



Arab Open University Excellence Award bylaw in Teaching

Adopted by AOU University Council

Meeting No. 63, on 11 July 2018

Introduction

The teaching process has been considered the main axis in the establishment of the Arab Open University (AOU). It is also deemed as the principal target of its inception. The success of the constituents associated with this process is seen as the true success of AOU's message and objectives. Since the teachers are considered the mainstay of this system, attention accorded to them and motivation provided for them shall reflect inevitably on the teaching process, and shall play an important role in achieving the aim sought by the University. Hence the University's interest in allocating the Teaching Excellence Award in each of its branches.

Article (1): Title

The current bylaws shall bear the title of "Arab Open University Excellence Award bylaw in Teaching".

Article (2): Definitions

The following words and expressions shall have the meanings specified hereunder:

University	The Arab Open University (AOU)
Branch	An AOU branch
Director/Rector	The Rector of a Branch in the country hosting it

Article (3): Aims of the Prize

This prize aims to:

- Upgrade the standards of teaching in all AOU branches to compete with other universities in the same area.
- Motivate the teaching staff to adopt the best teaching methods and to create effective ways to deliver the academic content of the courses taught.

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- Encourage academic staff to make optimal use of modern technologies to suit blended education.
- Encourage the teaching staff to contribute to the development of teaching material that suits AOU's message.

Article (4): Prize Types

The prize is assigned and presented annually to the winners as follows:

1. A Teaching Excellence Prize in each AOU branch: one winner is chosen from the candidates of all academic departments.
2. A Teaching Excellence Prize for each academic Programme (academic department): a single winner is selected on the AOU level.

Article (5): Prize Components

The prize consists of the following:

1. Certificate and shield bearing the University title and the name of the winner.
2. A prize of (\$2000) for each winner as detailed in article 4 of the current bylaws.

Article (6): Nomination Conditions

- Nominations are open to all teaching staff members other than high administrators (University President, Vice Presidents, Branch Rectors, Deans and others holding similar positions).
- The nominee ought to have been working on a full-time basis for at least two years.
- A winner of this prize may be nominated again for the same prize at least three years after the previous win.

Article (7): Prize Announcement & Awarding Procedures

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This prize is announced and awarded as follows:

1. The Vice President for Academic Affairs shall announce the start of application & nomination for the Teaching Excellence Prize. Subsequently, all AOU teaching staff members and the like are informed of the nomination conditions by the branch Rectors.
2. Applicants shall submit their applications to their Head of Department (Programme Coordinator) supported by the following documents:
 - An updated CV,
 - Students' evaluations of all the sections of all the courses taught by the nominee during the covered period.
 - Performance reports of the candidate from the academic department during the covered period. (The reports must be placed in sealed envelopes in accordance with AOU bylaws and regulations.)
3. The Head of Department (Programme Coordinator) in each branch shall peruse the applications for the said prize to ascertain that the candidate(s) have met the University's conditions. Once this is done, the applications are sent to the Dean via the Rector. However, in case the applicant is the Programme Coordinator himself, the Rector must form a committee of staff members to revise the application.
4. The concerned Dean forms a committee headed by himself with two faculty members to undertake the process of perusing each application.
5. The above-mentioned committee shall choose the winner(s) in each branch. Quorum is met by a simple majority and so are its decisions. Such decisions are not subject to appeal.
6. Names of proposed prizewinners are then sent to the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) for knowledge, approval and announcement.
7. The VPAA & SR may express reservation concerning the recommendation of the Branch committee.

8. The committee that is formed by the Dean may withhold the prize if the nominations were not up to the required standard. In this case, a detailed report explaining why the prize was withheld ought to be sent to the VPAA &SR's office. Another candidate shall be proposed for the same year.

Article (8): Principles of Selection

Selection of winners must be based on the following benchmarks:

1. Students' appraisals.
2. Appraisals by the candidate's superiors.
3. Diversity in teaching courses on B.A./M.A. levels.
4. Optimum use of the Learning Management System (LMS).
5. Communication and contacts with the students.
6. Positive use of teaching strategies and classroom meetings.
7. Contribution to the development of teaching materials (in the candidate's specialization) and of University programmes.
8. Holding academic activities (such as workshops, seminars, conferences) for students on a regular basis.
9. Participating in activities contributing to the induction and training of new staff members.

Article (9): General Provisions

- A. The current bylaws shall annul all previous bylaws named "Arab Open University Excellence Award bylaw in Teaching."
- B. Rectors of AOU branches are responsible for implementing the decisions made according to these bylaws.
- C. The University Council shall deal with matters not stipulated in these bylaws.