

# Criteria For Evaluating Graduate Programs

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## **Abstract**

Despite the importance of standards in evaluating the academic level of graduate programs, there are no unified standards that can be used as a basis for evaluating all programs. The standards used by different evaluation committees and academic accreditation organizations differ in their organizational structure, the aspects they focus on, and the terminology they use, but what they all have in common is that they revolve around evaluating the academic level of graduate programs. By reviewing some evaluation studies of graduate programs, it was possible to extract eight aspects that should be taken into consideration when evaluating graduate programs and when preparing lists of criteria that could be used as a basis for evaluating those programs. These aspects are program objectives, need for the program, program cost, financial capabilities, faculty members, academic courses, academic atmosphere, and students' academic level. Under each aspect, a set of criteria was placed with a five-point scale indicating the extent to which each criterion applies to the program being evaluated.

## **Introduction**

Evaluation of graduate programs aims to: (1) identify the strengths and weaknesses in preparing qualified specialists in research and teaching, (2) determine whether the programs have been implemented in accordance with the specifications established in the planning and implementation stages, (3) take Decisions regarding the continuation and modification of the program, expanding, continuing with or cancelling the program, (4) verifying that the program meets certain needs, (5) verifying the adequacy of performance and services provided, (6) verifying the suitability of the objectives, the possibility and cost of achieving them, and whether we can achieve the same goals through other, less expensive means, (7) identifying programs of good standard and those of poor standard.

Evaluating the academic level of graduate programs is essential in the process of making decisions regarding the continuation, modification, expansion, and cancellation of the program, because such evaluations provide us with information about the adequacy of the program's performance. Evaluating the academic level of postgraduate programs has become an urgent necessity due to the steady increase in the number of students enrolled in postgraduate studies, the decline in the labor market for graduates, and the need for these programs to increase the financial support they receive.

The process of evaluating the academic level of graduate programs is very difficult because it is a broad concept that cannot be easily measured, and there are no sufficient and comprehensive objective ways to measure it. Neither any indicator nor any set of indicators, such as the amount of financial support the program receives, the number of books in the library, the scientific production of faculty members, the level of the faculty, the number of faculty members participating in

scientific organizations, and the number of distinguished faculty members, can be sufficient to evaluate the scientific level of a program. what. Therefore, judging the academic level - from a procedural standpoint - often depends on subjective measures. To facilitate the process of evaluating the academic level of graduate programs, it is necessary to use a set of standards that provide a clear picture of the desired and acceptable level of performance so that we can compare the program's performance as it is in reality. Criteria are of great importance in the success of the evaluation process because they help collect information necessary for decision-making and increasing the stability and validity of evaluation judgments.

The type of criteria used to evaluate the academic level of a graduate program depends on the objectives of the program and the goal of the evaluation process. For that purpose, we have to define the goal of the evaluation before starting to set evaluation standards which can be determined in light of the needs of the community, the needs of the students, the cost of the program, the quality of services it provides, the degree of student and faculty satisfaction with the program, the number of program beneficiaries, the importance of the program to society, and so on. Standards can be collected from previous studies and through the use of questionnaires and forms for periodic evaluation of the progress of the program. It is better for the standards to be set by educators and specialists related to the type of program that we are about to prepare evaluation standards for.

When setting criteria for evaluating graduate programs, we should ask the following questions:

- What academic aspects should the standards cover?
- How many departments have graduate studies that we would like to evaluate?
- How many people are subscribed to the calendar?
- Who are the individuals involved in the calendar?
- What questions do we want to answer?
- How many criteria and how much verification can we use as a basis for evaluating a program?

Despite the importance of standards in evaluating the academic level of graduate programs, there are no unified standards that can be used as a basis for evaluating all programs. The standards used by different evaluation committees and academic accreditation organizations differ in their organizational structure, the aspects they focus on, and the terminology they use, but what they all have in common is that they revolve around evaluating the academic level of graduate programs. By reviewing some evaluation studies of graduate programs, it was possible to extract eight aspects that should be taken into consideration when evaluating graduate programs and when preparing lists of criteria that can be used as a basis for judging those programs. These aspects are: program objectives, need for the program, program cost, financial capabilities, faculty members, academic courses, academic atmosphere, and students' academic level.

### **List of criteria for Evaluating Graduate Programs**

#### **(1) First: Criteria for evaluating the program objectives**

**The program's objectives are clearly defined:**

- Totally agree

- ☐ OK
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Fairly OK
- ☐ Do not agree at all

**The program objectives are consistent with the general objectives of the university**

- ☐ Totally agree
- ☐ OK
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Fairly OK
- ☐ Do not agree at all

**The objectives of each course are consistent with the general objectives of the programme**

- ☐ Totally agree
- ☐ OK
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Fairly OK
- ☐ Do not agree at all

**Each goal is formulated in measurable terms**

- ☐ Totally agree
- ☐ OK
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Fairly OK
- ☐ Do not agree at all

**The overall objectives of the program are subject to continuous review**

- ☐ always
- ☐ mostly
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Scarcely
- ☐ never

**Course objectives are subject to continuous review**

- ☐ always
- ☐ mostly
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Scarcely
- ☐ never

**(2) Second: Criteria for evaluating the need for the program:**

**% of students enrolled in the graduate program out of the total number of university students**

- ☐ less than 5%
- ☐ From 6-10%

- From 11-15%
- 20%
- Above 20%

**Average number of students enrolled in courses:**

- Less than 5
- From 6-10
- From 11-15
- From 16-20
- Above 20

**Preparing students who are expected to join the program:**

- Very increasing
- Increasing
- Fixed
- Decreasing
- Very decreasing

**Students' interest in the program at present versus future expectations:**

- Very high
- high
- middle
- low
- very low

**The interest of graduate students in the program compared to undergraduate students:**

- Very high
- high
- middle
- low
- very low

**Demand of students from outside the department in the program:**

- Very high
- high
- middle
- low
- very low

**Percentage of dropouts from the program**

- less than 10%
- 20%
- 30%
- 40%
- 50% or more

**Average number of students graduating from the program per year**

- ☐ Less than 5
- ☐ From 6-10
- ☐ From 11-15
- ☐ From 16-20
- ☐ Above 20

**Number of students graduating from the program in the past five years**

- ☐ Very increasing
- ☐ increase
- ☐ middle
- ☐ decreasing
- ☐ Very decreasing

**The demand for graduates at the present time**

- ☐ very high
- ☐ high
- ☐ middle
- ☐ low
- ☐ very low

**Job opportunities are expected to be available for graduates of the program in the future**

- ☐ too many
- ☐ a lot
- ☐ Medium
- ☐ Few
- ☐ Very few

**The expected duration of continued demand for the program**

- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 4-6 years
- ☐ 7-9 years
- ☐ 10-12 years
- ☐ Above 12 years

**Developments in the specialty justify the program's existence**

- ☐ Totally agree
- ☐ OK
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Fairly OK
- ☐ Do not agree at all

**The program has special advantages given the unique location of the mosque and the demographic, industrial, geographic and cultural characteristics of the region**

- ☐ Totally agree
- ☐ OK
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Fairly OK
- ☐ Do not agree at all

**(3) Third: Criteria for evaluating the program cost**

What the university spends on a student enrolled in the program

- ☐ 50,000 or less
- ☐ 100,000
- ☐ 150000
- ☐ 200000
- ☐ 250,000 or more

**The percentage of what the university allocates from its budget to the program**

- ☐ less than 1%
- ☐ 2%
- ☐ 3%
- ☐ 4%
- ☐ 5% or more

**The size of scholarships provided to students**

- ☐ 100,000 or more
- ☐ 200000
- ☐ 300000
- ☐ 400000
- ☐ 500,000 or more

**The size of the program costs**

- ☐ The costs exceed the budget allocated to it
- ☐ The costs exceed the allocated budget
- ☐ The costs are equal to the budget allocated to it
- ☐ The costs are less than the budget allocated to it
- ☐ The costs are far below the budget allocated to it

**The university provides the financial support required for the program to achieve its desired goals**

- ☐ always
- ☐ mostly
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ Scarcely
- ☐ never

**External financial aid received by the program**

- There is
- nothing

**The program is an unnecessary repetition of similar programs in the Kingdom's universities**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do not agree at all

**The size of the program costs compared to the costs of similar programs at other universities**

- It increases a lot
- Increase it a little
- equal to it
- Less than her
- Much less than that

**The program has unique features that make it worthy of the support it receives**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do not agree at all

***(4) Fourth: Criteria for evaluating faculty members***

**Percentage of faculty members with the rank of professor**

- 5%
- 10%
- 15%
- 20%
- 25%

**Percentage of faculty members with the rank of associate professor**

- 5%
- 10%
- 15%
- 20%
- 25%

**Percentage of faculty members with the rank of assistant professor**

- 5%
- 10%
- 15%
- 20%
- 25%

**Percentage of faculty members who hold doctoral degrees from local/Arab universities**

- ☐ 10%
- ☐ 20%
- ☐ 30%
- ☐ 40%
- ☐ 50% or more

**Percentage of faculty members holding doctoral degrees from foreign universities**

- ☐ 20%
- ☐ 30%
- ☐ 40%
- ☐ 50%
- ☐ 60% or more

**Percentage of faculty members who are visiting and part-time professors**

- ☐ 5%
- ☐ 10%
- ☐ 15%
- ☐ 20%
- ☐ 25%

**Percentage of faculty members who worked outside the university (in government departments, business, industry, or other universities and institutes):**

- ☐ %5
- ☐ %10
- ☐ %15
- ☐ %20
- ☐ %25

**Percentage of faculty members participating in activities within the university (such as committees, workshops, and specialized scientific seminars):**

- ☐ %10
- ☐ %20
- ☐ %30
- ☐ %40
- ☐ 50%or more

**Percentage of faculty members involved in professional activities outside the university, such as providing consultations, conducting interviews, research, and giving lectures:**

- ☐ %5
- ☐ %10
- ☐ %15
- ☐ %20
- ☐ %25



**Percentage of faculty members who undertake administrative responsibilities and burdens**

- ☐ %5
- ☐ %10
- ☐ %15
- ☐ %20
- ☐ %25

**Percentage of faculty members who have 5 or more published papers**

- ☐ %5
- ☐ %10
- ☐ %15
- ☐ %20
- ☐ %25

**The number of research papers published and presented at conferences in the past five years by faculty members in the department**

- [1] Less than 25
- [2] 50
- [3] 75
- [4] 100
- [5] 100or more

**Faculty members have the opportunity to travel to attend specialized scientific conferences**

- ☐ always
- ☐ mostly
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ Scarcely
- ☐ never

**Faculty members are given ample opportunities for full-time academic study**

- ☐ always
- ☐ mostly
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ Scarcely
- ☐ never

**The materials, equipment, information sources, secretarial and computer services necessary to complete body member research are available**

- ☐ always
- ☐ mostly
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ Scarcely
- ☐ never

**The university provides the financial support required to complete faculty research**

- ☐ always
- ☐ mostly
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ Scarcely
- ☐ never

**The university provides supervising professors with adequate rewards in exchange for supervision**

- ☐ Totally agree
- ☐ OK
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Fairly OK
- ☐ Do not agree at all

**The record of faculty members is subject to continuous monitoring to ensure that their scientific production grows and increases its interest in graduate studies**

- ☐ always
- ☐ mostly
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ Scarcely
- ☐ never

**Faculty members participate in determining the program objectives**

- ☐ always
- ☐ mostly
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ Scarcely
- ☐ never

**Faculty members participate in setting the conditions for admission and graduation from the department**

- ☐ always
- ☐ mostly
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ Scarcely
- ☐ never

**Faculty members participate in academic advising**

- ☐ always
- ☐ mostly
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ Scarcely
- ☐ never

**Faculty members participate in developing, implementing and evaluating courses and programmes**

- ☐ always
- ☐ mostly
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ Scarcely
- ☐ Never

**Faculty members periodically evaluate resources, capabilities, and services**

- ☐ always
- ☐ mostly
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ Scarcely
- ☐ never

**Faculty members periodically evaluate student achievement**

- ☐ always
- ☐ mostly
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ Scarcely
- ☐ never

**Average number of hours taught by professors**

- ☐ Less than 3
- ☐ 4-6
- ☐ 7-9
- ☐ 10-12
- ☐ 13 or more

**The number of faculty members is sufficient to teach the courses**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ no

**Faculty members specialize in the courses they teach**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ no

**The supervising professor's specialization is consistent with the thesis' specialization**

- ☐ always
- ☐ mostly
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ Scarcely
- ☐ never

**The level of faculty members in teaching**

- excellent
- very good
- good
- illness
- weak

**The level of educational courses used by the professor**

- excellent
- very good
- good
- illness
- weak

**Faculty members take into account individual differences among students**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do not agree at all

**Faculty provide real-world experiences for students**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do not agree at all

**(5) Fifth: Criteria for evaluating financial capabilities:**

**The library's information resources are comprehensive, up-to-date and available**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do not agree at all

**Office services are adequate**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do not agree at all

**The number of books allocated to one student in the specialty**

- Totally agree

- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do not agree at all

**Teaching aids are sufficient**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do not agree at all

**Modern devices are available and the devices are subject to continuous maintenance**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do not agree at all

**Places for storing educational devices and materials are available**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do not agree at all

**Computer services are available**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do not agree at all

**Laboratories are modern, available and adequate**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do not agree at all

**Materials needed to conduct laboratory research are available**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK

- Do not agree at all

**Administrative and faculty offices are adequate**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do not agree at all

**Classrooms are sufficient**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do not agree at all

**The space allocated to one student in the classroom in square metres**

- 1 m<sup>2</sup>
- 2m<sup>2</sup>
- 3m<sup>2</sup>
- 4m<sup>2</sup>
- 5 m<sup>2</sup> or more

**Meeting rooms are adequate**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do not agree at all

**The university allows the use of capabilities and services available outside it**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do not agree at all

**(6) Sixth: Criteria for evaluating academic courses**

**The department offers a sufficient number of courses each semester**

- always
- mostly
- sometimes
- Scarcely
- never

**Courses are offered at intervals that help students proceed with the program and complete it without disruption**

- ☐ always
- ☐ mostly
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ Scarcely
- ☐ never

**Courses are reviewed and reviewed periodically**

- ☐ always
- ☐ mostly
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ Scarcely
- ☐ never

**The courses that make up a student's program of study are appropriate to the student's experiences and career goals**

- ☐ Totally agree
- ☐ OK
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Fairly OK
- ☐ Do not agree at all

**Courses include courses outside the major that are related to the major**

- ☐ 4 courses or more
- ☐ 3 courses
- ☐ Decided
- ☐ One course
- ☐ nothing

**The number of credit hours for the courses is sufficient**

- ☐ Totally agree
- ☐ OK
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Fairly OK
- ☐ Do not agree at all

**The courses contain subjects in the specialization and subjects of general culture**

- ☐ Totally agree
- ☐ OK
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Fairly OK
- ☐ Do not agree at all

**Courses provide students with knowledge, concepts, skills, and facts in the major**

- ☐ Totally agree
- ☐ OK
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Fairly OK
- ☐ Do not agree at all

**The level of graduate courses is higher than the level of undergraduate courses**

- ☐ Totally agree
- ☐ OK
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Fairly OK
- ☐ Do not agree at all

**There is a balance between the department's interest in undergraduate courses and graduate courses**

- ☐ Totally agree
- ☐ OK
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Fairly OK
- ☐ Do not agree at all

**Difficulty level of courses**

- ☐ very easy
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Medium
- ☐ Difficult
- ☐ very difficult

**The level of organization in the courses**

- ☐ Very flexible
- ☐ flexible
- ☐ middle
- ☐ Fairly flexible
- ☐ not flexible

**The courses complement each other**

- ☐ Totally agree
- ☐ OK
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Fairly OK
- ☐ Do not agree at all



**The program contains compulsory courses in the principles of statistics, computer sustainability, the English language, scientific research methods, and the use of information sources in the library.**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ no

**The courses contribute to training students in scientific research skills**

- ☐ Contribute very greatly
- ☐ contribute greatly
- ☐ Contribute to a moderate degree
- ☐ contribute somewhat
- ☐ Don't contribute at all

**Courses include advanced activities such as research hall, field training, practical training, and thesis**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ no

**Written assignments, examinations, and accompanying oral reports contribute to training students in communication skills in a manner and level commensurate with their specialization and the academic degree they seek to obtain.**

- ☐ Contribute very greatly
- ☐ contribute greatly
- ☐ Contribute to a moderate degree
- ☐ contribute somewhat
- ☐ Don't contribute at all

**The examinations, research, dissertation, and practical and field training accompanying the various courses give students the opportunity to apply the knowledge they have learned**

- ☐ Totally agree
- ☐ OK
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Fairly OK
- ☐ Do not agree at all

#### **(7) Seventh: Standards for evaluating the academic atmosphere**

**Students receive feedback from professors on assignments and exams**

- ☐ always
- ☐ mostly
- ☐ sometimes
- ☐ Scarcely
- ☐ never

**Students have opportunities for reflection and group work**

- always
- mostly
- sometimes
- Scarcely
- never

**Students participate in research conducted by professors**

- always
- mostly
- sometimes
- Scarcely
- never

**The program satisfies the cognitive needs of students**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do not agree at all

**The program contributes to solving students' problems**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do not agree at all

**Students participate in making their own decisions**

- always
- mostly
- sometimes
- Scarcely
- never

**Providing necessary counseling services for students**

- always
- mostly
- sometimes
- Scarcely
- never

**Cooperation between professors and students**

- Very enough
- Adequate
- middle

- a little
- Not enough at all

**Offering outstanding students incentive rewards**

- always
- mostly
- sometimes
- Scarcely
- never

**Students are provided with sufficient, clear and accurate information about the nature of the program, admission conditions, course of study, and graduation requirements**

- To a very great extent
- To a great extent
- To a moderate degree
- To a small degree
- at all

**The process of supervising students' theses is characterized by regularity and seriousness**

- Totally agree
- OK
- I don't know
- Fairly OK
- Do Do not agree at all

**(8) Eighth: Criteria for evaluating the academic level of students**

**Program admission criteria**

- Too high
- High
- Medium
- Low
- very low

**Average grades obtained by students in the course**

- 70 or less
- 71-75
- 76-80
- 82-85
- 86-90

**The number of research papers prepared by the department's students annually**

- 10
- 20
- 30

- ☐ 40
- ☐ 50 or more

**Level of student research**

- ☐ excellent
- ☐ very good
- ☐ good
- ☐ Patients
- ☐ weak

**Level of students' theses**

- ☐ excellent
- ☐ very good
- ☐ good
- ☐ Patients
- ☐ weak

**Students' theses add new knowledge**

- ☐ Totally agree
- ☐ OK
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Fairly OK
- ☐ Do Do not agree at all

**The percentage of students who achieve the desired goals of the program**

- ☐ less than 20%
- ☐ 40%
- ☐ 60%
- ☐ 80%
- ☐ 100%

**Average cumulative GPA of students upon graduation**

- ☐ 2.5-29.9
- ☐ 3-3,49
- ☐ 3.5-3.99
- ☐ 4-4,49
- ☐ 4,5-5

**Graduate level**

- ☐ excellent
- ☐ very good
- ☐ good
- ☐ Patients
- ☐ weak

**Graduates' opinion on the program**

- Very positive
- My love
- Somewhat positive
- negative
- Largely negative

**Graduates find work in their field of specialization**

- always
- mostly
- sometimes
- Scarcely
- never

**Employer satisfaction with the level of graduates**

- very big
- big
- middle
- weak
- None

**Department graduation standards**

- Too high
- High
- Medium
- Low
- very low

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