

## Arab Open University Succession Planning Policy and Procedures

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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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## Introduction

Arab Open University (AOU) recognizes the importance of succession planning in light of its vast expansion that has led to its establishment in Nine different countries with a stupendous student strength. AOU has over the years evolved in terms of not only its student strength but also the programmes it offers and the services it adopts to cater to the needs of its beneficiaries. The recent institutional SWOT analysis endorses the need for AOU to have a robust succession plan and procedure towards Business Continuity and quality assurance of its standards.

## Policy Statement

AOU is committed to ensuring that its structure and human resources are dedicated to meet the goals and objectives of the University.

## Purpose and Scope

Succession Planning at AOU aims at ensuring business continuity by keeping a job position filled by identifying highly qualified personnel from within the institution to take on new roles and additional responsibilities. Succession Planning at AOU is a process wherein future needs for business continuity are identified through gap analysis of existing resources and talents available. The gaps are addressed through staff development activities.

## Objectives

- ***Future Leadership:*** To develop future leaders for the different departments and the whole university.
- ***Critical Capacity Building:*** To build capacity in departments to support critical roles in case of absence of staff (sudden or otherwise) due to reasons that may be personal or official as staff being on leave due to official mission, suddenly resignation or retirement or any other personal reasons.

- ***Future Capacity Building:*** To plan for positions that will be responsible for new capabilities building within departments through various staff development activities.

### Defining Succession Planning

Succession planning at AOU refers to conscious planning towards staff empowerment through skills enhancement activities so as to ensure that all key positions always maintain the minimum level of stability and do not impair University's functioning in achieving its mission. The succession planning at AOU include:

- Identifying critical jobs at various levels, which if interrupted, would significantly affect AOU's functioning
- Identifying employees who exhibit interest in and demonstrate potential for succession to key positions.
- Investing substantially to ensure employees have appropriate and structured training and development opportunities.
- Aligning succession planning with university strategic goals and mission.
- Launching an internal recruitment plan in which all positions of executive leadership (Presidents, Deans, Branch Directors and Department Heads) and other senior administrative levels are filled.

### Succession Planning Procedure

**STEP 1:** Identifying Key & Critical Positions and Determine Functions & Responsibilities: Key Positions at AOU are identified based on criticality of the position and retention risk thus making certain positions critical at times. Criticality here refers to the significant impact it may have on the Business Continuity if the position is vacant. The significance of the impact could be on all aspects of University operations that include student enrollment and continuity, teaching and learning operations, highly technical skills (IT that covers SIS etc), finances and overall health of the University. Retention risk here refers to the predictable risks involved of the employee leaving either due to retirement or history of turnover etc.

**STEP 2:** Identify competencies: Every position requires a requisite set of competencies, knowledge and skills that are required to carry out the expected tasks in the said position. It is therefore essential to clearly list out the competencies required to identify the potential candidates. This may be done through the Human Resources procedures, which include reviewing job description, interviewing current and former job incumbents and valuing it in light of the University's objective and current developments.

**STEP 3:** Competency Gap Analysis: The University compares the current and future capability needs against the available Human Resources to identify the gaps. The Heads of the Department carry out this Competency Gap analysis and make the necessary recommendations to the Human Resources Department.

**STEP 4:** Design Developmental Opportunities for each set of Competencies: The development opportunities to bridge the gap may be done through either deputizing the next in line staff, training and development of the existing staff, hiring new staff or outsourcing.

**STEP 5:** Select Potential Candidates: the HRD in consultation with the concerned Higher Management may select the appropriate candidate either from the existing pool of resources or from the shortlisted candidates from outside of the University.

**STEP 6:** Implement Training and Developmental Programmes: The University may take all necessary steps to invest in the training and development needs of the candidate to be ready to fill the position.

**STEP 7:** Monitor, Evaluate, Reassess and track overall progress and maintain skills inventory: Based on the monitoring and evaluations results the HRD may

reassess and track overall progress maintain skill inventory and assess the suitability of the appointed candidate to the position.

### **Acknowledgement**

This policy is the result of the university's SWOT analysis findings. To develop this policy references have been made to various AOU Bylaws and Policies and to documents from comparable Universities.