Concept Paper Format for New Academic Programs

Concept Paper Submission Guidelines

Concept papers are an extremely important part of the application process because they enable the University Council (UC) to learn the program objectives, attributes of the graduate from the program, their employability, availability of faculty members and essential infrastructure, as well as the potential demand for the program. The use of concept papers also permits UC to better judge the feasibility of the proposed program.

A. Format and Content

All concept papers should include a cover sheet, a program narrative and a preliminary estimation of demand for the program.

1. The Cover Sheet
The Cover Sheet for concept papers should contain:

a. A title describing the proposed program;

b. The name and address of the organization, department or individual submitting the paper;

c. The name, title, address (if different from that in b), and telephone number of a contact person(s) who can provide further information about the paper; and

e. The estimated time length of the foreseen market study.

2. The Program Narrative

The Program Narrative of a concept paper should be no longer than necessary, but in no case should exceed five (5) double-spaced pages on A4 paper. Margins must be at least 1 inch and type size must be at least 12. The narrative should describe:

I. **General information**: name of the program, academic degree of the program's graduates, name of the faculty at which the program is going to be integrated.

II. **Specific Issues**
   a. Why is the program needed?

b. How can the program be of benefit to the Palestinian community in general and Birzeit University in particular?

c. If similar programs are available at other Palestinian institutions of higher education, then how will the proposed program be distinguished from existing programs?

d. If the program is to be conducted in a specific locations(s), rather than on campus, the applicants should discuss the particular needs of the program site(s) to be addressed by the program, why those needs are not being met through the use of existing facilities, materials, programs, procedures, services or other resources and the benefits that would be realized by the proposed site(s). (If the program is to be conducted on campus, you do not need to answer e below).

e. If the program is not site-specific, applications should discuss the problems that the proposed program will address, why existing facilities, materials, programs, procedures, services, or other resources do not adequately resolve those problems, and the benefits that would be realized from the program generally.

f. What are the attributes of the graduates of the program?

g. How employable would be the graduates of the program?

h. Are faculty members who are going to teach the program available? In case some of these are studying abroad for their master's degrees or PhD degrees, when are they going to join the program?

i. If the program does not have enough faculty members (less than 5), do we have letters of intent (LOI) from similar foreign institutions that they will send us visiting scholars who would teach for some time until we can have our own faculty members? If so, please attach the LOI.

j. Is there potential demand for the program? How sustainable is this demand?

k. Any idea of how much the tuition and fees per credit hour of the program? **It must be made clear that the program is a net revenue earner**, i.e. the following **considerations must be clarified**:

    a. Are new faculty members needed to be employed or the program will make use of the existing faculty members?

b. Are the new students going to be enrolled in existing courses and classes or new classes are to be opened to absorb them?

c. Do the new students represent additions to the existing students or are they going to be at the expense of the number of students in other programs? In other words is there a case of cannibalism involved in the introduction of the new program?

III. Special Infrastructure

Is there a need for special infrastructure for the program such as labs, specially designed rooms, and special equipment?

If the answers of these questions are positive, please indicate the level of investment required for such infrastructure, and if you have funding plans or agreements in this regard.

IV. Letters of Cooperation or Support

The UC encourages concept paper applicants to attach letters of cooperation and support from related agencies that will be involved in or directly affected by the proposed program.

5. Page Limits

a. Concept papers with program narratives should not exceed the limits set in sections 2. The page limit does not include the cover page and any letters of cooperation or endorsements. Additional material should not be attached unless it is essential to impact a clear understanding of the program.

b. Applicants submitting more than one concept paper may include material that would be identical in each concept paper in a cover letter, and incorporated that material by reference in each paper. The incorporated material will be counted against the eight page limit for each paper. A copy of the cover letter should be attached to each copy of each concept paper.