

What Does it Mean to be a Programme Director?

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Abstract

A program director plays an important and essential role in managing and coordinating various academic projects and activities. To get a complete idea about this job, I have distributed a questionnaire to (20) faculty members at the Preparatory Studies Center (PSC)- University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Ibri- The Sultanate of Oman. The results were a mazing-almost all participants agree that the job of a programme director is very important, though demanding and time consuming. Discussion, recommendations, and explanation will be highlighted in detail throughout this article.

Keywords: academic institutions, coordinator, leadership, placement test, programme director, syllabus

Introduction

Staff and faculty members are aware that the job of a programme director is very demanding and time consuming, as well. A good number of individuals think that this job is only about offering help and assistance to students; on the contrary, its main concern is building strong ties and relationships among all employees at a certain institution. Moreover, the skillful and smart programme director is the one who deeply concentrates on the syllabus, students and all staff which, finally, gives the academic institution an excellent reputation, locally or/and internationally.

Some staff members do not welcome being programme directors as they are content that it is not getting the proper credit they look for. They consider it an obstacle that hinders academic promotions, as they do not have enough time for researching and attending conferences and workshops. Being a programme director means one is always on the spot and whatever he/she does, might not satisfy all employees, no matter how much effort he gives to the academic institution. This paper highlights the job of “Programme Director” at the Preparatory Studies

Center- Ibri, obstacles might be faced, detailed discussion about the way things are run, in addition to the outcomes obtained.

Statement of the Problem

At higher education institutions, the job of programme director is both essential and vital. It deals with plans to follow, evaluation, and excellent outcomes that are reflected on all employees: students, staff, faculty members, etc.

Objectives of the Study

This study pursues the following:

1. Identifying and defining the exact job of programme director at the (PSC) - Ibri.
2. Examining the criteria followed upon recruiting programme directors.

Literature Review

“A programme director is an individual within an organization responsible for the planning, development and implementation of programmes. They're also accountable for the success or troubles of the programmes and of this department” (Indeeditorialteam,2025, Para. 2). So, it is clear that the programme director takes the maximum burden and responsibility of considering the proper way for all items related to the Center and without this, things become loose and uncontrollable. Time should be set for every mission and task in order to get the utmost perfection.

The programme director sets time frames for goal completion, including sub-goals building up to the programme's completion. Adherence to the deadlines set out by the director is important for any programme to succeed as it proves the reliability of the programme and everyone involved. (Indeeditorialteam,2025, Para. 5).

The programme director must have a strategic vision and skill so that all things become under control. “Provide strategic vision and strong leadership while directing our programs Ensure programs always support and advance the organization's mission” (ZipRecruiter Marketplace Research Team, (n.d), Para. 8). Upon recruiting programme directors, they should have some characteristics: innovative and dependable, etc. “We are seeking an innovative, organized, and dependable program director to join our growing team. You must be detail-oriented and a master collaborator, ready to prepare, plan and implement program initiatives and monitor their progress

to completion”. (ZipRecruiter Marketplace Research Team, (n.d), Para.5). let us see some other duties and responsibilities of the successful programme director. He should be:

... responsible for researching, planning, developing and implementing an organization’s programs. Their responsibilities typically include the following:

Hire, train and be a motivating mentor to staff, lead large group discussions to answer questions and remedy complaints, create and nurture effective communication within the organization, build a strong team through open communication and by collaborating on decision-making responsibilities, initiate and set goals for programs based on the organization’s strategic objectives, plan programs from start to finish, including identifying processes, deadlines and milestones. develop and approve operations and budgets. (Indeed, Employer Content Team, 2025, Para. 2).

A programme director does not come ready from the blue; on the contrary, he should undergo some training courses to be familiar with the mission he is going to take.

Most program directors receive training within their educational programs and related internships. Some entry-level positions, such as administrative assistant or program organizer, serve as on-the-job training for future program directors. Advanced courses in program planning are also available and cover topics such as setting goals, program implementation, strategic planning, teamwork and organizing program activities. (Indeed, Editorial Team, 2025, Para. 8).

Moreover, a programme director should always be watchful, alert, and vigilant for any unexpected events. He should make sure that all things go smoothly and functioning well with no risk of whatsoever that might affect the whole work.

Strategically map-out a program schedule and timeline and ensure it is followed, oversee and advise program staff in various tasks, ensure the smooth and proper functioning of current programs, assess and manage program risks, suggest innovative plans and processes to improve program functions. (ZipRecruiter Marketplace Research Team, (n.d), Para.6).

The Program Director is responsible for the entire program of an institution or organization. They develop, implement, and oversee all aspects of the program. In many cases, the Program Director is responsible for a specific program within the institution or organization. (Gunti, 2024, Para. 7).

Quality, rather than quantity. This is what programme directors should seek for. This requires deep and quality knowledge about the principles of the whole process, in addition to a sense of strong leadership merits.

A program director's goal is to ensure every program is completed successfully to add the highest possible value to the organization and program participants. This role requires a deep knowledge of program management principles, strategic thinking and strong leadership qualities. (Indeed, Editorial Team, 2025, Para. 5).

What makes programme directors smoothly navigate the diverse responsibilities effectively is promoting, continuously developing, and honing the proper skills needed to reach the ultimate success. "Developing a robust network and continually honing industry-specific skills will bolster your candidacy and prepare you to navigate the multifaceted responsibilities of a Program Director effectively". (nasw, (n.d), Para.5). Another merit that a programme director should possess is the skill of communication-- verbal and written, to convey messages to employees in a very clear way. Initiating good and effective relationships with other departments is strongly recommended.

A program director uses communication skills to share information with their team and provide team members with a level of comfort to put them at ease about speaking up about their concerns or offering constructive suggestions. Program directors can create and nurture effective interdepartmental communication as well as communication with organization stakeholders. (Indeed, Editorial Team, 2025, Para. 14).

Successful programme directors adopt certain techniques while taking critical decisions as a way of fulfilling the objectives. "Program directors use decision-making techniques to ensure a clear chain of command as well as a cohesive plan of action that appeals to the majority of the team and fulfills the objectives of the project and the organization". (Indeed, Editorial Team, 2025, Para. 15). The work of programme directors in famous organizations lets them know all details about the institution's management. As a result, they interact well with all employees around, managers, in particular. "...as program directors work above managers in organizations, they gain a good understanding of the actual situations the organization faces. By getting work experience as a manager, you can improve your management knowledge and learn to interact better with directors" (Simplilearn, 2025, Para. 13). Programme directors should be fair in dealing with all employees, especially when a certain conflict occurs.

Program directors use interpersonal skills to resolve conflicts and ensure the program continues smoothly. These skills include the ability to make fair decisions and communicate them to all parties involved. Using these skills also builds trust within the team through open communication and collaborative decision-making. (Indeed, Editorial Team, 2025, Para. 16).

A programme director is the only one who should be referred to so as to solve problems that nobody can deal with. He is a precious asset for the academic institution he works for. "If any dispute arises and the professionals lower in the hierarchy cannot fix it, the program director is responsible for resolving it" (Simplilearn, 2025, Para. 5). However, in the field of education, the

programme director develops programmes that give students credits to graduate satisfactorily and become useful figures in the society, locally or internationally. "...in education, the programming director must develop and maintain different education programs which provide credits for the students, ultimately helping them graduate with a good percentage". By Teamfoundit, 2024, Para. 5).

The Preparatory Studies Center (PSC)-Ibri

The University of Technology and Applied Sciences is a state university located in the capital city of Oman-Muscat. It has nine branches in different regions to serve the huge number of students. Every branch has a language center to assist newly admitted students. Upon joining the university, students have to undergo a placement test in three subjects: English, Information Technology-IT-, and Mathematics. Those who do not make it, shall take an orientation course(s) in the subject(s) they fail.

Ours, along with the other branches, has a full-fledged language center where students take courses before starting their majors. Interestingly enough, the language of instruction is English in all subjects, conducted by highly qualified faculty members that represent a multilingual community. Regarding my job, though demanding, still, enjoyable.

As the *Head of Curriculum and Teaching Methods Section*, I start the academic year by welcoming faculty members and thank them for their efforts done in the previous academic year, welcome the new comers, and then, update lecturers with what is new—instructions, regulations, and any matter of concern and interest. Due to some emergency, or urgent circumstances, other meetings are conducted throughout the academic semester: first, second, and the final exams, for instance. Keeping in touch with faculty members is done almost everyday via emails, Teams Platform, etc.

Our Preparatory Studies Centre boasts a very important section that represents the essence and core of the teaching/learning process. The Personal Development (PD) section is doing a very great job in giving lecturers the opportunity to meet and have friendly talks highlighting certain academic topics of their choice. Almost all lecturers participate in this weekly event- normally on Thursdays. Sometimes some international academic figures are invited on-line to give lectures, and exchange ideas with our lecturers who are keen on and interested in attending such beneficial meetings. As the number of students at the (PSC) is big, it is wise to share responsibility—coordinators also participate.

Coordinators do share the responsibility. They meet with lecturers, follow-up all matters of concern regarding the academic plans, making sure that all objectives are fully accomplished on

time. In fact, coordinators' efforts are highly appreciated, and are rewarded all the time. What about low-level students at the (PSC)?

As a matter of fact, upon releasing the first exam results, I ask coordinators of all levels to provide me with a list of failures. As a result, I recommend opening special sections for those students as Remedial classes in which failures can voluntarily join in their free time to improve their academic level. Normally, up to four remedial sections are available for all levels. Let me highlight a very important matter I always shed some light on- field tours.

Though our faculty members are industrious and hardworking, still, it is part of my job to always see what needs support, or assistance; just in case. From time to time, I move around to make sure that all is well. Upon my recommendations, I ask level coordinators to arrange a certain schedule for attending classes with new faculty members for guidance and orientation, which is good to make sure our teachers are familiar with the work. Upon recruiting teachers, I, personally, with the coordinators, in the presence of the Head of the Language Center interview new comers. They are really high caliber whom I admire and respect. Sometimes emergency cases happen, and as the Head of Curriculum and Teaching Methods Section, I have to have a decision.

During heavy rain and floods, students are unable to reach the campus to attend classes, as well as most faculty members. This is dangerous for everybody to take the risk. In this situation, and upon contacting the proper personnel, I recommend that teaching should be conducted online for the safety of students and staff alike. The Preparatory Studies Center is a marvelous place-- it should be visited to be believed.

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design using a survey method to gather data on the job of programme director. The use of surveys is appropriate for collecting standardized, comparable data across a sample of participants, allowing for statistical analysis of their responses.

Participants

The participants (20 male and female lecturers) teach at the Preparatory Studies Center / University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Ibri- in the Sultanate of Oman. They come from different countries-Ukraine, Russia, America, South Africa, Iran, Pakistan, India, the Sudan, Egypt, etc.). They are all experienced and have taught at different universities and colleges around the globe.

Sampling Strategy

Due to logistical constraints, the sample size was limited to (20) participants. A convenience sampling method was employed, as the lecturers were readily available to the researchers at the time of the study. However, the small sample size limits the generalizability of the results and is considered a limitation of the study.

Research Instrument

Data was collected using a questionnaire created by the researcher that had (15) questions. The survey asks (**Yes/No**), (**Agree/Disagree**), and (**Multiple Choice**) questions to gauge respondents' opinions on the job of Programme Director, which included empathy, fairness, and communication skills.

Data Collection Procedure

Surveys were distributed to participants during their free time at the Preparatory Studies Center. they were given a detailed explanation about the purpose of the study, informed of their right to apologize anytime, and assured of their anonymity.

Ethical Considerations

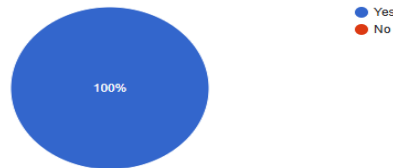
This study followed ethical research guidelines. All subjects gave their informed consent, and they were promised that their answers would be kept private.

Table1

I. The skills Program Directors should possess are: leadership, communication skills, and problem solving.	Yes	No
	20	0
	100%	0%

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رد 20



The findings indicate that the participants (100%) believe that the skills Program Directors should possess are: leadership, communication skills, and problem solving.

Table 2

3. Programme directors should follow certain strategies to motivate and lead a diverse team of professionals.	Yes	No
	19	1
	95%	5%

Programme directors should follow certain strategies to motivate and lead a .3
.diverse team of professionals

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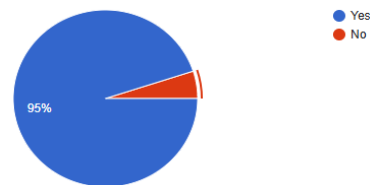


Table 2 shows that the largest group of participants (90%) agreed that programme directors should follow certain strategies to motivate and lead a diverse team of professionals.

Table 3

6. Throughout the academic year, programme directors should ensure transparency and address any concerns promptly.	Agree	Disagree
	17	3
	85%	15%

Throughout the academic year, programme directors should ensure .6
.transparency and address any concerns promptly

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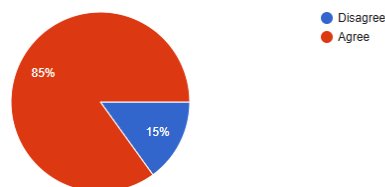


Table 3 illustrates that (90%) of participants agreed that throughout the academic year, programme directors should ensure transparency and address any concerns promptly.

Conclusion

In the previous paper, I tackled a very important matter that is considered the backbone of any academic institution- job of Programme Director. It starts from the very beginning of the academic year till the end. It is a challenge that needs flexibility in dealing with all matters in the institution to ensure that things are all done perfectly and accurately. Finally, whatever the programme director struggles for is the well-being of the whole organization. Though demanding and time consuming, I am doing my best to get excellent outcomes reflected on all employees.

Recommendations

- Programme directors should have excellent communication skills so that they can convey messages clearly to faculty members and staff, as well.
- Programme directors should have interpersonal skills to deal with any conflict that might happen in the institution.
- Programme directors should have a deep knowledge of program management principles, strategic thinking and strong leadership qualities.
- Programme directors should undergo some training courses in their field of work.
- Programme directors should set the framework of time for goal completion and achievement including minor goals that assist the programme's completion.
- Programme directors should be "motivation mentors" to staff: lead large group discussions, remedy complains, build a strong and competitive team.

Acknowledgement

The researcher would like to express his utmost gratitude to all participants whose involvement was essential for the accomplishment of this study.

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About the author

Sultan Al Sawafi is an English Lecturer at the Preparatory Studies Centre, University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS), Ibri, Oman. He is currently serving as the Head of the English Language Curriculum and Assessment Unit. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Education majoring in English Language from Sultan Qaboos University and a Master's degree in Education in TESOL from the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. With over nine years of teaching experience in Omani schools and more than eleven years at the university level, he has developed extensive expertise in English language teaching, curriculum design, and assessment. His academic and professional interests include foreign language acquisition, teaching methodologies and approaches, and the integration of AI in education.

Questionnaire

This questionnaire consists of three parts; **(Yes/ No)**, **(Agree/ Disagree)**, and **(Multiple-Choice)** questions, and is mainly geared to lecturers at the Preparatory Studies Centre- University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Ibri/ Sultanate of Oman. The questionnaire is about the job of a Programme Director. Your names will not appear in the questionnaire or analysis.

Part One Yes / No Questions.

I. The skills Program Directors should possess are: leadership, communication skills, and problem solving.

(Yes)

(No)

2. Program objectives should align with the overall strategic goals of the academic institutions.

(Yes)

(No)

3. Programme directors should follow certain strategies to motivate and lead a diverse team of professionals.

(Yes)

(No)

4. Programme directors should encourage faculty members to take training courses and professional development sessions.

(Yes)

(No)

5. Programme directors should listen to faculty members and staff to assess their problem-solving skills and ability to navigate complex situations in order to get successful outcomes despite challenges.

(Yes)

(No)

Part Two Agree/ Disagree Questions.

6. Throughout the academic year, programme directors should ensure transparency and address any concerns promptly.

(Agree)

(Disagree)

7. Faculty and staff members need to ensure that programme directors can effectively manage and resolve conflicts to maintain team cohesion and program success.

(Agree)

(Disagree)

8. Programme directors should follow the Open-door policy.

(Agree)

(Disagree)

9. Programme directors should focus on understanding each individual's unique strengths and career aspirations, providing tailored support and opportunities for growth.

(Agree)

(Disagree)

10. Programme directors should highlight the successful outcomes and lessons learned from problematic circumstances.

(Agree)

(Disagree)

Part Three: Multiple –Choice Questions

11. To handle conflicts within team members, programme directors should:

- A. Understand the perspectives of all parties involved.
- B. Facilitate open and transparent discussions to identify the root causes and work towards mutually beneficial solutions.
- C. Emphasize the importance of active listening to foster a positive team environment.

12. To measure the success of a program, programme directors should:

- A. Set clear, transparent, and measurable objectives
- B. Welcome regular feedback
- C. Both: A and B

13. Programme directors should:

- A. Oversee the planning process
- B. Track specific projects within an institution
- C. Manage teams, coordinate resources, and communicate with all staff and faculty members to ensure smooth and flexible operations

14. Programme directors should:

- A. Ensure that each program's objectives are clearly defined
- B. Use key performance indicators to track, observe, and adjust as needed.
- C. Reward distinguished staff and faculty members and thank them in meetings or giving them certificates, etc.

15. Programme directors should:

- A. Struggle for the well-being of the whole institution
- B. Do their best to get excellent outcomes reflected on all employees.
- C. Enjoy their job, though demanding.