

**The Policy of Closing a Branch or Freezing / Suspending an
Academic Programme at the Arab Open University.**

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Introduction

The Arab Open University (AOU) is committed to providing academic programmes of the highest quality to its students and to securing human and financial resources necessary to integrate the learning and teaching processes from the admission of students until the completion of the graduation requirements stipulated in the university regulations and bylaws. It also seeks to enhance the confidence of the local community in the countries hosting University branches. The AOU is also keen to secure everything necessary to maintain its continuity.

In case the University faces challenges related to the continuity of one of its branches, or to any of its academic programmes, because of factors beyond its will that hamper its continuation to function, even in the minimum acceptable drive to achieve its mission and objectives without any negative effects on the university as a whole, the terms and conditions of this policy shall be rendered active. They attempt to organize the freezing or suspension of any of its programmes or the closure of one of its branches or its study centres.

This document is divided into two parts:

- The first part includes the steps and procedures for freezing / suspending an academic programme offered by the university.
- The second part contains steps and procedures for closing a branch of the Arab Open University.

Article (1): Nomenclature

This document is called “The Policy of Closing a Branch or Freezing / Suspending an Academic Programme at the Arab Open University.”

Article (2): Definitions

The following words and terms wherever mentioned in this Bylaw shall have the following meanings:

University	Arab Open University
President	University's president
Board	University Board of Trustees
Headquarters	The headquarters of the university
Branch	University in the country of the branch
Director/Rector	Director/Rector of the branch country
Deanship	Deanship of specific academic programmes
programme	Accredited academic specialization for a degree
suspend a programme	Suspending the admission of new students for a specified period of time in that program

Stopping a programme	Admission of new students to that programme is closed permanently
Closing a branch	Permanent closure of admission of new students to this branch

Part I: The policy of freezing / suspending an academic programme offered by the university

Article (3): Freezing an Academic Programme

A. When an order to freeze an academic programme is issued, the following measures shall be taken:

1. The concerned Deanship shall be responsible for preparing the plan for freezing the academic programme based on the reports documented by the University's higher administration accompanied by the approval of the Board of Trustees, which clarifies the existence of a real problem facing the continuity of the said programme at the current time.
2. It is the responsibility of Headquarters to inform the branches offering the Programme of the decision to freeze it formally and explain the reasons which led to this action. HQ must also circulate the plan prepared with its explanation, stressing the necessity of adhering to it as soon as it is endorsed by the concerned parties.
3. The admission of new students to the relevant programme in all branches offering it at the beginning of the semester following the issuance of the freezing decree shall be suspended until further notice.

4. The branch management must inform all students enrolled in the frozen programme formally, and in full transparency. They ought to be informed of the University's plan to freeze it, as well as the freezing period, if possible, through all available means of communication.

5. Awareness bulletins and information workshops for students enrolled in the relevant programme shall be issued/held to explain and clarify what they are entitled to and how the suspension plan shall facilitate and accelerate the process of their graduation from that programme.

6. The University shall be keen to provide possible alternatives, on the academic level, for students enrolled in the concerned programme by facilitating their transfer to another programme if they so desire in accordance with the admission requirements of the new programme.

7. The AOU shall be committed to abide by the conditions of the Ministry of Higher Education in each hosting country where the relevant programme is offered, especially in matters related to how such cases are dealt with in accordance with active rules and regulations which organize similar processes.

8. The University and the concerned Deanship shall ensure the continuity of offering the courses of the frozen programme, and take all necessary measures to complete the educational process until the completion of the academic plan and the graduation of students in accordance with the regulations in force. These must not be inconsistent with the time limits indicated in the approved freezing plan.

B. If the programme in question is derived from the Open University in the United Kingdom, and in addition to what is mentioned in item A above, the University is committed to dealing with students enrolled in that programme according to the agreement concluded with the OU in this connection.

C. In the event that it is decided to suspend a programme in a specific branch, the above provisions of item (A) of this Article shall apply in coordination with the concerned AOU branch's management.

Article (4): Suspending an Academic Programme

A. When a decision to suspend an academic programme is issued, the following measures shall be taken:

1. The Deanship shall be responsible for preparing the plan for the suspension of the academic programme concerned based on reports issued by the AOU higher management coupled by the approval of the Board of Trustees, which clarifies the existence of a real problem facing the continuity of the programme.

2. It is the responsibility of AOU Headquarters to inform the branches offering the program of the decision to suspend it formally and explain the reasons.

This should be accompanied by the circulation of the suspension plan prepared together with its explanation and the necessity of adhering to it as soon as it is approved by the concerned parties.

3. The admission of new students to the relevant programme in all branches offering it shall be suspended at the beginning of the semester immediately following the suspension decision.

4. The branch management must inform all students enrolled in the discontinued program formally, transparently of its intention to suspend the programme via all available means of communication.

5. The concerned branches must issue bulletins and hold workshops for students enrolled in the programme to explain and clarify what they are entitled to in line with the approved suspension plan which seeks to facilitate and expedite their graduation from that programme.

6. The University must show keenness to provide possible alternatives at the academic level for students enrolled in the programme who are willing to

transfer to another one in accordance with the admission requirements of the new programme.

7. The AOU shall abide by the regulations and bylaws adopted by the Ministries of Higher Education in each country where the programme is offered concerning programme suspension rules.

B. If the programme in question is derived from the Open University UK, and in addition to everything mentioned in article "A" above, the University shall be committed to dealing with students enrolled in the concerned programme in accordance with its agreement with the Open University in this connection.

C. In the event that it is decided to suspend a programme in a specific branch, the above provisions of item (A) of this Article shall apply in coordination with the concerned AOU branch's management. Notification will be made through official newspapers and other means of communication as per the approved procedures in each AOU branch country.

Part II: The policy of closing a branch of the university

Article (5): The closure of an AOU branch

A. Upon issuance of a decision to close an AOU branch, the following measures shall be taken:

1. The Headquarters and the management of the AOU branch concerned shall prepare the closure plan for the branch based on reports, documented by the Higher Management and approved by the Board of Trustees, which show the existence of a real problem facing the continuity of the branch.

2. Upon issuance of the closure decision, the admission of new students to the relevant branch shall be suspended at the beginning of the following semester. The tasks of the concerned branch shall be restricted to completing the

learning and teaching of students enrolled in the relevant branch in accordance with the approved plan.

3. As soon as the closure decision is taken, the branch management shall officially undertake the task of officially announcing this closure and informing all students of the decision with transparency on all information channels. Measures will be taken to ensure that the students sign the formal notification form.

4. The concerned branch prepares leaflets and awareness workshops for students enrolled in it to explain and clarify what they are entitled to and what they should do in accordance with the approved closure plan in order to facilitate and accelerate the process of their graduation.

5. The University shall be keen to provide possible alternatives at the academic level for students enrolled in the branch who wish to transfer to other branches, if they so desire.

6. The University shall be fully committed to the regulations and policies of the Ministries of Higher Education in the state hosting the branch concerned, especially in dealing with similar cases.

B. If the branch concerned is approved by the Open University in the UK and the programmes offered are derived from it, and in addition to conditions mentioned in item **(A)** of this article, the University shall be committed to dealing with the students enrolled in these programmes according to its agreement with the OU in this regard.

C. If the branch has educational centers and decides to close any of them, the paragraphs of this article shall apply, and the center is treated as a branch.

Article (6): General Provisions

A. The University President, Vice-Presidents, Branch Rectors, Deans of Academic Programmes and Admission and Registration Departments shall be responsible for the enforcement of provisions under these regulations.

B. The University Council shall decide on cases not stipulated in these regulations.