

The Course Equivalency Bylaws at the Arab Open University

**Approved by University Council #77
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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 / AOU	The Arab Open University
Director/Rector	The Director/Rector of an Arab Open University branch or campus
VPAA&SR	The vice President of academic affairs and scientific research
Branch	An Arab Open University branch or campus
Programme	An academic major accredited for a Bachelor's award
Study Plan	A distribution of courses pursuant to the components of an accredited academic programme
Course Equivalency	The measures undertaken to review a course studied by a student in a recognized higher education institute to confirm its equivalency to a course offered at AOU
Credit Transfer	Giving credit for courses completed at a recognized higher education institute

Article 3: Course Equivalency Rules

- 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.

- 2) The student may apply for equivalency requests during the first two semesters (including summer semester) from the time of admittance.
- 3) An AOU enrolled student may apply for equivalency within the first two weeks of the semester using the specified University forms.
- 4) The student's grades in the equivalency-requested courses should not be below grade C or its equivalent(s).
- 5) The earned grade subject to equivalency was obtained less than 5 years back or less than that as per the specific programme regulations.
- 6) Course equivalency will only be considered if the course credit hours are equal or more than the credit hours offered by the AOU course.
- 7) 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.
- 8) 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 at AOU.
- 9) AOU branches shall abide by exempting students who have attained the required grade in TOEFL or IELTS from English Language Orientation courses.
- 10) Course equalization shall not be allowed for OU-UK courses that are levels 5 and 6.
- 11) With due consideration to Item 10 above, courses that have contents corresponding to those offered by AOU may be equated for AOU's local programmes only provided that their total value does not exceed 64 credit hours.
- 12) The equated courses including those with an incomplete prerequisite shall be given the grade T and be placed at the beginning of the student transcript alongside 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.
- 13) 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:***
 - Committee Chair: the Programme Coordinator
 - Members: two experienced academic staff
 - 2) ***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.
- 1) ***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
 - 2) ***Committee Tasks:*** to consider the Academic Programme Course Equivalency Committee recommendations following their examination by the concerned Department, to take appropriate decisions thereon and send a copy of its decisions to the concerned Dean in Headquarters through the VPAA&SR's office.

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 which in turn examines these 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 7 calendar days of the equivalence result announcement.
- C) The student will be notified with the appeal outcomes within 7 calendar days.
- D) The student may re-appeal the decision as per the ***AOU Appeals and Complaints Policy 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 applications.

Article 6: Course Equivalency for AOU Graduates and Students

- A) **Course equivalency for graduates that are interested in studying another programme**

- 1) A graduate from a programme that is not derived from the Open University (UK) whom is interested in studying a programme that is derived from it:
 - It is permitted to accept common courses completed by the student in their previous study plan, provided that the value of such accepted courses does not exceed 48 credit hours, per University stipulated regulations and procedures.
 - Such courses shall be computed within the student's cumulative average (GPA).

- 2) A graduate from a programme that is derived from the Open University (UK) wishing to study another programme not derived therefrom:
 - It is permitted to accept common courses completed by the student in their previous study plan, provided that the value of such accepted courses does not exceed 24 credit hours within University and respective Deanship requirements, per University stipulated regulations and procedures.
 - Such courses shall be computed within the student's cumulative average (GPA).

- 3) A graduate from a programme that is derived from the Open University (UK) whom is interested in studying a programme that is also derived from it:
 - It is permitted to accept common courses completed by the student in their previous study plan, provided that the value of such accepted courses does not exceed 64 credit hours, per University stipulated regulations and procedures.
 - Such courses shall be computed within the student's cumulative average (GPA).

B) Course equivalency for dismissed students or students whom enrollment was cancelled

Discontinued due to emergencies or special circumstances:

1) Discontinuation for a period not exceeding four semesters:

- The student shall be exempted from studying all successfully completed courses 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-enrollment, and that the student will return with his/her old University ID.
- If the old study plan is no longer in effect, the same previous marks obtained by the student before discontinuation of studies (both pass/fail) shall be included in his/her cumulative average (GPA), provided that these courses are included in the new study plan.

2) Discontinuation for a period exceeding four semesters (5+):

- The student will be given a new identification number and will be registered in a new study plan (the current study plan of the programme).
- The student may apply for course equivalency for previously studied courses, per University stipulated regulations and Branch procedures.
- The common courses of both study plans where the student has achieved a Pass will be included in his/her GPA, provided that the new record GPA will not plummet below 2.0.
- The equated courses and grades will be transferred to the student's new record and displayed at the beginning.

Discontinued due to being academically dismissed:

- Per Clause D, Article 25 of the AOU Bachelor's Degree Award Requirements Bylaws at the Arab Open University, a student who has been academically dismissed from a certain programme cannot be re-enrolled in the same programme.
- The student who has been irrevocably dismissed from the University on academic grounds may apply for re-admission to any other University

programme except for the one he/she was dismissed from. The student may also apply to be re-admitted into 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 GPA will not be less than 2.0 upon including these courses in the GPA calculation.

- The courses shall be included in his/her cumulative average (GPA).

Article 7: General Provisions

- A) The current bylaws herein shall override any previous bylaws relating to or having the same title or subject matter.
- B) The VPAA&SR, Branch Director/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.