



Among the 28 public universities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (PNU) is the first university exclusively for women. The education of women in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has received a great deal of attention and this has allowed Saudi women to make definite strides towards achieving their ambitions and unveiling their uniqueness in different fields. PNU establishment as a women university shows the attention given to the higher education of women. It started its business as a full-fledged and comprehensive university in its present campus in 2011. Prior to that, the roots of PNU as an institution for educating women started early, when the General Presidency for the Education of Girls - now the Ministry of Education - established the first college for women in 1970. The inauguration of more colleges followed, reaching 102, ranging from university colleges to intermediary colleges and community colleges. These were distributed over 72 Saudi cities and included about 600,000 female students. In Riyadh alone there were six colleges; namely the College of Education for Liberal Arts Disciplines, the College of Education for Scientific Disciplines, the College of Education for the Development of Teachers, the College of Social Services, the College of Home Economics and the College of Fine Arts. These colleges formed the foundation of PNU in its present form.

In 2006, a royal decree was issued for the establishment of the first university for women in Riyadh, under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education. This included the six colleges located in Riyadh, in

addition to a number of new colleges established for the purpose of women's education and development in the Kingdom.

The University was honored with the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques placing the cornerstone for the university campus on 30/ 10/ 2008. His Majesty at that time saw it best to change the name to Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University (PNU); Princess Nourah being the sister of the founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the late King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman. Then the University was inaugurated in 2011 with the appointment of its first rector, Her Royal Highness Dr. Al-Jawhara bint Fahd Al-Saud.

PNU was intended to help in achieving the Ministry of Education's objective in expanding the higher education for women across the country and in meeting the needs of growing number of high school female graduates in the entire Kingdom. The University will continue to provide high quality education and also professional development programs for faculty to raise scientific quality research that will be compatible with the University strategic objectives.

PNU, being a single campus without other branches, is located in the northern outskirts of the city of Riyadh, next to King Khalid airport Road, sprawling over an area of 8,000,000 square meters, nearly 165 square meters for each student and a total building space of 3,000,000 square meters, which makes it one of the largest women universities in the world.

PNU was established in 2011 at a time when the world was still witnessing an increase in globalization and associated technological advances in the various socio-economic and educational fields. There are many other current factors that have a direct impact on higher education in the country. Of these are the following:

The changing patterns of employment, the introduction of new technology methods, the changing demands of accreditation and ranking have all had an impact on how higher education is structured and delivered.

The engagement of developed societies in a transition from an industrial to a knowledge economy, and that universities are playing vital roles in this transition along with the business community.

The concept of relevance and quality are considered as the most important element in higher education. Relevance is a mandate of the workplace and quality education contributes to stakeholder's satisfaction.

Emerging international trends in education that show a shift from the traditional teacher-centered approach to a student-centered approach, i.e. the focus is not only on teaching but also on what the students are expected to be able to do at the end of the module or program. This has shaped up the currently practiced Outcome-Based education.

In the case of Saudi Arabian system of higher education, all Saudi public and private institutions get local institutional and program accreditations from the Saudi National Commission of Academic Accreditation & Assessment (NCAAA) in accordance with the National Qualification Framework requirements. PNU also measures its quality of education with respect to its impact on the community it serves, the Saudi society at large, and the international community. In this regard, the university strives to build great ties with these different entities through sound research that can earn its faculty national and international recognitions, and a community service through well-established continuing education programs.

Not only that, but PNU also recognized that knowledge created or gained from education remains the driving force towards prosperity and thus universities must play a part in these emerging trends. A knowledge economy is an economy in which growth is fueled by innovation that results from the production and application of new knowledge. Knowledge creation and application result from the education and output of highly qualified personnel who has the requisite knowledge, skills and training. Higher education is thus embarking on a period of quick growth and development that will result in some significant modifications to the way education is delivered. This means that traditional ways of education can no longer contribute effectively to high levels of completion and competency's achievements.

Having realized these trends, PNU leadership realized the importance of setting working plans to improve and run the university in a manner that is compatible with the above-mentioned orientations towards quality education and meet all the challenges the university might face. Accordingly, they adopted a clear blue print for starting a university with solid purpose and aspiration for quality education. This approach has been used to shape-up the plans and future direction of PNU University. An analysis of PNU's current capabilities shows that PNU has several strengths and opportunities that are seen as great potential for many current and coming success stories. Of these are the very solid infrastructure with a wide range of instruction and state-of-the-art buildings and laboratory facilities. There are also the well-established academic programs which cover a broad range of disciplines that are oriented largely toward not only women, but meet the requirements of local and international interests including an allied health program, education, science, business, computer science, arts, languages, and art and design. PNU has a wide-range of institutional curricula that provide students with a full understanding of disciplines, professions and jobs, and they focus on specialized knowledge and skills employed in the assigned fields. the design of PNU curricula is informed by its internationally renowned university partners. PNU believes that proper designing, implementing and continuous assessment and improvement of all of its sectors and activities can guarantee high quality. It has a broad range of disciplines and a distinct position in the higher education market as one of the largest female-only universities in the world.

PNU, as guided by its mission, practices quality education and services through progressive strategies. In planning its mission, vision and strategies, PNU relies on the two important concepts of "Relevance and Quality". Relevance is a mandate of the stakeholders. Keeping track of the evolving economy and adapting to changes in the workplace and, above all, involving the stakeholders in all its educational activities and practices lead to successful outcomes. Quality education is of prime importance as it prepares quality graduates to better contribute to the community and be an added value to the workforce.

Under its strategy, PNU identifies key aspects that guarantee competitive positions among peer universities. Examples include academic review, graduate employability, research, learning and teaching, international

outlook and innovation. For each aspect, PNU adopts an order of moving from its goals and objectives to targets, assessments and ending with recommendations for improvements. PNU has solid quality management system (QMS) and quality practice models that are consistent with the NCAAA requirements, and guided by the best practices of its benchmarked and peer universities. It has an integrated, coordinated, and well-designed system of student assessment, evaluation, feedback and continuous improvement mechanisms.

PNU has established a learning and teaching process that is consistent with NCAAA national requirements. The process is based on the concept of Input-Process-Output. Each program defines its long-range objectives. To meet these objectives, it defines learning outcomes. It maintains capable faculty members and staff and makes sure that its curriculum is capable of attaining the outcomes. Finally, it uses periodic assessments, evaluations and recommendations for its continuous improvement. PNU recognizes excellence in teaching through policies in staff recruitment, promotion criteria and professional development of its faculty. The university also provides a variety of professional training for its teaching staff. PNU has also established university-community partnerships with diverse entities. It has assessment tools and plans developed in collaboration with external partners, PNU has proactive partnerships with other universities.

On the level of scientific research, faculty at PNU are involved in scholarly research activities related to the institution's engagement mission. The Vice Rectorate of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research supervises all research processes and activities within its diverse sectors as shown in the following structure.

The THE Impact Ranking: Sustainable Development Goals:

The following report documents PNU achievement in Goal 16 about peace, justice and strong institutions as one of the 17 global goals established by the UN and emphasized by the THE Ranking to monitor and assess universities' performance in relation to their impact on societies. This impact bridges the gap between universities and society and highlights the major role assigned to universities through extending

its role behind universities' walls to influence people's lives and their communities. To start with the first practice within this SDG, PNU works within an identified and publicized quality management system that takes into consideration all the internal and external stakeholders. The following part shows some sections of PNU QMS's structural design.

## Section A: Academic Governance Structures

### A.1 Purpose of QMS:

All programs offered at PNU must meet the regulatory requirements of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These include the same credit and standard requirements, conformity with the National Qualifications Framework, the requirements for years of study and academic awards, and the development of learning outcomes in different domains of learning. PNU achieves these requirements by setting out its own regulatory framework of procedures and policies in the form of this QMS which guide all members of the University in achieving its aim of providing high quality academic programs leading to awards of the university. PNU programs equip students to achieve academic standards recognized both nationally and internationally. They combine the development of general cognitive abilities and skills, discipline-specific abilities and skills, transferable skills and English language proficiency at a level appropriate to the program of study. The QMS is a dynamic process for ensuring academic standards and quality improvements at PNU and the annual updating of the manual reflects the careful consideration that will be applied by the PNU academic community. The QMS recognizes that quality assurance procedures and the generation of quality improvements are most effective when operating closest to the point of delivery. All programs and colleges operate within the overall framework of the QMS. It is recognized that this is not an optional framework, and that the University will be viewed as being as good as its weakest component, if that weakest component has been accepted by the community as being acceptable. It is also recognized that the QMS contributes to the requirements of NCAAA standard 2.6 which states 'the institution must have a comprehensive and widely accessible set of policies and regulations establishing the terms of reference and operating procedures for major committees, administrative units and positions within the institution' To achieve the aim of fully embracing the QMS framework, it is important

that all members of PNU take full responsibility for ensuring that they fully align their actions and promote the guiding principles for academic standards and quality as set out in the QMS. It is expected that key members of academic management at PNU and in the colleges will take lead responsibility for promoting and delivering all aspects of the QMS throughout the university. Success will be evident when the whole community fully shares the responsibilities and demonstrates ownership of the QMS and continues to promote enhancements and developments to reflect the dynamics of the national and international communities within which it resides. The first step in reaching this goal is the creation of quality committees in all the colleges and across all academic programs, developing a structure for their successful operation, and determining their terms of reference. They aim at assuring the quality of the internal processes, and securing the program in compliance with the prevailing procedures and regulations. One aim of forming the committees is to enhance cooperation and sharing of good practice among colleges and employees, and to emphasize the fact that establishment of the quality assurance leading to academic accreditation can only be achieved through interaction of the teaching staff, the university support staff, and the beneficiaries from among the local community. This will enable the University to achieve the desired objective represented in educational preparation of the student and activation of her role in the community through fulfilling the requirements of the labour market in the community.

## A.2 Committee Structures:

The University designates the University Council as responsible for all awards made, and colleges must work within the framework of policies and procedures laid down by the Council and any delegated committee(s) established by Council to act on its behalf. The quality committees and programs committees in Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University consist of the following:

1. Higher Committee of Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation.
2. Academic Planning Committee.
3. Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee

4. Program Approval Committee
5. Ethics Committee
6. Quality Assurance Committee in each college (CQAC).
7. Program Committee for each academic program
8. Program Examination Committee for each academic program.

The Higher Committee for Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation and the Academic Planning Committee are the 'deliberate' bodies with overall delegated responsibility from the University Council for securing the quality processes in the University across all colleges. To discharge their responsibilities, they will operationally work with, Academic Affairs, the Deanship of Quality Assurance and Accreditation (DQAA) and the College Quality Assurance Committees (CQAC), with the respective dean appointed as chair of her CQAC. These committees are the formal decision-making process. Of course, much of the preparatory work and ideas are formulated by the officers of these committees and the various parts of the management structure, acting as 'executive' bodies across the University. Hence the concept of deliberate and executive bodies exists across the University. The program committees and program examination committees for each program are responsible to the College Council through the Departmental Council and the College Quality Assurance Committee.

The committees which are core to the quality agenda have a reporting system that is fully explained within the QMS that is publicized on PNU site. Each of these committees plays an important role in making sure the University Council is assured that programs are secure and delivered to the standards it sets for the University. The reporting detail presented to each level reflects sufficient detail for the committee to function effectively, be assured that appropriate action is being taken to address all identified shortfalls, and report in a timely manner to its own parent body.

The Higher Committee for Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation (HCQAAA) for example, has a major role to play in ensuring that the contribution of the academic community in delivering the University's



quality assurance agenda. The committee has the delegated responsibility from the University Council to assure the quality of standards and learning experience of all the programs delivered in the University. Academic Affairs and the Deanship of Quality Assurance and Accreditation are the key bodies in undertaking the operational role on behalf of HCQAAA, and HCQAAA maintains oversight of the relevant activities undertaken by these bodies. It will receive and approve new policies and regulations pertaining to the quality assurance processes, and receive and approve quality reports from the CQACS and Program Approval Committee and from professional body and NCAAA accreditation activities. Where specific work or tasks needs to be undertaken, it can commission task groups or subcommittees to undertake such work and report back. An example of such a temporary sub-committee would be a group charged with the responsibility for overseeing the development of an NCAAA accreditation self-evaluation report.

#### Terms of Reference:

- Agreement of program approval recommendations and the institutional, academic and program accreditation activities.
- Agreement of policies recommended by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee.
- Consideration and adoption of recommendations submitted by the bodies relevant to academic accreditation.
- Approval of the University's policy and procedures for the regulation, quality assurance and enhancement of its academic provision, particularly those deemed appropriate by the Committee to accelerate attainment and maintenance of academic accreditation.
- Establishing committees with appropriate membership to advise and assist HCQAAA in carrying out its responsibilities, considering reports from these committees and through these reports monitoring and evaluating the work they undertake.
- Approval of the quality annual report to University Council.
- Ratification of procedures to motivate and reward individuals and outstanding teams in the application of quality.

### **Membership:**

The Committee will meet at least once a semester, comprises the following membership, and will have a quorum of 66%:

1. Chair:
2. PNU President
3. The Committee Members:
4. All Vice Rectors Dean of Quality Assurance and Accreditation  
Chair of Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee Chair  
of Ethics Committee.
5. External representatives (e.g. NCAAA and/or KSA)

### **Preparation:**

The agenda will follow a standard format plus any items agreed by the Chair. Minutes of the committee, once confirmed as a true record, will be distributed to committee members, normally within 10 working days of a meeting. The results of the committee's deliberations indicating the approval of panel recommendations will be communications to the submitting college. The Secretary will prepare and circulate the agenda and all papers. The University calendar will identify the schedule of meetings at least one academic year in advance.

PNU also values students' participation in the decision-making processes. Therefore, it recognizes their role and thus established students' union that is open for students' election and they discuss all topics that concern them.