

The Bachelor's Degree Award Requirements Bylaws at the Arab Open University

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Article 1: Title

The present bylaws shall be named: “The Bachelor’s Degree Award Requirements 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 / AOU	The Arab Open University
President	The University President
VPAA&SR	The vice President of academic affairs and scientific research
Dean	The Dean of an academic programme
Deanship	The Deanship of an academic program that offers a Bachelor's degree
Director	The Director of an Arab Open University branch or campus
Branch	An Arab Open University branch or campus
Headquarters / HQ	The Arab Open University headquarters
Programme	An academic major accredited for a Bachelor's award
Tutorial	A face-to-face classroom teaching hour
Study Plan	A distribution of courses pursuant to the components of an accredited academic programme
Academic Committee	A permanent committee formed by the University Council

CEC	The Central Examination Committee at the University's headquarters
FEC	The Faculty Examination Committee in a Deanship
BEC	The Branch Examination Committee

Article 3: Study Plans

- A) The University Council shall approve the Bachelor's programme study plans pursuant to the recommendation of the competent Faculty Council and the endorsement of the Academic Committee.
- B) Academic programme study plans shall be based on the credit hour system.
- C) The total credit hours required for obtaining a Bachelor's degree in any programme shall not be less than 128 credit hours (480 credit points). These credit hours are distributed as follows:
 - A minimum of 18 credit hours (68 credit points) of compulsory general University requirements.
 - A range of 80 to 100 credit hours (300 to 375 credit points) of a programme's specialized requirements.
 - A minimum of 14 credit hours of Deanship requirements and elective courses that are specified in the approved study plan of the academic programme.
- D) The distribution of credit hours in some AOU programmes may not follow the distribution highlighted in Clause C herein so long as the overall credit hours required for obtaining the Bachelor's degree is maintained; 128 credit hours (480 credit points).

Article 4: The Academic Year

- A) The academic year shall consist of two semesters. Each semester's duration is 16 weeks, including the final exams period.
- The summer semester is optional and shall span eight (8) weeks including the final exams period.
- B) The University calendar, as approved by the University Council shall determine the commencement of the academic year, semesters, and examination dates.

Article 5: Admission

- A) To be admitted into any Bachelor's programme, an applicant should have fulfilled the following conditions:
- Obtained a general secondary school certificate or an equivalent certificate.
 - Fulfilled any other conditions determined by the University or by the competent authorities of the branch country.
- B) The Branch Council shall devise and approve a specific admission policy pursuant to admission requirements in the branch country.
- C) Any applicant whom meets admission requirements, but could not be admitted due to competition may re-apply in any forthcoming opportunity.
- D) The Branch may admit students willing to study specific courses (if any) as non-registered students provided that they meet any other conditions determined by the nature of these courses.
- E) A student who studied at a branch as a non-registered student in previous semesters may submit an admission application to any programme offered in said branch after filing an application during the specified admission period announced by the branch. If admitted, and at his/her request, previously studied courses will be credited so long as they are consistent with the local accreditation conditions. Additionally, the grades earned in these courses shall be entered onto his/her new academic record.

- F) A prospective student may appeal against an admission decision or file a complaint against an admission process.

Article 6: Language Placement Test (LPT)

- A) All freshmen shall undertake the language Placement Test (LPT) in Arabic and English according to the approved standards by the University Council as shown in the table below.
- B) Non-Arabic speaking freshmen shall be exempt from the Arabic LPT and shall be treated according to approved standards by the University Council.
- C) Depending on the freshmen's score in TOEFL and/or IELTS, he/she can either be exempt from taking the English LPT or exempted from some courses as shown below. They also ought to have taken either test not more than two years prior to applying.

TOEFL Score			IELTS Score	Student is Exempted from
Internet-Based Test (IBT)	Computer-Based Test (CBT)	Paper-Based Test		
30	93	397	3	EL097
41	123	437	4	EL098
53	153	477	4.5	EL099
65	183	513	5.5	EL111
79	213	550	6.5	EL112 To be exempted from the placement test

- D) Students may be exempted from pursuing one or more University-required Arabic compulsory courses pursuant to scores obtained in the Arabic LPT, and in accordance with the approved standards by the University Council.

Student Grade in Placement Test	Student is Exempted from
0 – 59%	No exemption

60 – 89%	AR111
90% and above	AR112

If a student is undertaking the updated University requirements, the exemptions will differ as follows:

Student Grade in Placement Test	Student is Exempted from
0 – 74%	No exemption
75% and above	AR113

- E) On entry, the freshman's academic record shall contain a record of all courses from which the freshman has been exempted due to his/her performance at the Arabic and/or English LPTs. These exempted courses shall be marked "CR". Moreover, the credit hours associated with exempted courses shall not be included in the freshman's cumulative averages.

Article 7: Duration of Study

The maximum duration for obtaining a Bachelor's degree shall be twenty-four semesters (12 years), taking into account the local accreditation requirements.

Article 8: Study Load

The following is only applicable to normal (non-summer) classes and is regarding local accreditation conditions required by each University branch:

- 1) **Minimum Load:** the minimum study load per student shall be **eight** credit hours (30 credit points) per semester. However, with the branch Rector's approval, this load may be reduced to **six** credit hours (22 credit points).
- 2) **Maximum Load:** The maximum study load per student shall be 21 credit hours (78 credit points) per semester. However, for students expected to

graduate in the same semester, the branch Rector may raise the maximum load to 24 credit hours (90 credit points).

- 3) Students with a cumulative average under 2.00 on a scale of 4:00 shall not be permitted to register more than 16 credit hours in a semester.

Article 9: Registration

A) Registration within the Study Plan:

- 1) Students must register for courses included in their study plan according to the sequence prescribed by the concerned Deanship in order to obtain the required academic degree.
- 2) Students are not allowed to register for a course if they had not passed its pre-requisite or obtained a mark in its continuous assessment and final exam that is less than 30/100.
- 3) A graduating student may register for a course and its pre-requisite simultaneously.
- 4) A student may be allowed to register for a course and its pre-requisite simultaneously if it allows him/her to reach the minimum study load of 8 credit hours, and only by recommendation from the programme coordinator and by approval from the Branch Director/Rector.

B) Registration Outside the Study Plan:

- 1) A student may register for any course offered by the University even if outside of his/her study plan.
- 2) The credit hours of registered courses that are not included in the student's study plan will not be attributed to him/her. Consequently, they will also not be included in the student's semester or cumulative averages.

C) Registration and Study in another Branch:

- 1) A student registered in one branch may study courses within his/her study plan in another branch upon the approval of both concerned branch Rectors.
- 2) The required courses are registered and paid for in the host branch.

Article 10: Drop and Add

- A) Without prejudice to the provisions of Article 8 hereof, the student may drop and add certain courses included in the study plan within the statutory drop and add period declared in the University calendar.
- B) In financial terms, drop and add procedures are dealt with according to the following table and in a manner that does not conflict with the financial plans approved by the branch Rector.

Withdrawal	% of Student Reimbursed Fees	Symbol Shown in the Student's Record
Before study commencement and during drop and add period	100%	It is not shown
After drop and add period	70%	Withdrawn – W
Week 3	50%	Withdrawn – W
After week 3	No reimbursement	Withdrawn – W

- C) The student is considered deferred if he/she had withdrawn from all courses in a certain semester after getting the approval of the respective authority.
- D) The student is not allowed to withdraw after the last week of study.

Article 11: Deferral of Study

A continuing student (non-freshmen) may defer his/her study within a period not exceeding 2 weeks after semester commencement, provided that such deferral does not exceed six (6) consecutive or interrupted semesters. Such

deferral shall not be included within the maximum study duration limit allowed for graduation requirements completion.

Article 12: Discontinuation of Study

- A) A student is considered discontinued in a semester if he/she fails to register for any course during specific semester.
- B) This semester is accounted for within the allowed period of study.
- C) Students may submit a petition to the branch Rector showing proof of the force majeure¹ which prevented him/her from registering in the semester. If approved, he/she shall be deemed deferred for that semester.
- D) No student is allowed to discontinue his/her study for more than three consecutive or interrupted semesters.

Article 13: Withdrawal from the University

- A) A student is considered withdrawn when he/she personally fills an application of withdrawal from the University.
- B) The student is not entitled for any fees refund including tuition fees, textbooks fees and any other remuneration if he/she withdraws completely from the university during any semester including summer semester.

Article 14: Cancellation of Enrolment

- A) A student enrolment is cancelled in the following cases:
 - 1) Upon personally filing an application of withdrawal from the University.
 - 2) If he/she fails to register for any course during the first semester following enrolment at the University.
 - 3) Should he/she discontinue his/her studies for **three** consecutive semesters without any valid justification.

¹ Definition in Law: unforeseeable circumstances that prevent someone from fulfilling a contract.

- 4) If deferral periods exceeded **six** consecutive or interrupted semesters.
- 5) If he/she is dismissed from the University.
- B) A student with cancelled enrolment due to discontinued studies may apply for re-enrolment if his/her current study plan was identical to his/her previous one. The academic record is then restored with his/her previous registration number.
- C) If the two plans were not identical, he/she may apply again and all completed courses are credited in accordance with the ***Course Equivalency Bylaws at the Arab Open University***.

Article 15: Face-to-Face Tutorial Sessions

The following are local accreditation conditions required by each University branch:

- A) The minimum face-to-face classroom meeting hours allocated for tutorials in each course during a single semester shall be 4 classroom hours against each credit hour allotted to the course. In other words, 1 credit hour = 4 classroom hours.
- B) Face-to-face tutorial classroom hours may increase in the case of certain courses having a special nature. This is determined by a competent Deanship or a branch with a view to fulfil local accreditation requirements, for instance.
- C) Attending the face-to-face tutorial sessions of the registered course is mandatory by students. Absence from such tutorials may not exceed 25% of the prescribed tutorials as stated in the approved University calendar. A student whose absence exceeds this percentage fails the course.

Article 16: Course Assessment

- A) Each course shall have a final mark out of 100 marks to be equally distributed between the continuous assessment and the final exam.
- B) The continuous assessment s 50 marks shall be allotted as follows:

- A minimum of 20 marks shall be assigned to Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs).
 - A maximum of 30 marks shall be allotted to the Midterm Assessments (MTAs).
- C) The concerned Deanship may exclude any course from the marks distribution stipulated in Clauses A and B above following the approval of the Deanship Council and the Academic Committee.
- D) The minimum number of TMAs required for each course shall be at least 1 TMA per course per semester. The Deanship may determine the maximum number of TMAs.
- E) A maximum of two (2) continuous assessments per course may be held during the semester.
- F) Each Deanship shall be responsible for the preparation of assignments, mid-term and final exam of every course.
- G) TMAs, MTAs and Final Examinations shall be unified in all University branches and endorsed by the concerned Dean.
- H) A Deanship may hold more than (1) MTA in a single semester in response to special circumstances.
- I) According to special instructions issued by the University Council, the MTA and the final exam are held at the same time and the same date in all branches. In special circumstances, exceptions may be allowed.

Article 17: Period of Storing Mid Term Assessment and Final Exam Booklets

Students' final exam and mid-terms assessment answer booklets shall be kept as references at the branches for specific periods and circumstances should they be needed. Specific periods are as follows:

Mid-term assessments are kept for one (1) semester following the specific assessment semester.

Final exams are kept for two (2) semesters following the specific final examination semester.

The answer booklets shall be destroyed at the end of the retention periods, according to university-approved procedures.

Article 18: Absence from Exams & Assessments

A) Mid-Term Assessment (MTAs):

- 1) A student who is absent from an MTA shall be credited with a zero (0) mark, unless he/she presents a valid reason for the absence within one week (7 calendar days) from the exam date.
- 2) If the reason for absence is accepted, he/she may sit for a make-up examination in the same semester at a time set by the Admission, Registration, and Examination Department at the University Head Quarter (HQ).

B) Final Examinations:

- 1) A student who is absent from the final exam shall earn a zero (0) mark, unless he/she submits a force majeure (extenuating circumstances) excuse within one week (7 calendar days) from the exam date.
- 2) In case the excuse was accepted, the letter I² shall be entered in the student's academic record and he/she shall be permitted to re-sit for the exam on its first subsequent session.
- 3) In such a case, the course's credit hours shall be excluded from the student's semester and cumulative averages.
- 4) Should the student fail to submit the exam on its first subsequent session, the letter I shall be replaced with the letter F³ in his/her academic record.

Article 19: Examination & Assessment in a Different Branch

- A. A student may sit for their registered courses' final exams at any other branch according to the approval of the Rectors of both concerned branches within a maximum of one week from the start of the examination period. The Vice president for academic affairs must be informed of the same exam's availability at the host branch.

² The letter I stands for Incomplete.

³ The letter F stands for Fail.

- B. Upon the approval, the host branch must inform the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Scientific Research in the decision at least one week before the examination period.

Article 20: Grading Scale

- A. The University grading scale is as follows:

Letter Grade	F	D	C	C+	B	B+	A
Points	0.00	1.50	2.00	2.50	3.00	3.50	4.00

- B. Grade D is the minimum passing value for a student's successful completion of a course.

Article 21: Course Failure

- A) A student shall fail a course in any of the following criteria:
- 1) If a student's mark in continuous assessment was less than 30% of the marks assigned to it, the grade FC (failed continuous assessment) shall be entered into his/her record.
 - 2) If a student was absent from the final exam without an acceptable excuse, the grade FA⁴ shall be entered into his/her record.
 - 3) If the student's mark in the final exam was less than 40% of the overall mark, the grade FF⁵ shall be entered into his/her record.
 - 4) If the student's final mark—the total marks obtained in continuous assessment and the final exam—was less than 50%, the letter F shall be entered into his/her record.
- B) The credit hours of a course that a student fails for any of the reasons stated in Clause A shall be counted in determining his/her semester and cumulative averages.

⁴ FA stands for Absent from Final Examination

⁵ FF stands for Failed in Final Examination

Article 22: Results

The Central Examination Committee (CEC) shall approve the results according to a recommendation submitted by the Faculty Examination Committee (FEC) of the concerned Deanship.

Article 23: Appeals

- A) A student may appeal against a recommendation or decision regarding course progression or course results.
- B) A student may not appeal against matters of academic judgement.
- C) The appeal can only be considered according to **AOU Appeals and Complaints Procedures** and within the dates set in the **Bachelor's Degree Award Examination and Assessment Bylaws**.
- D) The committees that look into student appeals are:
 - 1) The Appeals Committee: the committee that considers a student's first appeal.
 - 2) The Re-Appeals Committee: the committee that deals with students' re-appeals (second appeal).

Task	Period
Student submit an appeal against a recommendation/decision within one (1) week (7 calendar days) of the results announcement	Week 1
The Appeals Committee looks into student appeals and submits its recommendation to the Assistant Director/Rector for Academic Affairs	Week 2 Week 3
A student will be informed of the committee's recommendation through the online appeals system or the official University email	Week 4
A student may re-appeal the recommendation/decision within one (1) week (7 calendar days) of being notified.	
The Re-Appeals Committee looks into student re-appeal and makes recommendations in consultation with the respective General Course Coordinator (GCC). The recommendation will be submitted to the Branch Rector/Director for endorsement.	Week 5 Week 6
The Branch Director/Rector informs the VPAA&SR of all appeals and re-appeals to be submitted for final approval by the CEC.	Week 7

The student will be notified of the re-appeal status formally through the online appeals system or the official University e-mail.	
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- E) Re-appeal cases are allowed only for cases of previous appeals.
- F) The respective committees present their recommendations to the Branch Director/ Rector who then submits it to the Chairperson of the Central Examination Committee for approval and endorsement.
- G) All students' results are deemed final and irrevocable one (1) academic semester following their declaration, and changes are prohibited from this point onward.

Article 24: Semester and Cumulative Averages

The number of points for each course shall be computed by multiplying the credit hours of the course a student studied during a semester by the total number of points he/she earned during the same semester, then assigned a letter grade as shown in Article 20 herein.

- A) The semester average:
 - 1) The semester average shall be computed by dividing the student's total number of points earned during the semester by the total number of credit hours of courses studied during the same semester.
 - 2) The semester GPA will be calculated according to the provisions of Clause B of Articles 10 and 18 of this bylaw.
- B) The cumulative average:
 - 1) The cumulative average is computed by dividing the overall number of points earned by a student in all of their registered courses in the study plan since joining the University by the overall number of these courses credit hours.
 - 2) Exemption of the calculation of cumulative average is subject to Clause E of Article 6, Clause B of Article 10, Article 18, and Clauses B and C of Article 27 of this bylaw.

- 3) Both semester and cumulative averages shall be rounded to the nearest two decimal points.

Article 25: Warning and Dismissal

- A) A warning shall be issued to a student, whose cumulative average is under 2.00 and has successfully completed 12 credit hours as a minimum at the end of any semester, excluding the summer semester.
- B) The student shall be dismissed from the University if he/she receives five warnings within five consecutive semesters, excluding summer semesters.
- C) A student whose academic warnings exceed the allowed number shall be referred to the special studies programme where they will remain under the warning system on the conditions that:
 - 1) He/she had successfully completed a minimum of 80 credit hours.
 - 2) He/she had not exceeded the stipulated period for graduation.
- D) A student who is academically dismissed from a certain track is not allowed to re-apply and register in that same track.
- E) A student may apply for another programme or even a different track under the same programme that he/she were dismissed from. He/she may request the University to credit the relevant registered courses that they had previously passed. All shared courses by the study plans should be credited to the student if the cumulative average is not under 2.00 after these courses are computed.

Article 26: Repeating Courses

A. Repeating provisions:

- 1- Students may not retake any course in which they had obtained a Grade B or above.
- 2- No student is allowed to repeat a 5th or 6th level course derived from the Open University-United Kingdom (OU-UK) in which he/she had obtained a Grade C or above.

B. Repeating an optional course:

- 1- Students who had failed to pass an optional course may repeat it or any other course in order to fulfill the requirements of their programme's study plan.
- 2- If they pass the course, the grade obtained in the repeated exam shall be counted in their semester average and cumulative average.
- 3- If they fail the course, this shall not affect their cumulative average.

C. Repeating compulsory course:

- 1- A student who fails to pass a compulsory course must retake the same course in a subsequent semester. The student's grade resulting from the repeat shall be entered into his/her record.
- 2- If they pass the course, the new grade will be counted in his/her semester and cumulative average.
- 3- If the student fails the course, the number of course credit hours shall be excluded from his/her cumulative average.

A. Repeating courses in order to raise the cumulative average to 2.00; the required minimum for graduation.

- 1- Contrary to Clause A herein, the student may retake any course in his/her study plan other than 5th or 6th level OU-UK courses if he/she needs to raise the cumulative average to 2.00 to graduate.
- 2- Consonant with Clause A Item 2 herein, a student may retake any 5th or 6th level OU-UK courses provided that the grade ceiling is C.
- 3- In both the above cases, the new grade is entered into the cumulative average whether it is higher or lower than the previous one, and the number of points earned prior is cancelled alongside the course's credit hours.

Article 27: Equivalency of Courses

- A. A student may apply for equivalency of courses completed at another recognized higher education institute that is in the same country as the branch where the student is studying pursuant to the standards and

procedures in *The Course Equivalency Bylaws at the Arab Open University*, and in accordance with the procedures approved by the University Council.

- B. Courses accepted as equivalent are entered as the letter T⁶ into the student's academic record alongside their figures and credit hours.
- C. Equivalent courses' credit hours shall not be counted in the student's cumulative average.

Article 28: Transfer

- A) Following the principles and procedures approved by the University Council, a student may apply for transfer between:
 - a. Tracks
 - b. Programmes
 - c. Branches
- B) These transfers are governed by the principles and procedures stipulated in *The Student Transfer Bylaws at the Arab Open University*.
- C) A student who cannot meet the transfer conditions of the aforementioned bylaws may cancel their enrollment, then apply again for admission to a different programme or track. In doing so, the passed courses shared between the previous and new study plans shall be credited alongside their grades, on the condition that their cumulative average is not lower than 2.00 after these courses are computed.

Article 29: Graduation

- A. Following the recommendation of the competent Faculty Examination Committee (FEC) and Central Examination Committee (CEC), the University degree award shall be granted pursuant to a University Council decision.

⁶ T stands for Equivalent.

- B. The Bachelor's Degree Award is awarded to a student after he/she had passed all the courses listed in the validated study plan of their programme, provided that his/her GPA is not less than 2.00.
- C. A student who has not completed the graduation requirements of the academic programme may be awarded a statement, provided that he/she meets the requirements stated by the relevant Deanship in this respect.

Article 30: Award Classification

- A. The graduating students award grades shall be pursuant to the cumulative average of the graduation semester as follows:

Cumulative Average	Grade
3.67 – 4.00	Excellent
3.00 – 3.66	Very Good
2.33 – 2.99	Good
2.00 – 2.32	Pass

- B. The range of the cumulative average may be modified to match local accreditation specifications in a certain branch country if Clause B of article 20 herein is not breached.

Article 31: General Provisions

- A. The current bylaws herein shall override any previous bylaws relating to or having the same title or subject matter.
- B. The Vice Presidents, Deans, branch Rectors and Head of Admissions, Registration and Examination shall be responsible for implementing the provisions of the current bylaws.
- C. The University Council shall decide on all cases not covered by the provisions of the current bylaws.