



Arab Open University Staff Development Policy and Procedures

Version 3

Policy Title:	Arab Open University Staff development Policy
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Executive Owner:	Vice President Planning and development
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Policy Monitoring and Compliance:	VPPD Office HQ Branch Rectors Quality Assurance and Accreditation Units at AOU Branches
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Note: A policy can be reviewed before the designated review date should there be a need to.

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Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the role of AOU towards staff development of all its employees in their relevant areas of work.

Policy Scope

The policy applies to all AOU staff across branches.

Policy Statement

Arab Open University is committed to investing in its staff development programmes and training related to the professional growth and role that may in ways advance their skills and value to their performance of university in turn.

Principles

It is committed to providing equal opportunities for the professional development of its staff based on the following principles:

- Acknowledges the need for staff development towards realizing the University's mission and vision.
- Encourages and enables self-development of its staff towards enhanced work performance.
- Acknowledges the identified staff needs through the University's appraisal system in building their potential.
- Comply to the highest quality standards in staff development
- Comply with all AOU bylaws and policies underpinned by the Equal Opportunities policies.

Context of Staff Development

AOU values its staff as of prime importance towards meeting its goals and objectives. Therefore, it believes in investing in highly skilled and motivated task force.

Staff development would therefore entail any activity that would directly contribute to the skills, competence and development of the staff through training programmes, conferences, seminars, appointment in any statutory body (not leading to any conflict of interest) that would provide an opportunity to exercise intellectual abilities towards any academic development.

Staff Development Responsibility

Individual Staff:

AOU considers individual participation in identifying staff development needs as of crucial importance and therefore provides individuals with a platform to do so through appraisal process, peer review, PDP, student feedback etc. Individual staff are encouraged to take responsibility for their own self-development by taking advantage of all AOU provisions towards staff development.

AOU as an Institution:

AOU as an institution is committed to the development of its staff. The senior management is expected to ensure that all staff employed receive support towards professional staff development. The leadership at both the Branch level (Director /Programme Coordinators) and HQ (Senior Management/Department Heads) are also to contribute effectively towards staff development needs.

Institutional level audits both at the external and internal level would assess, monitor and evaluate efforts towards the staff development and generate periodic reports.

Procedures

Entitlement:

- All full time employed staff are entitled to access staff development opportunities as per the AOU bylaws.
- Access to staff development opportunity is the prerogative of every employed staff and the entitlement to the same would be determined on meeting the requirements in compliance to the AOU policies that would ensure equality of opportunity throughout the whole department.
- Manager/Department Head who would ensure equality of opportunity throughout the whole department.
- Development activity will be monitored by the Line Manager/Department Head to ensure fairness and equity of treatment under the policy.

Requesting for Staff Development:

- All requests for staff development must be received through the department head.
- Requests by email or verbal requests will not be accepted as formal requests.
- Any requests received without an authorizing signatory will be returned to the applicant.
- Development events can be requested for individuals, teams and departments where it is deemed appropriate.

Expenditure for Staff Development Activity:

- All staff development provision will be available at no cost to the individual staff member or his/ her department, where it is deemed to be for the benefit of the department and AOU by the line manager/department head.
- The expenditure towards the staff development should come from the allocated budget of the respective Branches/HQ. Where departments have no budget for staff development, staff will be able to access central funds at no cost where there is a perceived benefit to the department and the University.

- Funding towards conferences/seminars/symposium in the staff member's relevant field of expertise will be the responsibility of the concerned Department/Faculty. Only conferences directly related to duties and responsibilities expected to be performed by an individual can be funded if merited.
- Where a department has no conference budget, requests may be made to the branch director. When a branch does not have a budget for a conference, a request may be made to the concerned Vice President, and subject to availability of funds and merit of the request, the same may be approved.

Cancellation of Events:

Failure to attend an event or where a staff member has to withdraw or cancel their place (Either internal or external) leading to a cost for the University / branch, will be investigated by the concerned assistant branch director's office and a charge will be incurred by the department, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Appeals:

Where an application for development is not successful, an individual may appeal in sequence to the Head of human resource department at the branch, then to the branch director / or to the Director of Human Resources then AOU president at HQ.

Payment of Membership Fees:

AOU will not pay any membership fees for staff wishing to join professional associations.

Recommendations

- In order to plan a coordinated approach to departmental training and development activities, departments should use the training plans available centrally from VPP&D office.

- Each department head can communicate with the training head at VPP&D to discuss developments against plans and receive advice and guidance on how best to proceed.