

# **American University of Beirut**

## **Policy on Graduate Diploma Programs**

### **Consultations/Approval History:**

- Approval by the BOD: May 17, 2018
- Approval by the PPRC: May 16, 2018
- Approval by the Board of Graduate Studies (BGS): April 19, 2018

## **Policy on Graduate Diploma Programs**

This policy establishes the criteria and process for introducing, evaluating and approving new academic and professional graduate diploma programs by the faculties.

### **General Provisions**

1. A graduate diploma is a program of study that involves a cohesive body of academic work organized around clear learning outcomes.  
Graduate diplomas serve such functions as: study complementary to graduate degree programs; professional development or upgrading knowledge and skills; and bridging with existing graduate degree programs.
2. Graduate diplomas should be focused primarily on either academic or professional development outcomes, and should meet a minimum level of academic content.
  - A graduate academic diploma is a graduate diploma that is primarily focused on academic development, and with course credits that can be transferred to regular graduate degree programs.
  - A graduate professional diploma is a graduate diploma program that is primarily focused on professional development, and with course credits that normally cannot be transferred to regular graduate degree programs.
3. This policy does not cover the requirements, evaluation and approval of certificates or undergraduate diploma programs.

### **Course Requirements**

A graduate diploma should include a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 18 course credits, with the option to have a maximum of 3 course credits in undergraduate courses. Graduate academic diplomas can include courses from existing graduate degree programs.

### **Admission Requirements**

Students who wish to apply to a graduate diploma program should meet the below admission requirements.

For graduate academic diplomas, the student should meet the university's minimum requirement for admission to a graduate degree program. The student should have an undergraduate bachelor's degree (or its equivalent from AUB or other recognized institutions of higher learning) with an average of at least 75 percent (or standardized equivalent from other institutions of higher learning). In addition, an applicant who does not meet the minimum undergraduate average requirement but appears to have reasonable potential for academic success, for example as manifested by relevant practical experience or high scores on relevant standardized exams, may be admitted based on the recommendation of the faculty.

For graduate professional diplomas, the same admission requirements apply as for graduate academic diplomas but without a minimum constraint on the undergraduate average. Faculties/schools may set additional admission requirements for specific graduate diploma programs.

Graduate diploma programs will follow the same maximum residence requirements as for master's degree programs.

### **English Language Proficiency Requirement (ELPR)**

Applicants to graduate academic diploma programs other than AUB graduates and graduates of recognized colleges or universities in North America, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand, should demonstrate proficiency in the English language following the university's ELPR for graduate degree programs.

Applicants to graduate professional diploma programs are expected to demonstrate proficiency in the English language following the university's ELPR for graduate degree programs; however, they may be granted ELPR waiver at the discretion of the faculty graduate studies committee (FGSC) based on a recommendation from the department.

### **Graduation Requirements**

To be eligible for graduation with a graduate academic diploma, the student must have attained a cumulative course average of 80 or above and must have completed the minimum credit hours of coursework designated by the specific diploma with a course passing grade of 70/100.

To be eligible for graduation with a graduate professional diploma, the student must have completed the minimum credit hours of coursework designated by the specific diploma with a course passing grade of 70/100.

Voting on graduate diplomas is done at the level of the faculty/school, and does not require vote in the university senate. Graduate diplomas will be signed by the dean of the faculty/school, and transcripts of records will be maintained by the office of the registrar.

A student who receives a graduate diploma that satisfies the requirement of at least 240 lecture hours in total (or equivalent) will be granted an associate alumnus status.

### **Transfer of Credits towards Graduate Degree Programs**

Transfer of course credits from a graduate academic diploma program at AUB to a graduate degree program is allowed following the academic rules and regulations specified by the university and the faculty/school offering the graduate degree program. However, the number of course credits that can be transferred is up to 12 credits. In addition, only graduate-level courses in which the applicant earned an equivalent grade of 80 or above can be transferred. Approval by the department or the academic unit concerned and the FGSC is required for all transfers.

Transfer of course credits from a graduate professional diploma program to a graduate degree program is not allowed.

### **Proposal Submission Guidelines for New Graduate Diploma Programs**

A complete proposal for a new graduate diploma program should be prepared including the following sections:

- Academic merit and value
- Motivation and market analysis
- Learning outcomes
- Curriculum and relation to existing graduate degree programs in the university
- Transfer of credits to existing graduate degree programs
- Description of the courses including their delivery modes (online, hybrid, capstone, etc.)
- Faculty members who will be teaching the courses and advising the students
- Admission requirements, including accepted undergraduate majors
- Graduation requirements
- Administrative responsibility and governance
- Diploma program and learning outcomes periodic assessment plan
- Tuition fees per credit, income and costs, and financial viability<sup>1</sup>

### **Approval Process for New Graduate Diploma Programs**

New graduate diploma programs require approval at multiple levels as per the table below, based on the submitted proposal.

<b>Approval Level</b>	<b>Academic Diploma</b>	<b>Professional Diploma</b>
Department	Required	Required
Faculty Graduate Studies Committee (FGSC)	Required	Required
Faculty	Required	Required
Board of Deans (BOD)	NA	Required
Board of Graduate Studies (BGS)	Required	NA
Senate	Required	NA
Board of Trustees (BOT)	Required	NA

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<sup>1</sup> As part of the implementation, involve the office of financial planning in reviewing the financial analysis in new proposals.