

Arab Open University Excellence Award bylaw in Teaching

Approved by AOU University Council

Meeting No.79, October 2023

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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 mission and objectives. Since that Academic Staff members are considered the basic pillar of the education ecosystem, attention accorded to 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 campuses /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) in the branch country
Headquarters	AOU Headquarters
Director/Rector	The Rector of the university in the country hosting it

Article (3): Aims of the Prize

This prize aims to:

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

Article (4): Prize Category

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

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

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 (\$1000) for each winner as detailed in article 4 of the current bylaw.

Article (6): Nomination Conditions

- Nominations are open to all teaching staff members taking teaching responsibilities during the academic year.
- 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

This prize is announced and awarded as follows:

1. The Vice President for Academic Affairs & Scientific Research 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 AOU campus/branch Rectors/Directors.
2. Applicants shall submit their applications to the Local dean/Programme Coordinator of the academic programme 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/programme during the covered period. (The reports must be placed in sealed envelopes in accordance with AOU bylaws and regulations.)

3. The local dean of the programme 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 University rector/director, who then forms a committee of some faculty members to undertake the review and audit process.
4. The concerned local Dean/ Programme Coordinator forms a committee headed by him/her with two faculty members from the deanship and three faculty members from the universities to select the winner of the Excellence Award in teaching at the academic programme level.
5. The above-mentioned committees shall choose the winner(s) in each campus /branch. Quorum is met by a simple majority and so are its decisions. Such decisions are not subject to appeal.
6. Names of proposed prize winners are then sent to the Vice President for Academic and Scientific Research (VPAASR) to view.
7. The winner is announced by the formed committees, and they have the right to withhold the prize.

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 the Bachelor and Master level.
4. Optimum use of the Learning Management System (LMS).
5. Communication and contacts with the students.
6. Positive use of teaching strategies and classroom sessions.

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 academic staff.

Article (9): General Provisions

- A. The current bylaws shall annul all previous bylaws named "Arab Open University Excellence Award bylaw in Teaching."
- B. The President of the university and the Rectors of AOU campuses/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.