to the curriculum in Form 3 and forward the revised curriculum to the Specialisation Committee for dissemination.

Step 4: Dissemination and Implementation of the revised curriculum

- After approval, the SpC will ensure that the revised curriculum is disseminated without delay to all the CoTs for implementation with appropriate guidelines.
- The HoDs/HoCs are responsible for guiding the departments/centres in smooth implementation and monitoring the implementation.
- The HoDs/HoCs should also organise workshops/seminars required to create awareness among and help the users in the smooth implementation of the revised curriculum.

Step 5: Feedback and Review

After completion of step 4, it is necessary to start again from step 1 to see the effect of improvement, as curriculum development and review is a cyclical process. It is very important to collect feedback from stakeholders annually. It must, however, be noted that a new curriculum introduced based on long-term review recommendations should be further changed only after implementation for a minimum period of 3 years.

Documentation

- The Heads of Specialization Committees are responsible for maintaining all relevant documents – data, forms, reports and communications – in a way that enables easy documentation and retrieval of information relating to curriculum development and review.
- In addition, a copy of each of these documents has to be kept in the Academic Affairs Dept. at the DGTE's office.

SECTION 5.0 Timeframe for Curriculum Development and Review Processes

The curriculum development and review processes outlined earlier should be carried out according to the action plans. Sample action plans are shown in Tables 5.1, 5.2 & 5.3 below.

Table 5.1: Sample Action Plan for Curriculum Review – Short-Term

Curriculum Review Action Plan – Short-Term (1 Academic Year)				
SL no:	Activities	Deadlines for submission	Responsibility	Expected Outcome
1.	Data collection from Departments/Centres (Forms 1A , 1 B & 1C)	Semester 1	Dept / centre QAOs and SpC	Collected data from CoTs
2.	Summarising and submitting recommendations to SpC (Forms 2A, 2B, 2C, & 2D)	Sem 2	CDRC	Compilation reports
3.	Approval of Short-Term recommendations	End of Sem 2	SpC	Changes approved and Plans for revision of curriculum disseminated to CDRC
4.	Revision of curriculum	Sem 3	CDRC	Revised curriculum
5.	Approval of revised curriculum	Sem 3	SpC	Revised curriculum approved
6.	Dissemination of revised curriculum	Sem 3	SpCs and CDRCs	Revised curriculum disseminated to CoTs
7.	Implementation of revised curriculum	Sem 1, following AY	HoDs/HoCs	Revised Curriculum implemented

Table 5.2: Sample Action Plan for Curriculum Development and Review – Long-Term for Existing programmes

Curriculum Review Action Plan – Long-Term (3-5 Academic Years)				
SL no:	Activities	Deadlines for submission	Responsibility	Expected Outcome
1.	Data collection from Departments/Centres (Forms 1A & 1 B)	Semester 1	Dept / Centre QAOs and SpC	Collected data from CoTs
2.	Summarising and submitting recommendations to SpC (Forms 2A, 2B, 2C, & 2D)	Sem 2	CDRC	Compilation reports
3.	Submit Long-Term recommendations to the DGTE	End of Sem 2	SpC	Recommendations send to DGTE
4.	Approval for Long-term recommendations	AY 2: Semester 1 – before the end of week 10	TC	Approved curriculum
5.	Revision of curriculum	AY 2: Semester 2 – before the end of week 10	CDRCs	Revised curriculum
6.	Dissemination of revised programs and plans	AY 2: Semester 3	SpCs and CDRCs	Revised curriculum disseminated to CoTs
7.	Implementation: procuring required resources , piloting revised plans and programs, phasing out old programs/courses	AY 2: Semester 3	Dean, ADAA, HoDs/HoCs	Revised Curriculum implemented

Table 5.3: Sample Action Plan for Curriculum Development – Introduction of New programs/courses

Curriculum Development Action Plan – Long-Term (3-5 Academic Years)				
SL no:	Activities	Duration	Responsibility	Expected Outcome
1.	Conduct feasibility studies for submission of long-term recommendations	6 months	SpC	Recommendations for introduction of new programs
2.	Submission of Long-Term recommendations to the DGTE / New programs proposed by the Deans council	2 months	SpC	Recommendations send to DGTE
3.	Approval for Long-term recommendations / New programs	1 month	TC	Approved curriculum
4.	Formulation of new curriculum	4 months	CDRC	New curriculum
5.	Dissemination of new programs and plans	2 months	SpCs and CDRCs	New curriculum disseminated to CoTs
6.	Implementation: procuring required resources , piloting new plans and programs, phasing out old programs/courses	10 th month onwards	Dean, ADAA, HoDs/HoCs	New Curriculum implemented

SECTION 6.0 Related Documents and Appendices

Related Documents:

1. CoTs Strategic Plan (Strategic Directions)
2. Oman Academic Standards for General Foundation Programs (OAC/OAAA)
3. Common Pedagogical Framework
4. Benchmarking procedure (to be developed)

Appendices:

1. Forms 1A, 1B & 1C: Self-Assessment Review (SAR) Template (to be used by every department/centre)
2. Forms 2A & 2B: Synthesizing Curriculum Revision Proposals (SARs) from CoTs (to be used by the CDRC)
3. Form 3: Consolidated Recommendations based on Curriculum Review Process (to be used by CDRC & SpC)

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