

Arab Open University Website Policy

Policy Title:	Arab Open University Website Policy
Version Number	1
Executive Owner:	Vice President for Planning and Development
Policy Review:	Quality Assurance Accreditation, Academic and Institutional Standards Committee(QAAAIS)
Policy Implementation:	AOU HQ and AOU Campuses
Monitoring and compliance	Content publishers and website integrity team
Next Review Date	February 2026

Note: A policy may be reviewed before the designated review date should there be a need to.

Arab Open University Website Policy

Introduction

This policy governs all websites representing Arab Open University (AOU) and any of its entities that conduct official University business or provide official University information. These include but are not limited to all websites under the domain umbrella arabou.edu and aou.edu.

Article 1: Title

The current bylaws shall bear the title of “Arab Open University Website Policy.”

Article 2: Definitions

- University: The Arab Open University (AOU)
- Campus: An AOU Campus
- Director/Rector/President: The Rector of the AOU Campus in the country of the branch.

Article 3: Aims of the Policy

AOU websites are valuable assets of the University. As critical business and communication vehicles, it is important that the information they provide be accessible, accurate, easy to find, navigate, and timely. This policy has the following objectives for all websites that conduct official University business:

1. To ensure sites are regularly updated and provide accurate content to constituents.
2. To present a consistent professional image of AOU that maintains the integrity of the institution.
3. To define certain visual and informational elements required for all AOU websites.

4. To ensure websites clearly establish a unit's relationship to AOU and consistently include basic elements intended to aid users as they navigate across AOU websites.
5. To define website accessibility standards and requirements.
6. To establish a process to decommission dormant AOU websites and reclaim arabou.edu subdomains.

Article 4: Definitions

- Domain Name: An organization's unique internet identity. The root domain is the web address and includes a domain name (AOU) and a name domain extension or top-level domain such as .edu.
- Identity: The University's brand guidelines define the standards for using AOU's logos and other graphic marks and visual identity elements.
- Subdomain: A domain that is part of a larger domain. Using subdomains provides for the creation of discrete website addresses for unique site content across a larger organization.
- URL: The Uniform Resource Locator (URL) is used to specify addresses on the web for all sites, pages, links, images, audio, video, etc.

Article 5: Roles and Responsibilities

- Webmaster: Oversees the overall website structure, functionality, and design consistency.
- Content Editors: Departmental representatives responsible for creating and maintaining content in their respective areas. They ensure the accuracy, relevance, and timeliness of the content.
- Content Publishers: Individuals responsible for reviewing and approving content created by Content Editors before it goes live on the website. They ensure content adheres to AOU's standards and policies.
- IT Department: Provides technical support and ensures the website's security and functionality.

Article 6: Website Requirements

All official AOU websites must adhere to the following standards and criteria:

1. Accessibility

For the University websites to be viewed and used by the widest audience, all webpages must support web accessibility to provide equal access and equal opportunity to people with disabilities.

2. University Identity

1. The full name of the University—Arab Open University—must appear on every webpage, preferably in the footer.
2. The AOU or an official department signature, must appear at the top of every webpage.
3. The use and placement of University trademarks must follow the standards defined in the AOU Brand guidelines.

3. Link to the University Homepage

The top section of all website homepages officially representing AOU must include an easily identifiable link to the university main homepage.

4. Search Function

1. All official University websites must provide a search function for their sites.
2. All official University websites must provide a way to search all of AOU by either adding the AOU search to their site or linking to the AOU search.

5. Contact Information

Top-level pages of websites must include a clear way to contact the unit for additional information or to report problems on the webpage.

6. Website Footer Requirements

All University webpages must display the following information at the bottom of the page in the webpage footer:

- a) A prominent link to the University homepage.
- b) University accessibility statement: "AOU is an equal access/equal opportunity institution. Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to

direct suggestions, comments, or complaints concerning any accessibility issues with AOU websites to accessibility@arabou.edu."

c) University copyright: "Copyright 20XX Arab Open University."

Article 7: Website Content Standards

Content Accuracy

1. **Content Development:** Proofread all content for accuracy and spelling errors before it is published. Content publisher is responsible for ensuring that all content on the unit's AOU website is accurate, secure, and timely.
2. **Content Updates and Maintenance:** Websites should be reviewed at least every semester and definitely annually. Maintaining accuracy and timeliness involves ensuring currency of the published information, removing outdated content, updating old photos, videos, and images, moving older content to an archive, and regularly checking the site for broken links.

Responsible Management of Information

All information provided through the web must be classified and appropriately managed using the parameters cited in University Policy on Information Classification, Labelling and Deletion.

Acceptable Use

All webpages must comply with University Policies. No University webpage may contain any copyrighted or trademarked material owned by others without permission except as permitted by law. User access to and use of the Site is subject to the website policy and all relevant university applicable bylaws and regulations.

Educational Material

All information on academic programs, including admissions requirements, program requirements, graduation requirements, and similar information, must be posted on an official University website.

Code of Conduct

Individuals who place content on University websites used to conduct official University business must follow AOU Code of professional Conduct.

Advertising

AOU does not allow advertising or sponsorships on websites that students are required to access to complete their studies or that prospective students are required to access when seeking admission to AOU.

Fundraising

Only fundraising for official University programs is permissible. The University has designated responsibility to the AOU Foundation for soliciting and administering all gifts and grants from individuals as well as gifts to the University's endowment.

Linking to Other Websites and Pages

Linking to non-AOU websites and pages is permitted. Links should not appear to be an endorsement or a violation of the ethics and conflict of interest policies. Endorsements are not permitted. The AOU is not responsible for the content available on any other Internet sites linked to the Site. Access to any other Internet sites linked to the Site is at the user's own risk.

Article 8: Website Administration and Management

All AOU websites must only allow encrypted communication or data transmission. All units must use the University's standard authentication services for login and maintain a master list of all individuals who have administrative and editing access.

A permanent AOU employee in each department/unit should be assigned as the website administrator to ensure continuous access, control, and oversight of the website.

Additionally, a backup person should be designated for key administrative and content editing roles.

Article 9: Annual Website Certification by Administrative Leaders

1. All members of the University community must adhere to the AOU Website Policy; in addition, AOU units must annually certify the websites within their areas of responsibility.
2. The certification process will be coordinated through the Web Integrity Team comprised of staff from Deans, Quality Assurance, Community Engagement and Marketing, and the Information Technology offices.

Article 10: Assignment of Domain Names for AOU Websites

The University standard is to use the arabou.edu/aou.edu domain for all services that are administered by the University community as part of the mission of the institution.

1. If a University service can only be administered through an external website, the service must be provided through a website approved or contracted by AOU.
2. If a non-arabou.edu/aou.edu name is needed, a request and justification must be supplied to the Chief Information Officer (CIO) Office.
3. Access to and use of password protected and/or secure areas of the website is restricted to authorized users only. Unauthorized individuals attempting to access these areas of the Site may be subject to disciplinary action.

The CIO will administer the distribution of arabou.edu subdomain names based on the following guidelines provided by the Department of University Communications and Marketing:

1. The proposed subdomain name is closely related to the purpose of its website.
2. The intent of the website will be easily understood by audience members who use the subdomain name.
3. The subdomain name does not incorporate profanity or derogatory language.

Article 11: General Provisions

- Rectors of AOU Campuses and AOU-Headquarters staff are responsible for implementing the decisions made according to this policy.
- The University Council shall deal with matters not stipulated in this policy.
 - The Arab Open University reserves the right to revise this policy at any time and users are deemed to be apprised of and bound by any changes to this policy.