

The Course Equivalency Bylaws at the Arab Open University

Approved by University Council No. 76

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Article 1: Title

The present bylaws shall be named: “The Course Equivalency Bylaws at the Arab Open University.”

Article 2: Definitions

Unless the context indicates otherwise, the following words and expressions shall have the meanings specified hereunder:

University	The Arab Open University
Branch	The University established in any Branch Country
Branch Rector	The Rector of the University in the Branch Country
Programme	Academic major accredited for BA/BSc Award
Study Plan	Distribution of courses pursuant to the components of an accredited academic programme
Course Equivalency	The measures that the University undertakes to review a course studied by a student in a recognized higher education institution to confirm that the course is equivalent to a course offered at AOU.
Credit Transfer	Giving credit for courses that a student has completed at a recognized higher education institution.

Article 3: Course Equivalency Rules

Course equivalency rules apply according to the following conditions and procedures:

- 1) The freshman student should have completed all the courses which he/she wishes to apply for their equivalency at a higher education institute that is recognized by the concerned authorities in the relevant country, and that these courses have been completed prior to having joined an AOU Branch.

- 1) The student may apply for equivalency requests through the first two semesters from the time he has been accepted to join the study including the summer semester.
- 2) An AOU enrolled student may apply for equivalency of courses completed by him/her in another Higher Education Institution/ Academic Programme within the first two weeks of study of the semester using the specified University forms.
- 3) The student's grades in the courses that he/she applies for their equivalency should not fall below (C grade) or equivalent.
- 4) The earned grade subject to equivalency was obtained less than five years back or less than that as per the specific programme regulations.
- 5) Course equivalency will only be considered when the course credit hours to be equalized equals or more than the course offered by AOU.
- 6) Elective AOU courses that are not derived from the Open University (UK) may be considered for equivalency irrespective of the percentage required for the corresponding contents.
- 7) When considering equivalency for any course, other than those included in Item 6 above, its academic content should correspond by at least 70% to the contents of its counterpart course being offered by the AOU.
- 8) AOU branches shall abide by exempting students who have attained the required grade in TOEFL or IELTS from English Language Orientation courses.
- 9) Course equivalency shall not be allowed for OU-UK courses that are levels 5 and 6.
- 10) Courses that have contents corresponding to those offered by Arab Open University may be equated for AOU's local programmes only if their total value does not exceed 64 credit hours and with due regard to item 10 of this article.
- 11) The equated courses including those that their prerequisite has not been completed by the student shall be given grade (T) = (Transfer), and be placed at the beginning of the students' transcript together with their numbers and titles, but without their grades. Their total credit hours shall be

computed within the total credit hours completed by the student, but they shall not be computed within his/her GPA.

- 12) All cases not provided for in these rules shall be resolved by the Academic Committee (AC) at Headquarters.

Article 4: Committees Responsible for Course Equivalency

A) Academic Programme Course Equivalency Committee:

A committee that shall be formed in each AOU country branch.

1) Committee Formulation:

- The Programme Coordinator as the Committee Chair
- Two experienced academic staff as members.

The Committee Tasks:

To consider and approve the concerned Academic Department's recommendations regarding the equated courses, then submit them to the branch Rector for endorsement and inclusion in the student record.

B) The Branch Central Course Equivalency Committee: a committee formed by the AOU Branch Council.

Committee Formulation:

- Committee Chair: branch Rector
- Members:
 - Faculty Local Dean / PC
 - Experienced Academic Staff
 - Head of Admission & Registration in AOU country branch
 - Quality Assurance Coordinator in AOU country branch

The Committee Tasks:

The Committee shall consider the recommendations of the Academic Programme Course Equivalency Committee following their examination by the concerned Department, take appropriate decisions thereon and send a copy

of its decisions to the concerned Dean in the Headquarter through the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Scientific Research.

Article 5: Course Equivalency Procedures

- A) Course equivalency procedures shall be unified in all AOU branches with due consideration to local accreditation requirements. They are as follows:
- 1) A student applying should fill the University approved equivalency request form within the specified period, pay the stipulated fees, and submit the application file containing the following:
 - Equivalency form duly completed by the student.
 - Grades transcript duly certified by the educational institution wherein he/she studied together with attestation of the official authorities before joining AOU.
 - Detailed description of completed courses duly certified by the relevant institution.
 - 2) Equivalency applications shall be examined by the respective Branch Equivalency Committee not later than the first month of each semester.
 - 3) The Academic Programme Course Equivalency Committee shall examine the applications and submit its recommendations to the Branch Central Course Equivalency Committee, that in turn examines these recommendations and takes appropriate decisions.
 - 4) Following the entry of the equated courses into the Student Information System (SIS), the Equivalency File shall be kept on the student's main file.
 - 5) The Branch Central Course Equivalency Committee shall send copies of its decisions to the VPAA&SR's office for review and monitoring purposes.
- B) The student may appeal against the equivalency result within two weeks of the equivalence result announcement.
- C) The student will be notified with the appeal outcome within 7 to 14 calendar days.
- D) The student may re-appeal the decision as per AOU appeals and complaints process and procedures.

- E) The Admission and Registration department in each AOU branch will monitor the course equivalency process to ensure that it is applied consistently to all equivalency applications.

Article 6: Course Equivalency for AOU Graduates and Students

1. Graduates Interested in Studying another Major

a. A graduate from a programme not derived from Open University (UK), but is interested in studying a programme derived therefrom:

- It is permitted to accept courses that were completed by the student within his/her previous study plan, provided that the value of such accepted courses shall not exceed 48 credit hours, under the University stipulated regulations and procedures.
- Such courses shall be computed within the student's cumulative average (GPA).

b. A graduate of a programme derived from the Open University (UK) wishing to study another programme not derived therefrom:

- It is permitted to accept the common courses that were completed by the student within his/her previous study plan, provided that the value of such accepted courses shall not exceed 24 credit hours from the University requirements and the respective deanship requirements, per the University stipulated regulations and procedures.
- Such courses shall be computed within the student's cumulative grade point average (GPA)

c. A graduate of a programme derived from the Open University (UK) wishing to study another programme derived therefrom:

- It is permitted to accept courses that were completed by the student within his/her previous study plan provided that the value of such accepted courses shall not exceed 64 credit hours within AOU mandatory and elective requisites that are shared between both (the completed and the new) programme following the University approved regulations and procedures.
- Such courses shall be counted towards the student's cumulative grade point average (GPA)

2. Dismissed students or students whose enrollment was cancelled

a. The student who has discontinued his/her studies for special circumstances or emergencies:

1. Discontinuation for a period not exceeding four semesters

- The student shall be exempted from studying all the courses that he/she had successfully completed in conformity with the study plan before discontinuing his/her studies provided that such courses are included in the new study plan at the time of re-enrolment (In addition, the student will return with his / her old University ID).

If the students' old study plan is no longer in effect, the previous marks obtained by the student before discontinuation of studies (both pass/fail) shall be included in his/her cumulative average (GPA) if these courses are included in the new study plan.

2. Discontinuation for more than four semesters (5 and above)

- The student will be given a new identification number and will be registered in the new study plan (the current study plan of the programme).
- The student may apply for course equivalency for the courses that he/she has previously studied as per University stipulated regulations and Branch procedures.
- The common courses of both study plans (old and new); where the student has achieved the pass mark will be considered and included in his/her GPA provided that the GPA will be no less than 2.00 in the student's new record.
- The equated courses and the grades that the student achieved in each will be transferred to the student's new record.

b. The student who has been academically dismissed:

- A student who has been academically dismissed from a certain programme shall not be re-enrolled in the same programme, per clause 'D' of Article (25) of the AOU Bachelor Degree Award Requirements Bylaw.
- The student who has been irrevocably dismissed from the university on academic grounds may apply for readmission to any other university programme except for the one he/she was dismissed. The student may also apply to be re-admitted in another track of his/her programme of study other than the track he/she was dismissed from and is entitled to apply for course equivalency.
- The student shall be exempted from the mandatory and elective courses that he/she completed if they were common between both programmes/tracks provided that the Grade Point Average (GPA) will not be less than 2.0 upon including these courses in GPA calculation.
- The courses shall be included in his/her cumulative average (GPA).

Article 7: General Provisions

- a) The present bylaws shall abrogate all previous bylaws regulating the Course Equivalency Bylaw at the Arab Open University.
- b) The Vice President for Academic Affairs, Branch Rectors and Respective Authorities shall be responsible for implementing the present bylaw.
- c) The University Council shall decide on all cases not covered by the provisions of the present bylaws and shall resolve any conflicts arising from their implementation.