



FOUNDATION PROGRAM

البرنامج التأسيسي



Faculty Manual Policies and Procedures, 2017-2018

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1. Introduction

1.1 FP: Introduction

The General Foundation Program is a one-year bridge course intended to equip high school graduates to pursue university majors and is undertaken by most university students in Oman. The program focuses on four areas: English, Mathematics, IT, and general study skills.

Dhofar University's Foundation Program (hereafter FP) follows the general standards and learning outcomes as outlined by the Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA). It aims to impart quality education to students and prepare them for their various majors. With courses ranging from Beginner to Intermediate, it caters to the curricular and co-curricular needs of students to actively bridge the gap between secondary and tertiary education.

Since its inception, the FP has successfully met both these needs and the academic expectations of Dhofar University. There are presently more than 50 faculty members of various nationalities in the FP. The richness of their professional expertise and experience, their enthusiasm, and their involvement in the community constitutes the backbone of the FP as it serves a substantive student body.

This manual is to be read alongside the Dhofar University bylaws (which supersede any contradiction, if any). Faculty are advised to read these bylaws (see www.du.edu.om) and the Oman Academic Standards (OAS) for General Foundation Programs for more information.

1.2 FP: Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

DU Foundation Program aspires to occupy a position of distinction amongst general foundation programs in the Sultanate by imparting quality education.

Mission

DU Foundation Program strives to equip students with quality outcome-based education in a rich teacher-learner environment conducive to academic excellence and life-long learning.

Values

- Academic excellence
- Individual responsibility
- Continuous improvement
- Active citizenship
- Life-long learning

2. Organizational Structure

The FP is an integral part of Dhofar University. It is composed of officers and both academic and non-academic personnel.

2.1 The Officers of the FP

1. Director
2. Deputy Director
3. Program Coordinators
4. Timetable Coordinator
5. Placement Test Coordinators
6. Registration Coordinator
7. Exam Coordinator
8. Mentors
9. Non-academic Staff

2.2 Academic Personnel of the FP

The academic personnel of the FP shall consist of:

1. Assistant Professors
2. Lecturers
3. Instructors

2.3 Academic Units

The FP consists of three units:

- English Language Unit
- Math Unit
- IT Unit

Other units, centers, or programs may also be established as per university policies and procedures.

2.3.1 Organization of Academic Units

An academic unit shall consist of academic personnel headed by a Program Coordinator appointed by the Director.

2.3.2 Unit Meetings

The academic unit shall meet as frequently as required upon the call of the Coordinator. Minutes of all meetings shall be duly taken by an appointed minute taker and shall be sent to the Director as well as the secretary for filing purposes. In the event that a motion needs to be voted on:

1. Voting faculty shall consist of non-visiting, full-time academic personnel.
2. Voting is limited to faculty actually present at the meeting.

2.3.3 Unit Functions

1. The academic unit shall be responsible for implementing program requirements and maintaining high professional standards in all its transactions.
2. It shall also present to the Director recommendations and proposals for improving the functionality of the courses offered.

2.3.4 Recruitment, Leave and Evaluation of Faculty

1. Established university policies and procedures shall govern actions regarding faculty recruitment and promotion.
2. Recruitment of faculty members is subject to the approval of the Recruitment panel headed by the Director, as well as the consent of the Deputy Vice Chancellor.
3. Requests for leave shall be subject to the Director's approval in accordance with the university rules and regulations.
4. New faculty will be subject to a 3-month probationary period. During this period, the Director, Deputy Director, Coordinator, and Mentor will evaluate the new faculty. Based on their evaluations, the Director will submit a recommendation of continuation or dismissal to the Deputy Vice Chancellor.
5. FP faculty are required to submit an Annual Faculty Appraisal Report toward the end of the academic year.

2.4 FP Committees

1. Foundation Program Academic Council (FPAC)
2. Administrative Committee
3. Academic Promotion Committee
4. Academic Support Services Committee
5. FP Academic Program Development and review Committee
6. Student Affairs Committee
7. FP Recruitment Committee
8. Induction Committee
9. Exam Committee
10. Students-at-Risk Committee
11. English Club Committee
12. Research Committee
13. Outstanding Student Award Committee
14. Faculty and Staff Recreational Committee
15. Community Service Activities Committee

16. Professional Development Committee
17. FP Chronicle
18. News and Publications Committee
19. Health and Safety Committee
20. Risk Management Committee
21. FP Alumni Committee

2.4.0 Terms of Reference for GFP Committees

Purpose

As per the bylaws of the university, committees are formed to ensure the smooth running of the various activities within the Foundation Program.

Details on the specific purpose of each committee can be found under Functions sections below.

Duties and responsibilities

FP committee members will commit to:

- attending all scheduled committee meetings.
- abiding by the leadership of the chairperson.
- participating in all activities related to the nature of the committee.
- being a part of the decision making process related to the nature of the committee.

Details on the duties and responsibilities of each committee can be found under Functions sections below.

Membership

For the first seven committees listed below, membership is occasionally stipulated by FP bylaws. Other members are determined for a period of two years by the Director, in consultation with the Deputy Director. These committees report to the Director.

Membership in the remaining fourteen committees is voluntary. Every two years, faculty are provided the opportunity to either remain on their present committee(s), or join one or more different committees. These committees are chaired by faculty selected by the Director and Deputy Director and report to the Deputy Director, both on an ongoing basis and in annual reports.

Committees should have no more than seven members and no less than three members.

Details on the membership of each committee can be found under Membership sections below.

Meetings and Voting

The chairperson of each committee leads the meeting. A meeting quorum is at least two-thirds of the members. For steering committees, decisions are made by an agreement of at least two-thirds of those present. For other committees, decisions are made through consensus. Meeting agendas are provided by the chairperson and the chairperson assigns the responsibility to a committee member to take minutes. Meetings must be held at least twice a term.

2.4.1 Foundation Program Academic Council (FPAC)

Members

1. Director
2. Deputy Director
3. Unit Coordinators

Functions

- Deliberate and decide upon key issues pertaining to the FP
- Review and approve key decisions brought forth by other committees
- Decide upon matters of urgency
- Receive student and teacher grievances in writing on the prescribed petition form and examine, deliberate and make recommendations to the Director about these grievances.

2.4.2 Administrative Committee

Members

1. Director (or his or her representative as chairperson)
2. Deputy Director
3. Executive Secretary
4. Two faculty members

Functions

- Plan and organize registration
- Review and manage administrative matters, faculty and student attendance, and faculty leave
- Review and manage inventory of FP physical assets
- Discuss all issues relating to classroom equipment and facilities
- Disseminate general administrative policies and announcements

2.4.3 FP Promotion Committee

Members

1. Chairperson chosen by Director in consultation with Deputy Director
2. Five additional Lecturers or Assistant Professors from within the FP
3. One senior faculty member from outside the FP

Functions

- Receive applications for promotion
- Determine if applications satisfy FP promotion criteria
- Recommend promotion to the Deputy Vice Chancellor once criteria are met

2.4.4 Academic Support Services Committee

Members

1. FP Director
2. QA Director
3. Library Director
4. CNC Director
5. Three faculty members (one representative from each unit)

Functions

- Suggest policies that help the library perform its role optimally
- Suggest policies that help the Computer Network Center (CNC) perform its role optimally
- Monitor and develop use of learning resources and state-of-the-art technologies in teaching
- Make recommendations about the annual budgets of the library and CNC
- Recommend purchase of periodicals and scientific and literary resources
- Apprise FPAC of decisions and recommendations made
- Oversee the advising policy and role of the academic advisors

2.4.5 FP Academic Program Development and Review Committee

Members:

1. Director
2. QA Director
3. Five senior faculty members

Functions:

- Review FP English, Math, and IT program.
- Ensure FP program are in alignment with OAS.
- Ensure that operations run smoothly and effectively
- Oversee operational plan for the FP.

2.4.6 Student Affairs Committee

Members

1. Director (non-voting member)
2. Director of Student Affairs (or his or her representative)
3. Four to five FP faculty members (at least one representative from each unit)
4. Student Representative

Functions

- Examine student-related issues, refereed by the Director or any faculty member.
- Work with faculty members and students to enrich student activities in the FP.
- Take disciplinary action against students violating proper academic conduct.
- Forward decisions to FPAC.

2.4.7 FP Recruitment Committee

Members

1. Director
2. Deputy Director
3. FP HR Representative
4. One senior faculty member

Functions:

- Determine personnel needs of the FP
- Liaise with the university's Human Resource Department
- Interview short-listed candidates
- Recommend to Human Resources the most suitable candidates for appointment
- Help facilitate visa processing and the arrival of newly appointed faculty

2.4.8 Induction Committee

Members:

1. Deputy Director
2. FP Human Resources Representative
3. Three faculty volunteers

Functions:

- Review the FP Induction Manual on an annual basis
- Provide support and guidance to new faculty

2.4.9 Exam Committee

Members:

1. Controller of Examinations
2. One faculty member from the English Unit
3. One faculty member from the Math Unit
4. One faculty member from the IT Unit

Functions:

- Ensure that exams are conducted in a secure environment and in compliance with DU's rules and regulations about academic honesty, integrity and fairness

2.4.10 Students-at-Risk Committee**Members:**

1. Chairperson chosen by Director in consultation with Deputy Director
2. Four faculty volunteers (at least one representative from each unit)

Functions:

- Schedule, plan and manage supportive activities for students at risk
- Liaise regularly with coordinators about the committee's efforts
- Facilitate communication between the Foundation Program and the Learning Support Center and its activities

2.4.11 English Club Committee**Members:**

1. Chairperson chosen by Director in consultation with Deputy Director
2. Five faculty volunteers

Functions:

- Identify games, competitions, and other activities in English for teachers and students inside and outside the classroom
- Schedule, plan and manage English Club activities
- Encourage students to write articles and submit other entries for the FP Chronicle

2.4.12 Research Committee**Members:**

1. Chairperson chosen by Director in consultation with Deputy Director
2. Four faculty volunteers (at least one representative from each unit)

Functions:

- Promote research among faculty members of the FP and motivate them to conduct research in their respective academic fields
- Review the applications submitted by staff for research funding and make recommendations to the Director.
- Inform and educate the faculty about the University Research Board (URB) and the various research schemes, grants and incentives available to researchers

- Improve the research output of FP Units
- Answer queries regarding research-related activities
- Organize professional development seminars and workshops relating to research

2.4.13 Outstanding Student Award Committee

Members

1. Chairperson chosen by Director in consultation with Deputy Director
2. Four faculty volunteers (at least one representative from each unit)

Functions:

- Promote healthy competition among students and motivate them to excel in their studies
- Review the criteria for selecting outstanding students after the FP Exit Exam
- Establish the students eligible for the award
- Interview eligible students and decide upon the winner of the award
- Schedule, plan and manage the Outstanding Student Award Ceremony

2.4.14 Faculty and Staff Recreational Committee

Members

1. Chairperson chosen by Director in consultation with Deputy Director
2. Four faculty volunteers

Functions:

- Schedule, plan and manage special events such as picnics and local trips
- Secure and manage deals with restaurants and hotels (for example, special events, health club membership and pool access)
- Schedule, plan and manage various sporting opportunities

2.4.15 Community Service Activities Committee

Members

1. Chairperson chosen by Director in consultation with Deputy Director
2. Four faculty volunteers

Functions:

- Identify activities of faculty interest that best serve the community
- Schedule, plan and manage community service activities
- Encourage participation in said activities

2.4.16 Professional Development Committee

Members

1. Chairperson chosen by Director in consultation with Deputy Director
2. Four faculty volunteers

Functions:

- Identify professional development needs based on issues and developments in English language teaching, Math and IT.
- Schedule, plan and manage professional development opportunities
- Identify faculty interested in leading professional development opportunities
- Encourage participation in said opportunities

2.4.17 FP Chronicle

Members

1. Chairperson chosen by Director in consultation with Deputy Director
2. Four faculty volunteers

Functions:

- Encourage the FP student body to participate in a tangible project and to promote a sense of achievement
- Gather articles, write-ups, and artwork from the students (across all units) pertinent to the theme of the issue
- Publish at least two issues each academic year

2.4.18 News and Publications Committee

Members

1. Chairperson chosen by Director in consultation with Deputy Director
2. Two faculty volunteers

Functions:

- Serve as a channel of communication amongst the other committees
- Update faculty regarding events and news about the FP and FP faculty and staff

2.4.19 Health and Safety Committee

Members

1. Chairperson chosen by Director in consultation with Deputy Director
2. Two to three faculty volunteers
3. Two student representatives (male and female)

Functions:

- To implement the DU Health and Safety Policy
- To maintain records of health and safety accidents
- Oversee the risk management system
- To conduct awareness programs about the possible health and safety hazards including natural calamities within the university campus, the safety measures available at the university, and how these can be used to minimize the damage
- Conduct mock drills on the possible hazards so as to demonstrate practically how the available safety measure can be used
- Organize first aid training session in the colleges and FP unit

2.4.20 Risk Management Committee**Members**

1. Chairperson chosen by Director in consultation with Deputy Director
2. Three faculty volunteers

Functions:

- Identify potential risks in the FP
- Maintain a Risk Register for FP, indicating the type of risk, likelihood of risk, impact of risk and the total risk score (likelihood times impact)
- Create and maintain a Risk Management Form for each identified risk, with specified preventive measures, risk indicators, possible consequences and mitigation plans
- Provide the appropriate Risk Management Forms to the Risk Owners concerned at the beginning of every term and collect the feedback at the end of every term for review
- Create awareness among FP faculty regarding Risk Management System at FP
- Keep a record of all correspondences regarding Risk management at FP
- Coordinate with the University Risk Management Committee and update the members

2.4.21 FP Alumni Committee**Members**

1. Chairperson chosen by Director in consultation with Deputy Director
2. Two faculty volunteers

Functions:

- To act as a bridge between the FP and its alumni
- To build a mutually-supportive relationship with alumni and create a 'culture of belonging' towards the FP
- To ensure effective, meaningful engagement and communication with alumni
- To promote formal and informal alumni connections with FP students and staff

2.5 Administrative Staff: Prerogatives and Duties

1. Subject to the provisions of the corporate bylaws, rules and regulations, and the established general policies of the university, the FP shall determine its own academic policy and shall have authority to direct its own affairs in consultation with the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice Chancellor with regard to all academic and administrative matters.
2. The FP Director, during a regular or special meeting with FPAC, shall have the prerogative to review any action taken by any committee, if deemed fit.

2.5.1 Director Appointment

In accordance with the corporate bylaws of Dhofar University, the Director is appointed by the Vice Chancellor. The initiative for the appointment of a Director and his or her continuation in office rests upon the recommendation of the Vice Chancellor. For absences of the Director lasting for three months or more, an Acting Director shall be appointed by the Vice Chancellor upon the recommendation of the Director and after consultation with the FPAC. For shorter absences, the Deputy Director shall replace the Director until he or she returns.

Duties, Responsibilities and Prerogatives of the Director

The Director, as the responsible academic and executive head of the FP, shall have his or her duties, responsibilities, and prerogatives defined by the Board of Trustees and the Vice Chancellor. Within the FP, his or her duties, responsibilities, and prerogatives shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Execute the Vice Chancellor's directives and enact the policies of the FP
- Oversee the performance of the Deputy Director and the Unit Coordinators and ensure the proper delivery of the taught courses
- Develop the FP in regards to academic programs, curricula, academic personnel, student body, and physical facilities
- Make recommendations to the Vice Chancellor or Deputy Vice Chancellor in all matters pertaining to recruitment, termination, renewal, non-renewal, and leave in consultation with FPAC
- Prepare the budget proposal for FP after consultation with the concerned parties
- Prepare bi-annual and annual activities reports and submit them to the Deputy Vice Chancellor
- Appoint members to committees where necessary in consultation with FPAC
- Chair meetings of committees where necessary
- Have the prerogative of final action on all committee decisions
- Determine which decisions of the committees of the FP shall be in the form of actions and which shall be regarded as recommendations to the faculty
- Appoint Coordinators for the English, Math, and IT units and other coordinators as needed

- Inform Level and Unit Coordinators of new academic and administrative actions and follow up implementation
- Update faculty members of new university decisions pertaining to FP
- Perform any other duties as mandated by the Vice Chancellor or his deputy
- Establish and maintain open communication between the FP and Dhofar University administration, students and their parents
- Monitor and ensure the effective functioning of student support services, academic resources and equipment.
- Liaise with the Office of Registration and Admission regarding student examination results and registration of students
- Meet with Class Representatives to discuss possible issues and impart information regarding new policies and regulations

Meetings

- The Director shall call regular meetings of the faculty at least once a term. A written notice with a stated agenda shall be sent to faculty members at least one working day prior to the date of the meeting.
- Special meetings with stated agendas shall be called by the Director at her/his discretion or at the written request of the FPAC.
- The Director or her/his Deputy shall chair all faculty meetings.
- The Director shall appoint a minute taker from among the faculty on a term basis. The minute taker shall duly take the minutes of the meetings, write them up and send them to the Director for inspection before they are sent to faculty and the Deputy Vice Chancellor.

2.5.2 Deputy Director

The Deputy Directors shall assist the Director in the implementation and administration of all aspects of the Foundation Program, including the management of the teaching team and their performance.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Support the Director in the overall management of the FP
- Stand in for the Director in his absence
- Ensure that faculty maintain the standards set out in OAS guidelines
- Supervise the effective implementation of curriculum and assessment in the FP
- Ensure that a high standard of teaching is maintained with students receiving well-planned, well-taught, and relevant lessons
- Observe, motivate, and appraise faculty and give documented feedback on their performance
- Supervise the planning and effective implementation of FP examinations

- Supervise the planning and effective implementation of the FP registration process
- Supervise community service programs involving the FP
- Supervise professional development programs for faculty, staff, and student representatives
- Assist the Director in forming official committees
- Oversee the functioning of the various official committees
- Assist the Director in recruitment of new faculty and staff
- Plan and direct the orientation of new faculty and staff

2.5.3 Program Coordinators

Coordinators

Level Coordinators are appointed by the Director. There are three Level Coordinators in the English Unit. There is also a Coordinator for Math and another for the IT Unit. The appointment is usually for one year, subject to renewal.

Duties and responsibilities of the coordinators shall include the following:

- Prepare syllabi, study plans and portfolios for each term
- Call regular meetings to discuss matters pertaining to teaching materials, exams, student performance, etc.
- Decide dates and timings for tests in consultation with the Director
- Assign test preparation tasks to instructors
- Convey the Director's directives, instructions and guidelines to faculty
- Ensure that faculty maintain good teaching standards in the implementation of curricula
- Cross-check samples of marked tests from all sections before they are returned to students in order to ensure consistency and conformity to the assessment process stipulated in the rubrics (Note: In cases of contention, the issue is referred to the Director, who takes action as need be.)
- Oversee student progress, attendance and well-being
- Apprise the Director of progress and performance within the level
- Encourage teamwork, collegiality and collaboration among instructors and between instructors and their students
- Compile a comprehensive course file and submit it to the Director at the end of each term

2.5.4 Registration Coordinator: Duties and Responsibilities

- Coordinate the whole registration process
- Serve as the primary point of contact among all parties concerned during registration
- Prepare registration schedules and assign tasks to registration team
- Ensure that the registration process runs smoothly and suggest ways and means of improvement
- Update the Director on the running of the registration process
- Ensure that registration is fair and unbiased to all students

2.5.5 Placement Test Coordinators: Duties and Responsibilities

- Prepare placement tests in line with FP standards and requirements and update them on an annual basis
- Coordinate the operation of placement tests including scheduling and administering them, assigning proctors and markers, overseeing marking, and finalizing and tabling results
- Interpret test scores and place students in their respective levels

2.5.6 Timetable Coordinator: Duties and Responsibilities

- Undertake all aspects of planning and operation for the production of staff timetables for each term.
- Ensure that teaching timetables are prepared and ready well ahead of time.
- Prepare exam and proctoring timetables and work alongside coordinators to determine the number of proctors needed.

2.5.7 Exam coordinator: Duties and Responsibilities

- Liaise with the three English Level Coordinators to determine the content of midterm and final exams, including Reading and Listening texts, grammar points to be assessed, and essay topics.
- Write the exams and provide them to the Coordinators, along with answer keys for the various versions (morning, evening, and re-sit/makeup) and annotated versions listing all OAS Learning Outcomes.
- Ensure that exams are fair, valid, and reliable as students' progress from level to level.

2.5.8 New Faculty Mentors: Duties and Responsibilities

A mentor is an experienced instructor with an excellent teaching record, a positive attitude and at least two years of experience at Dhofar University. He or she is usually chosen by the Level Coordinator or Director. The mentor's main duty is to help new faculty integrate into DU for a period of one term. He or she should act as a role model for the new faculty member. Responsibilities are as follows:

- Provide knowledge and a degree of comfort in the basics of classroom management, ethics, attendance, time management and course preparation
- Discuss the course, pedagogical strategies, learning outcomes, grading, etc.
- Explain cultural differences and taboos
- Keep mentees informed of FP-related news until university email addresses are activated
- Answer mentees' questions and inquiries during their first term in the FP

2.6 Non-Academic Staff

2.6.1-2 Executive Secretary and Secretaries: Duties and Responsibilities

- Organize work by reading and routing correspondence, collecting information, and initiating communication
- Maintain calendars for faculty and arrange meetings and workshops
- Provide administrative and clerical support to the Director or Acting Director
- Schedule meetings and reserve exam and meeting halls
- Provide historical reference by utilizing filing and retrieval systems
- Alert Coordinators to meeting calls or cancelations
- Prepare correspondence for faculty
- Manage spreadsheets
- Handle student affairs
- Deliver and supervise student evaluations of staff
- Coordinate office management activities
- Ensure office allocation to new faculty
- Relay directives, instructions and assignments to Coordinators and faculty
- Receive and relay telephone messages
- Maintain hard copy and electronic filing systems
- Coordinate operations between FP administration and other departments
- Maintain office supplies inventory by checking stock to determine inventory level, anticipating needed supplies, placing and expediting orders, and verifying their receipt

2.6.2 Recruitment Officer: Duties and Responsibilities

- Develop job descriptions and specifications
- Prepare job adverts and create a database for applications
- Receive, check, and process applications
- Shortlist applicants in coordination with the recruiting panel
- Communicate with applicants via email or phone

2.6.3 Messenger: Duties and Responsibilities

- Collect mail from and deliver it to faculty
- Ensure recorded delivery of important messages and documents between the FP and various university departments
- Photocopy, collate and staple tests, as per instructions of FP Coordinators.
- Liaise with purchasing for kitchen supplies, stationery, etc.
- Affix display boards and teaching schedules on office doors of faculty
- Carry out basic repair of photocopiers, printers, and other equipment
- Serve tea, coffee and refreshments

3. Faculty Personnel: Rights, Duties and Policies

3.1 Induction and Probation Period of New Faculty

New faculty will undergo a three-month probationary period starting from the commencement of their employment. They will be provided with all necessary assistance to equip them for this period. The period itself has three phases: Orientation, Observation/Assistance, and Evaluation.

During Orientation, a well-structured, three-part induction program will be provided to new faculty, consisting of briefings by the Secretary, the Induction Team, and the Level Coordinator, as per the prescribed checklist for the induction program. New faculty will also be assigned a mentor to assist them and answer questions. At any time, they may also solicit the guidance from the appropriate Level Coordinator. During this phase, feedback sessions may be convened by the Deputy Director to address questions and concerns of new faculty.

During Observation/Assistance, there will be two announced classroom observations: one by the Director and Deputy Director and another by the Level Coordinator. The Director and Deputy Director will also make one unannounced observation. In addition to the reports from these observations, confidential reports will be collected from mentors and Level Coordinators.

During Evaluation, the content of these reports, as well as complaints or compliments from students and other faculty (if any) will be taken into consideration for the continuation of new faculty contracts. The final decision on the probationary period will be communicated to new faculty by the Human Resources department.

The university and new faculty may, at any time during the probationary period, terminate the contract with prior notice of at least seven (7) days.

3.2 Academic Responsibilities of Faculty

Faculty are responsible for helping to build and maintain an environment of high-quality education according to the rules and regulations of Dhofar University and the Sultanate of Oman in a three-fold manner:

1. Conduct classes in a way that promotes learning via the free exchange of information and ideas
2. Keep abreast of research in their respective fields
3. Strive to build a strong FP in cooperation with other departments of the university

Duties of faculty include but are not limited to:

- Ensuring that teaching leads to measurable learning as per the learning outcomes stipulated by OAS
- Being actively engaged in the development of the FP through workshops, committee memberships, and other meetings and seminars

- Presenting the syllabus to students at the beginning of each term, including materials, objectives, schedule, and evaluation
- Evaluating students
- Producing new material like handouts and presentations as per the needs of each class
- Posting and being available for office hours
- Avoiding topics in class that are controversial or not germane
- Utilizing technology as appropriate
- Encouraging student attendance
- Conducting research and publishing in their respective fields as possible

3.3 Office Hours

Faculty are required to hold at least six office hours (eight for Level Coordinators) distributed evenly Sunday-Thursday between the hours of 8am and 4pm. The office hours are posted outside offices at the beginning of each term. Faculty must be in their offices and available to meet with students during the posted hours.

3.4 Teaching

Dhofar University strives for excellence in teaching, characterized by:

- Thorough, up-to-date knowledge of subject matter
- Organized, lucid presentation of course material using illustrations, handouts and technology as appropriate.
- Motivating students to think and assume responsibility for their role in the learning process
- Comprehensive and meaningful evaluation of student performance through assignments, quizzes, and examinations
- Fair grading based on academic criteria

3.5 Teaching Load

Teaching timetables are set by Timetable Coordinator in consultation with the Director and Deputy Director. Considerations of the common good of students and the unit outweigh matters of convenience to individual faculty.

Full-time faculty normally have a teaching load of 20 hours per week each term. Faculty with administrative responsibilities (such as Unit Coordinators) teach a reduced load per the approval of the Vice Chancellor. Coordination of outside programs and other such responsibilities will be assigned by the Director with an accompanying reduction in teaching load of two hours, as appropriate.

3.6 Academic Freedom

Academic freedom aims to ensure and safeguard an environment in which high-quality education flourishes, per the rules and regulations of both Dhofar University and the Sultanate of Oman. This includes the freedom to:

- Select material consistent with the guidelines of each unit (while avoiding material that may be controversial)
- Conduct research per URB guidelines
- Engage in consultations, lectures and seminars per Dhofar University rules and regulations
- Discuss within the university all matters related to teaching, research and student affairs

3.7 Recruitment Procedures

Advertisements for academic vacancies are placed in newspapers and on the university website with the approval of the Director and the Vice Chancellor. Applications are considered by the Recruitment Officer and the Recruitment Committee for an initial review. Shortlisted candidates are interviewed by the Recruitment Committee, and recommendations based on established criteria adopted by the university are made. The Director makes her/his final recommendations to the Deputy Vice Chancellor after consultations with the Recruitment Committee.

3.8 Performance Review and Contract Renewal

Toward the end of the academic year, the Director submits a performance review (see the Annual Faculty Appraisal Form) for each faculty member to the Vice Chancellor, who makes a final decision on contract renewal (or non-renewal). Copies of performance reviews are kept in personnel files and are strictly confidential.

The university is obligated, in cases of non-renewal, to inform the faculty concerned three months prior to the end of the contract. The same applies to a faculty member who does not wish to renew her or his contract informing the Director of her or his decision.

Faculty may not resign during the academic year unless due to extreme circumstances acceptable to the Director.

3.9 Evaluation of Faculty Performance

Faculty performance is evaluated from three perspectives:

Teaching (70%):The effectiveness of teaching is related, at least in part, to whether students achieve learning outcomes as specified in the course syllabus. One component of evaluation is a student-completed questionnaire about faculty completed at the conclusion of each term. The results of this questionnaire are analysed, summarized, and communicated to faculty, their respective Unit Coordinators, and the Director. These include a selection of transcribed

comments by students and comparative statistics for both the FP and Dhofar University as a whole. Course files, other academic activities and completed coordinator, self- and peer-review reports are also considered.

Research (10%):Research (including publication) is taken into account during faculty evaluation. Where applicable, more weight is given to peer-reviewed publications in academic journals and presentations at conferences.

Community Service (20%):Faculty are also evaluated according to their involvement in the community, including committee work, lectures (both on- and off-campus), and participation in student activities (for example, as a club advisor).

3.10 Vacation and Leave

Faculty are entitled to an annual leave of 60 days (July-August), plus public holidays during the year. Nine additional types of leave are also available to faculty, pending approval of the Director.

- **Research Leave:** Upon recommendation of the Director, with full or partial pay, to conduct research for a period of up to two months, once every five years. (Note: Research leave is not granted to faculty with less than three years' experience at the university.)
- **Conference Leave:** Upon recommendation of the University Research Board (URB), with full pay, to present at conferences for a period of up to five days.
- **Scientific Paper Discussion Leave:** With full pay, to discuss scientific papers at other universities or scientific institutions for a period of up to five days.
- **Sick Leave:** Upon presentation of an approved medical report for a period of up to ten weeks per year, consecutively or non-consecutively. Pay is as follows:
 - Weeks 1-2: Full pay
 - Weeks 3-4: Three-quarters pay
 - Weeks 5-6: Half pay
 - Weeks 7-10: One-quarter pay
- **Emergency Leave:** With full pay, for a total of six days a year, for a period of up to three days at a time.
- **Pilgrimage Leave:** With full pay, for a period of up to two weeks, once during employment at the university. (Note: Pilgrimage leave is granted to Muslim faculty only.)
- **Maternity Leave:** Upon presentation of an approved medical report for a period of up to 50 days pre- and/or post-birth, with full pay. (Note: Maternity leave is not granted to faculty with less than one year's experience at the university.)
- **Mourning Leave:** With full pay, for a period of up to four months and ten days, to Muslim women who are widowed while under contract with the university. For all other mourning cases, with full pay, for up to three days.
- **Unpaid Leave:** Without pay, for a period of up to two terms for personal, family or health reasons.

3.11 Promotion Policy

3.11.1 Promotion from Instructor to Lecturer

For consideration for promotion to Lecturer, an Instructor must have:

- A Master's degree in a relevant discipline (received at least two years prior)
- Completed at least two (2) years of continuous service at DU
- A total experience period of five (5) years within the rank (tertiary-level teaching experience)
- A total score of at least 3.5/5 in Annual Faculty Activities Report (AFAR)
- A promising professional record (i.e., good references from Coordinators, chairs of committees associated with, or any other higher authorities at FP or DU)
- Positive student-evaluations (no less than the department mean)
- A measurable and proven record of his/her commitment to the image and growth of the FP/DU

An Instructor should submit his or her application along with an updated CV and academic achievement portfolio to the chair of the FPAPC for review and evaluation. The application shall be reviewed by the FPAPC, and applications of successful candidates, together with the recommendations of the Committee, shall be forwarded by the FP Director to the DVC for the final approval of the University Council.

3.11.2 Promotion from Lecturer to Assistant Professor

Standards and requirements for promotion to the academic grade of Assistant Professor shall be in line with the DU Academic Promotion Policy.

3.12 Confidentiality

Discussions in level and committee meetings of personal and professional matters related to appointment, reappointment, academic leave, academic review, promotion conducted at any level in the university, student final results, and test items are strictly confidential. Breaches of confidentiality shall be dealt with according to applicable rules and regulations.

3.13 Voting Procedures

Voting in the FP, its units, and committees will take place by show of hands in meetings chaired by the Director, the Level Coordinator, or committee chairpersons. Results are recorded and may be subject to approval of the FP Academic Council.

3.14 Research

Research is an integral part of the academic duties of faculty and is a criterion for review, promotion and salary increases.

The University Research Board supports Dhofar University faculty research through the funding of short-term research projects. However, faculty members are also encouraged to seek research grants from external funding agencies.

3.15 Missed Classes

Faculty are not permitted to miss classes except for valid reasons and after notifying the concerned Coordinator well ahead of time. Faculty must abide by the cover policy and cover schedule set each term.

3.16 Disciplinary Measures

Any one violating university rules and regulations and/or the laws of the Sultanate may be subject to disciplinary measures commensurate with such violations.

3.17 Grievances

Faculty have the right to appeal to a higher level than the one directly supervising their performance by submitting a petition. If they are not satisfied with the decision, they may submit a petition to the Director. In exceptional cases, the Vice Chancellor of the university may form a special committee to review certain cases or confirm lower-level decisions.

3.18 Amendments

Amendments to the faculty manual require a two-thirds majority vote of approval by the Foundation Program Academic Council (FPAC). Amendments are subject to approval by the University Council, the Vice Chancellor and the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees.

4. Curricular Outline

4.1 Program Overview

The FP is designed for students who are not sufficiently prepared to join the academic programs at the university. Incoming students are generally required to spend one or more terms in the FP depending on the results of placement tests administered by the university. The program is designed to equip students with knowledge and skills in English, Information Technology, Mathematics and study skills that will allow them to succeed in their chosen major.

The following table summarizes the FP study plan:

Level	English	Mathematics	Information Technology	Total Hrs/Week
Level 1	20/25	2	0	22/27
Level 2	20	5	3	28
Level 3	20	5	3	28

4.2 Program Structure

The FP is designed to bridge the gap between secondary education and university undergraduate studies. The curriculum is aligned with the learning outcomes stated in the Oman Academic Standards for General Foundation Programs*. The emphasis of the English program is on general communication and academic skills. The Math program is divided into Basic, Applied, and Pure sessions, while the IT program focuses on the skills required to use technology effectively in routine studies. Tests and alternative assessment schemes are used to evaluate the students' performance throughout the semester.

*For more information visit www.oaaa.gov.om

English Language Unit

Since English is the medium of instruction at Dhofar University, there is a definite need to approach the teaching of English at the university in a systematic, meaningful, and purposeful manner. The English Language Unit offers incoming students with low proficiency in English an intensive program to help them pursue their studies in the major of their choice through the medium of English by immersing them in the English language.

Students have 12-15 hours a week dedicated to reading and writing and 8-10 hours a week dedicated to listening and speaking. Students take a midterm and a final exam. Marks are Determined by exam grades as well as from continuous assessment, portfolios and progress tests. Marks for each skill are weighted as follows:

<u>Skill</u>	<u>Weighting</u>
Reading	30%
Writing	30%
Listening	20%
Speaking	20%

English Language Courses:

Level 1

FPE 101A	Foundation Program English Level 1	(20/25hrs)
FPEL 100	Foundation Program English for Law	

Course Description:

Level 1 (FPE 101A, and FPEL 100) is an elementary level intensive English course designed to improve both English and study skills of students according to the course learning outcomes. The main skills taught are Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. The learning outcomes are aligned with Oman Academic Standards. Upon completion of this course, students move to Level 2, the pre-intermediate level.

Level 2

FPE 102B	Foundation Program English Level 2	(20hrs)
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Course Description:

Level 2 (FPE 102B) is a pre-intermediate level intensive English course with the same goals, skills taught, and learning outcomes as Level 1, albeit at a pre-intermediate level. Upon completion of this course, students move to Level 3, the intermediate level.

Level 3

FPE 103C	Foundation Program English Level 3	(20hrs)
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Course Description:

Level 3 (FPE 103C) is an intermediate level intensive English course with the same goals, skills taught, and learning outcomes as Level 1 and 2, albeit at an intermediate level. Upon completion of this course, students graduate from the FP and move to their respective majors.

Mathematics and Information Technology Units.

Mathematics

This three-semester course is designed to bridge gaps in students' knowledge of mathematics. In English Level 1, students are introduced to basic mathematical terminology necessary in Level 1 and 2 Math. Students take Basic Mathematics (Level 1) the following term and either Applied or Pure Mathematics (Level 2) after that, depending on their respective majors.

The details of the courses are as follows:

Course Code	Course Name	Contact Hours /week
FPM 100	Foundation Program Math Pre - Level 1	2
FPM-101A (Basic)	Foundation Program Math Level 1	5
FPM-102B (Pure& Applied)	Foundation Program Math Level 2	5

Course Descriptions

FPM 100 Foundation Program Math for Pre-Basic Level

This course equips students with very basic concepts of the subject for further study of mathematics at the FP and, subsequently, university level.

The program covers Basic Mathematical Operations on Real Numbers, BODMAS, Prime Factorization, Fractions and Basic Algebraic Operation.

FPM-101A Foundation Program Math Level1 (Basic)

This course emphasizes conceptual understanding of basic mathematical skills and problem solving. The program covers Basic Algebraic Operations, Polynomials, Exponents, Radicals, Rational Expressions First Degree Equations and Inequalities, Quadratic Equations, Equations of a Circle, Straight Lines and Basic Trigonometry.

FPM-102B Foundation Program Math Level2 (Pure & Applied)

This course equips students with the knowledge necessary for further study of mathematics at higher levels and for pursuing the study of other subjects. The program covers Graphs & Functions, Exponential & Logarithmic Functions, System of Linear Equations, Matrices, Basic Statistics and Introduction to Probability.

FPML 100: Foundation Mathematics for Law

This course equips law students with a learning environment in which they are exposed to the basic concepts in mathematics like algebra, equations, and the fundamentals of trigonometry. Students will become familiar with the language of basic mathematics and learn how to solve real-life problems.

Information Technology

This two-semester course aims to bridge the gap for students who wish to join Dhofar University and lack IT fluency and competency skills. It emphasizes the essential parts of a standard curriculum in IT as required by Oman Academic Standards for General Foundation Programs.

The curriculum gives the students a basic understanding of computers, the use of word-processing software, and essential IT skills. It uses a practical approach by investigating a variety of situations across the spectrum of technology. Furthermore, it provides students with knowledge of graphics and the use of the Internet. It is worth noting that students producing a relevant ICDL or IC3 certificate are exempted from the course at the discretion of the IT Coordinator in consultation with the Director, who may request that such a student be given a challenge test to ensure eligibility for exemption. Details of the IT courses are as follows:

Course Descriptions

FPT 101A	Foundation Program IT Level 1	(3 hrs.)
FPTL 100	Foundation Program IT for Law	

This course equips learners with computing and IT knowledge and skills necessary to source, communicate, and process information related to higher education. Students experience hands-on training with various software packages like MS Windows and Word. Students are also exposed to the fundamental concepts related to IT and basic computer operation and file management.

FPT 102B	Foundation Program IT Level 2	(3 hrs.)
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This course equips students with computing and IT knowledge and skills necessary to source, communicate, and process information related to higher education. Students experience various day-to-day software packages like MS Excel and PowerPoint, and animation software. Students are also exposed to concepts and practices related to the Internet and its usage in day-to-day life.

Study Skills

Study Skills are integrated in the English, Math and IT programs and aim to help students develop the range of useful study skills that they need to succeed at the university level. They learn how to use and organize their time, read faster with comprehension, expand their vocabulary, take notes in class, keep track of assignments, interpret and analyse graphic information, and adopt the most effective communication strategies.

4.3. Tests and Examinations

1. Tests and exams should be comprehensive and measure students' grasp of material and their ability to apply it in new contexts.
2. Proctoring of tests and examinations is part of the responsibilities of all faculty. Proctors are expected strictly to supervise students throughout the duration of the test or exam.
3. Feedback on tests should be discussed with students.
4. Answer booklets and question sheets of final exams are kept for a period of one year after the date of the final exam, after which they are disposed of.

4.4. Invigilation Policy: Duties and Responsibilities *(updated December 8th, 2016)*

Head Proctor:

1. Receive test papers no later than ½ hour before the time of the exam from the Controller of Examinations. (Note: If they are bulky, proctors will help the Head Proctor carry them to the exam hall.)
2. Ascertain that proctors monitor the sections assigned by the Level Coordinator. (Note: Head Proctor does not proctor the students; rather he/she is in charge of all other proctors.)
3.
 - a. Announce start and finish times of the exam, as well as one-hour and two-hour marks for longer exams.
 - b. Announce that phones are not allowed to be seen and if seen, students will be given “Warning 2” for extraneous material.
 - c. Announce that students are not allowed to share stationary.
4. Make students aware of exam rules and regulations before the commencement of the exam and ensure that they read the rules given on the front page of the answer sheet and sign it.
5. Explain questions to students ONLY if the rubrics are not clear.
6. Ensure that the exam commences and ends at the time specified in the examination schedule.
7. Encourage students to use the restroom PRIOR to the start of the exam and discourage requests during the exam.
8. Permit students to enter and leave the exam hall according to university policy. (Students should not be allowed to enter the exam hall 30 minutes after the commencement of the exam except in the case of the English Listening Exam, for which as soon as the audio commences late students will be denied entry to the exam hall. No extra time is to be allowed for late-comers. Likewise, students should not be allowed to leave the examination hall within the first 30 minutes of the examination.)
9. Fill out the Noteworthy Events and Feedback sections of the Comprehensive Exam Form after the exam, noting comments made by ALL Proctors as well as their own ideas, and deliver it to coordinators on the SAME DAY.

Proctors:

1. Vigilantly proctor throughout the exam and refrain from relaxing, using mobile devices, or engaging in conversations with other proctors. (Note: Head Proctor will report such instances to the Director.)
2. Guide students to their respective rows as assigned by the Level Coordinator.
3. Check students’ university identification cards and take the attendance. Attendance sheets to be countersigned by the Head Proctor. (Note: ONLY Dhofar University ID will be considered as sufficient evidence). The Proctor must also ensure that students keep their IDs on their desks for the duration of the examination.
4. Visit the sections that they teach to check for imposters 30 minutes after the commencement of the exam. English teachers visit their sections 30 minutes after the

commencement of the Reading/Writing exam. Proctors must sign in the impersonation box at the bottom of the attendance sheet.

5. Accompany students to the restroom if the exam is held in a hall. Make sure that the student does not bring extraneous material with them (mobile phones, books, papers, etc.).
6. Record warnings on the Signature Sheet. Only after a student receives a red card (under any circumstance) must their information be recorded in the Exam Report Form. These forms are to be kept close to the section proctor.
7. Give up to three verbal warnings to students found cheating. *
8. Bring any disciplinary matter to the notice of the Head Proctor.
9. Refrain from conversation with students.
10. Receive completed answer booklets from the students in the rows they are responsible for. (Note: Proctors may receive answer booklets from students in other rows but should hand them over to the responsible proctor.)
11. Count answer sheets and confirm that the number matches the number of students who sat the exam.
12. Fill out the Exam Report Form at the end of the exam and deliver it to the Head Proctor along with answer sheets and signature sheets.

*Any student involved in cheating (aside from extraneous material cheating) should be warned with a yellow card (Warning 1!) in the first instance. If they repeat the offence, they should be moved to different seat (within the proctor's invigilating area) and an orange card (Warning 2!) will be issued. If they are caught for a third time, they will receive a red card (Warning 3!) and be referred to the Student Affairs Committee. In reference to extraneous material cheating, proctors should confiscate any extraneous material found with students and issue a special red card (Warning!). All students accused of cheating should be permitted to continue the examination. Proctors must document warnings on the attendance sheet. Any case that is to go to the Student Affairs Committee must be documented in the Exam Report.

4.5 Course Files

A file should be kept in the FP for every course offered. Coordinators of each unit and the faculty member who teaches the course in question are responsible for updating the course file at the end of each term.

The course file should contain the following:

1. Course syllabus, study plans, portfolio and samples of supplementary material
2. Faculty teaching schedule and level meeting minutes
3. Exams, their specifications, rubrics, and solutions
4. Class lists with final course grades along with all grades given throughout the term
5. Midterm and final exam booklets of students who scored the highest, lowest, and median grades
6. Proctoring schedules and policy along with exam schedules

4.6 Change of Grade

1. Once grades are posted online, a change of grade is not allowed unless a demonstrable mistake was made in the correction of the final examination or calculation of the grade. If a change of grade would result in a change of the student's academic status, supporting evidence for any change must be presented to the Unit Coordinator and the Director.
2. Students may petition the Director's Office to request a review of their final exam papers in case they have reason to believe that some oversight may have been made in correction or in calculating the course grade. Such petitions must be submitted within one week from the date of posting of course grades. The Director's Office will transmit the petition to the faculty concerned.
3. To change a course grade, the teacher must complete a special form available from the Registrar's Office and submit it to the appropriate coordinator along with supporting evidence. If the coordinator approves the change of grade, he/she will sign the form and give it to the Director for final approval.

4.7 Placement and Exemption Criterion

Students are placed in the appropriate level or exempted from the Foundation Program based on their results in the placement tests for English, Math and IT.

Placement and Exemption criterion for different levels (*English*)

Criterion	Level	Exemption Criterion
0 – 24	Level-1	Students who score 60+ on Cambridge University Online Placement Test and those who produce either an IELTS certificate with a band of 5+ or a TOEFL certificate indicating a score of 500+ are exempted from the Foundation Program. Such students join their Majors.
25– 39	Level-2	
40 – 59	Level-3	
60 and above	Major	

Placement criterion for different levels (*Math*)

Criterion	Level	Exemption Criterion
0 – 49	Level-1	Students who score 60+ in Math Placement Test are exempted from the Foundation Program in Math and shall join their majors.
50 – 59	Level-2	
60 – 100	Exempted	

Placement criterion for different levels (IT)

Criterion	Level	Exemption Criterion
0 – 59	Level-1	Students are exempted from taking IT and can join the majors if: 1) score 70+ in the Moodle-based IT Placement test or 2) provide an International (English) IC3 or ICDL certificate or 3) provide a Domestic (Arabic) IC3, ICDL certificate or any other equivalent certificate AND 60% score in an IT Challenge test.
60 – 69	Level-2	
70 – 100	Exempted	

4.8 University Policies

All university policies are located in a binder in the Director’s or Deputy Director’s office. Faculty are encouraged to regularly review these policies. Policies directly related to faculty will be sent electronically in a PDF booklet at the start of each academic year.

Please find below a list of DU Policies:

Academic Policies	Administrative Policies
1.DU-AC-001 Schedule Preparation & Modification Policy 2.DU-AC-002 Academic Staff Teaching Load Policy 3.DU-AC-003 Academic Advising Policy 4.DU-AC-004 Assessment Policy 5.DU-AC-005 Moderation Policy Document 6.DU-AC-006 Examination Policy 7.DU-AC-007 Academic Integrity Policy 8.DU-AC-008 Academic Program Review & Modification Policy 9.DU-AC-009 Learning Support Center Policy	1.DU-AD-001 Policy Management System 2.DU-AD-002 Risk Management Policy 3.DU-AD-003 Entity and Activity Review Policy 4.DU-AD-004 Students’ Code of Conduct 5.DU-AD-005 Student Grievance Policy 6.DU-AD-006 Students feedback Policy 7.DU-AD-007 Communication Policy 8.DU-AD-008 Student Clubs Policy 9.DU-AD-009 Student Employment Policy 10.DU-AD-010 Health and Safety Policy
Research Policies	HR Policies
1.DU-RE-001 Consultancypolicy 2.DU-RE-002 Ethics Policy 3.DU-RE-003 Biosafety Policy 4.DU-RE-004 Intellectual Policy 5.DU-RE-005 Research Ethics and Code of Conduct Policy	1.DU-HR-001 Recruitment Policy 2.DU-HR-002 Omanisation Policy 3.DU-HR-003 Staff Induction Policy 4.DU-HR-004 Professional Development Policy 5.DU-HR-005 Incentives and Rewards Policy 6.DU-HR-006 Promotion Policy 7.DU-HR-007 Severance Policy 8.DU-HR-008 Succession Planning policy 9.DU-HR-009 Faculty Appraisal Policy 10.DU-HR-010 Staff Grievance Policy

4.9 University Bylaws

Faculty who would like further details regarding any point referred to here, whether professional, academic or curricular, are advised to refer to the university bylaws or meet the respective Level Coordinator or the Director.

Please note that if there is any contradiction between the FP Faculty handbook and Dhofar University's bylaws, the university's bylaws shall supersede the FP Faculty Handbook.

We wish you a prosperous career and a wonderful academic experience with the FP!