

Arab Open University

Quality Assurance Policy and Strategy

Policy Title:	Arab Open University Quality Assurance Policy and Strategy
Version Number	4
Description	Policy to guide Quality Assurance
Policy Reviewer:	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Department
Approving Body	University Council # 77
Policy Implementation:	AOU Academic and Administrative Sectors
Policy Monitoring	Directors and Heads of Quality Assurance and Accreditation at AOU Branches and Headquarter.
Next Review Date	2024

***Note:** A policy may be reviewed before the designated review date should there be a need to*

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Policy Statement

The Arab Open University (AOU) is committed to excellence and quality assurance of all its academic and administrative activities.

AOU is also committed to adhering to Higher Education legislations and regulations. The policy will be interpreted and applied within the legal framework of each AOU country and any other international or local accreditation requirements.

Purpose of This Policy

To develop a systematic and continuous procedures for assessing and evaluating the quality of the learning and teaching provision and the associated support services through collection and analysis of reliable information, critical reflection and maintenance of an effective oversight in all university functions. The main goal of the quality assurance policy is to ensure that relevant and appropriate academic standards are achieved and good quality education is provided to students by encouraging and supporting continuous monitoring and quality improvement in institutional as well as in programmes and research management

Policy Objectives

- I. To safeguard and improve the academic standards and the quality of the learning and teaching delivery.
- II. To ensure the integrity of the academic awards.
- III. To ensure that the offered academic programmes are of high standard and of continued relevance to labor markets and the needs of the workforce in each AOU Branch Country.
- IV. To continually improve the quality of the academic programmes and the students learning experience.
- V. To enhance constant improvement of the learning resources and the internal support services provided to students and staff
- VI. To develop and promote an institutional quality culture and ensure that

all members of the university community are aware of and support the institution's approach to quality;

- VII. To ensure that an appropriate quality assurance system (a set of quality assurance policies, procedures and performance indicators) is in place to achieve the vision and mission of the university
- VIII. To ensure that The AOU quality assurance system is coordinated, developmentally oriented, and is fit for purpose and addresses beneficiaries' requirements and aspirations through:
 - Enhancing the beneficiaries' satisfaction by meeting their requirements and expectations.
 - Establishing quality objectives and providing qualified resources to achieve it.
 - Improving the performance of our operations by presenting the required resources.
 - Compliance with legislation, laws and regulations of Higher Education Authorities.
 - Constantly striving to improve processes effectiveness.

Scope

This policy provides a general guide to the process of monitoring and evaluating quality in all aspects of the university operations.

The policy assumes that the different university sectors and its key committees shall continually set and review quality standards in all the major fields of operation.

The task of the quality assurance process is to determine the extent to which the university achieves the standards it set for itself, and to advice on ways of improving quality at both academic and institutional levels.

The Quality Assurance Units shall execute this task using appropriate evaluation instruments. It is the duty of the Quality assurance Units to constantly develop and review these instruments with a view to verify that

they are capable of capturing sufficient evidence to show the extent to achieving its set quality standards in all its major spheres of operation.

Strategic Aims

The quality assurance strategy is a statement of the University's commitment to assuring quality of its services to students and staff. It is in congruence with the larger institutional strategic plan that places pronounced emphasis on increasing partnership opportunities with other external stakeholders, in widening the learning and teaching opportunities for staff and students. It provides goals and objectives for implementing the University Quality Assurance Policies and comprises systems and mechanisms that contribute to quality enhancement as highlighted below:

1. To continue enhancement of quality assurance (QA) systems towards operational academic and administrative systems of AOU.
2. To facilitate the efforts of the University in acquiring the necessary local accreditation, the approval of the Open University Validation Partnership and any other international accreditation for all AOU branches.
3. To assure consistency of operation in implementation of University rules and regulations and that AOU standards are maintained across the Eight AOU branches.
4. To support the Deanship initiatives which are likely to enhance academic standards, student learning experience and staff development.
5. To assure that AOU has in place student support strategies.
6. To establish professional links with regional and international Quality Assurance agencies to incorporate and adapt internationally accepted standards of QA practices.

7. To develop an effective and efficient Quality Assurance Culture at all levels of staff (both admin and academic) through continuous inductions and workshops.

Implementation

The following are the guiding principles for the implementation of the Strategy:

- All teaching, learning and administrative activities are to comply with the University bylaws and policies
- All academic and administrative activities eventually lead to achieving the mission and goals of the University.
- The quality assurance monitoring activities reflect and ensure uniformity and consistency of implementation of AOU policies and procedures throughout the University.
- Faculties to remain informed about the needs of current and potential students and consider them in the, design or acquisition of new modules and programmers of study
- Ensuring that the results of the feedback surveys and quality monitoring activities enhance the design and delivery of courses/ modules and the assessment of students.
- Monitoring and supporting the application of electronic technology to improve and enhance the University's blended learning system
- Providing the necessary support, for example training workshops, to all academic staff to enable them to deliver interactive teaching and conduct assessment according to the bylaws of the University.
- Disseminating knowledge and awareness about quality assurance and enhancement among members of each Branch and Faculty through orientation programmes, training workshops and Quality Assurance guides.
- Enhancing communication between Branches and Faculties to share ideas, good practices and experiences in solving problems through video-

conferencing, electronic forums, organized annual meetings and staff exchange, etc.

- Continuous monitoring and adoption of evaluation processes that inform and stimulate student support strategies.
- Improving methods and means of communicating feedback to students through electronic newsletters, website announcement, student representatives etc.
- Reviewing and updating the rules and regulations of AOU to take into account the local and international accreditation requirements.
- Ensuring the continuous development of student information system (SIS) which will improve the data collection and data analysis upon which a robust QA system is dependent.
- Supporting and training Academic Staff in the relevant coordination, course delivery monitoring and induction activities.
- Developing links with leading regional and international QA bodies in higher education to judge outcomes and processes against the highest external standards and benchmark with comparable open learning institutions.