

The Bachelor Award Examinations and Evaluation Bylaw
At Arab Open University

Article (1)
Definitions

A) The present bylaws shall be called “The Bachelor Award Examination and Evaluation Bylaws at Arab Open University”, and shall be in force from the date of approval thereof by the University Council.

These Bylaws should be read in conjunction with the “The Bachelor Degree Award Requirements Bylaw”, and shall complement and not conflict therewith.

B) The following words and expressions shall have the meanings stated hereunder unless the context indicates otherwise:

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| University | The Arab Open University (AOU). |
| President | The University President |
| Vice President | The Vice President for Academic Affairs |
| Dean | The Concerned Dean of the Academic Programme. |
| Deanship | The Competent Deanship of Academic Programme. |
| Programme | The academic specialization recognized for awarding the Master's Degree |
| Headquarters | AOU Headquarters (HQ). |
| The Branch | The University Branch established in any country. |
| Branch Director | Director of an AOU branch. |
| Faculty Member | The Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, or Lecturer appointed at AOU HQ or at any Branch thereof. |
| General Course Coordinator | Faculty member responsible for coordinating the course requirements in all branches. |
| Branch Programme Coordinator | Faculty member responsible for monitoring the Programme implementation at the Branch. |
| Branch Course Coordinator | Faculty member responsible for coordinating course requirements at the Branch. |
| Academic Committee | A permanent Committee formed by the University Council |
| Central Examinations Committee(CEC) | The Central Examination Committee at the University Headquarters |
| Faculty Examination Committee(FEC) | The Faculty Examination Committee in the relevant - deanship |
| Branch Committee(BEC) | Branch Examinations Committee. |
| Course Assessment Committee(CAC) | A Committee to Assess the Course. |

Article (2)
Examinations and Assessment

- A. The total mark for each course is (100), evenly distributed between results of continuous assessment and final examination. Such distribution of marks can be modified by increase or decrease, depending on the nature of the course, and it is contingent upon the approval of the relevant Faculty Council and the Academic Committee.
- B. The (50) marks allotted to continuous assessment shall be distributed as follows:
 - A minimum of (20) marks for Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs), assigned in the approved Course Study Calendar.
 - A maximum of (30) marks for Mid-Term Exam(s).
- C. The relevant Deanship may exclude any course from the distribution of marks stipulated above in paragraph (B), following the approval by the Academic Committee.
- D. The minimum number of TMAs is one per course, per semester.
- E. The maximum number of exams (MTAs) per course, per semester is two.
- F. All final exams, MTAs and TMAs are subject to Group Marking and Cross Branch Marking (CBM).

Article (3)
Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs)

- A) Each Deanship shall prepare the TMAs pertaining to its courses, including marking guidelines for such TMAs, as well as criteria for student assessment pursuant to the standards and procedures adopted by the University Council.
- B) Each Deanship shall supply the branches with all required TMAs for all its courses latest by the beginning of the semester in which the course is offered but not exceeding the second week of the semester.
- C) The student shall comply with deadlines set for submitting each TMA on its due date as declared in the approved course calendar.
- D) Students with special needs whose condition impedes them from carrying out their TMAs and/or other assignment requirements, have to prove and submit their case to the Branch Programme Coordinator, who shall refer such documents to the Branch Director, in order to be considered by the Examination Committee and take the appropriate decision.

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E) For each TMA not submitted on its due date, the student shall receive a (0-zero) mark unless he presents a valid excuse. In this case, the student may be given a grace period of seven days after the said due date.

F) Each TMA shall be marked and returned to the student following entry of remarks thereon by the course tutor. Student's mark shall be entered in the Student Information System (SIS) within a period not exceeding two weeks from the TMA due date.

G) The Branch Course Coordinator (BCC) shall review random samples of the marked TMAs of each study group to verify compliance of the marking process with Deanship guidelines, as well as the quality of remarks given to students. The review process shall be documented by the Branch each time it takes place.

H) The student may apply for reconsideration of his/her TMA mark within one week of its return to him/her. In such case, the tutor and the Branch Course Coordinator (BCC) shall study such application to ascertain that all questions were marked, and that no errors have occurred in compilation of marks or entry thereof. The student must be notified of the result within one week of his/her application.

I) Samples of the TMAs and exams shall be sent to the General Course Coordinator (GCC) for reviewing and follow-up.

J) The student TMA mark may not be modified unless a written application therefore is submitted by the Branch Programme Coordinator, specifying reasons, which led to modification request. Such application should be approved by the Branch Director and be submitted within a maximum period of one week following returning the TMA to the student.

Article (4)
Midterm Assessments (MTAs)

A) A standardized MTA for each course shall be held for all study groups each semester, and the relevant Deanship may unify the content and timing of examinations at all branches.

B) MTAs shall be held under the supervision of the Branch Course Coordinator (BCC).

C) The time allotted to 3-4 credit hour courses shall not exceed an hour and a half; and two hours for 5-8 credit hour courses.

D) Should the student fail to sit for the MTA, he/she will be given (0-zero) mark unless he submits a force majeure excuse within three days of the MTA date. If his/her excuse is found valid, the student may sit for an alternative MTA at a date assigned by the Admission, Registration, and Exams Directorate at the Headquarters.

E) The MTA shall be marked by the course tutor. The Branch Course Coordinator (BCC) shall review samples of students' answers in each study group with a view to verify the marking process and the distribution and compilation of marks. The MTA results shall be announced not later than 10 days following convening date thereof.

F) MTA mark should be entered by the course tutor in the Students Information System (SIS) under the supervision of the Branch Course Coordinator (BCC).

G) The student may request a review of his/her MTA mark within one week following the results announcement. Should his/her request be approved, the tutor and Branch Course Coordinator (BCC) shall verify that all MTA questions were marked, and that no errors have occurred in the compilation or entry of marks. The student shall be notified of the result within one week from the date of submission of the appeal.

H) No modification of the student's entered mark may take place unless requested in writing by the Branch Course Coordinator (BCC) and approved by the Branch Director within a maximum period of 10 days from the MTA results announcement date.

I) The student's marks in continuous assessment (TMAs & MTAs) for each course shall be entered in the Student Information System (SIS) in the branch as soon as each is given so that all mark are entered at most one week before the start of final exams.

J) All students' answer booklets shall be kept for a period of one semester for reference when needed.

Article (5)
Arrangements for the Final Examinations

A) Each Deanship shall devise two different versions of the Final Examination for each of its courses; prepare the Answer Key as well as Student Assessment Guidelines for each version pursuant to the standards and procedures adopted by the University Council.

B) Each Deanship shall provide the Director of Examinations Department at the headquarters with the final exam questions for each course, ahead of time, in order to prepare copies according to the number of students

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enrolled in study groups at all branches; and shall be sent to the branches via express mail.

- C) Final Examinations for all courses shall be held at the end of the semester within the specified period stated in the approved university calendar.
- D) The Final Examinations for each course shall be uniform for all the study groups taking the course at all branches. The examinations for the same course shall be held on the same date, day and time. Answers must be written on the approved Answer booklet.
- E) The Final Examination paper must indicate the marks allocated for each question and the time allotted for the specific exam.

In determining the exam time, the course credit hours should be taken into consideration, as follows.

| Course Credit Hours | Duration of the Final Exam |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2-3 | Two hours |
| 4-5 | Two hours and a half |
| 6-8 | Three hours |

- F) Students with special needs have to inform the Branch Examinations Committee, through the Programme Coordinator, about their needs in order to take them into consideration, and provide them with the necessary equipment, or to extend the time of the final exam. They should submit such requests 3 weeks prior to the date of the exam or submission of an assignment/ project.

Article (6)

Receipt of Final Examination, marking and grade entry

- A) Final Exams shall be marked at the branches, according to the following standards and procedures:
 1. Final exams must be marked on campus and under no circumstances should the examination scripts be taken outside the University premises. This applies to all forms of marking including scripts marked by a single tutor, scripts marked by a group of tutors or cross branch marked scripts.
 2. For anonymous marking purpose, the student's name and ID will be covered in the examination answer book. Only when marking has been completed will the flaps on the examination answer book will be opened.
 3. The examination scripts for each course must be collected by the Branch Course Coordinator from the examination steering committee

(Exam Control) at the end of the examination after duly signing the receipt form.

4. Marking shall be conducted pursuant to Cross Branch Marking and Group Marking Rules by all the course tutors at the branch. Each tutor shall sign his/her name against the question marked by him/her according to set regulations.

5. The Branch Course Coordinator (BCC) shall review random samples of the marked answer booklets, the number of samples to be reviewed should constitute at least 10% from the total marked answer booklets.

6. Examination booklets are to be distributed randomly among course tutors for double marking and each tutor shall put his/her signature next to the question marked by him/her according to set regulations.

7. Specific procedures should be followed to document the process of delivery and receipt of answer booklets indicating the number of answer booklets, the course name and course code and delivery date and the date of return the booklets and along with the name and signature of the recipient, during all stages of marking process under the supervision of the Branch Course Coordinator.

B) The Branch Course Coordinator (BCC) shall supervise the entry of students' marks which are entered in the Student Information System (SIS) and signed by the tutor. No marks shall be modified after that.

C) Branches shall keep the student's final examinations answer booklets for a period of two semesters for reference purposes.

D) The student who fails to attend the final examinations shall be given a (0-zero) mark unless he/she submits a force majeure excuse within three days of the exam date. In case the excuse was found valid, letter (I) – Incomplete – shall be entered into the student's academic record, provided that he/she has not failed in the Continuous Assessment. An (I) student shall be permitted to re-sit for the exam on the first subsequent session. However, the course hours shall be excluded from his/her semester and cumulative averages. Should the student fail to re-sit the exam on its first subsequent session, the letter (I) shall be replaced with (F) – Fail – in his/her academic record.

E) If the student fails in one course only in the last semester before his/her graduation, he/ she may re-sit for the following final exam provided that he/ she has passed the continuous assessment. His/her new grade for this course should be capped by (C).

Article (7) **Samples**

In cases where no electronic submission of TMA and MTA samples takes place, each branch shall supply the Deanships at the Headquarter with samples of TMAs and MTAs as well as Final Examinations for review by the external examiners, provided that the minimum number of such samples

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comprise (3) samples per tutor per each course taught by him/her. The samples should represent variations of students' performance levels.

Article (8) **Examination Results**

- A) A Student's final mark in any course shall consist of the total marks earned in the Continuous Assessment and Final Examinations.
- B) The final marks shall be dispatched by branches to the Examinations Department at the Headquarters following their approval by the Branch Examinations Committee, pursuant to the procedures adopted by the University Council.
- C) The Examinations Department at Headquarters shall process the final marks pertaining to each course as received from branches pursuant to the method adopted by the University Council, with a view to determining categories of the final marks, so that each category corresponds to a final grade which is expressed by a specific letter – symbol.
- D) Final grades for each course as letter grades shall correspond to the following points:

| Letter grade | Points |
|---------------------|---------------|
| A | 4 |
| B+ | 3.5 |
| B | 3.0 |
| C+ | 2.5 |
| C | 2.0 |
| D | 1.5 |
| F | 0.0 |

- E) The Standard Deviation Method shall be used when processing percentages in order to set the letter grade system.
- F) Grade (D) shall be the minimum passing requirement for student's successful completion of the course.
- G) The student shall fail the course in any of the following cases:

1. If his/her marks in the Continuous Assessment were less than (15) out of (50) marks. In such case, an (FC) grade – (Failed in Continuous Assessment) – shall be entered in his/her record.
2. Should his/her marks in the Final Examinations be less than (20) out of (50) marks. In such case, an (FF) grade – (Failed in the Final Exam) – shall be entered in his/her record.
3. If his/her final marks representing the total of Continuous Assessment and Final Examinations mark were below (50%). In such case, an (F) grade – (Fail) – shall be entered in his/her record.

H) The final results of any course shall be endorsed by the Central Examination Committee following a recommendation by both the Course Assessment Committee, and the relevant Faculty Examination Committee.

Article 9 **Objection to Results**

- A) The student may request a review of his/her final mark in any course through applying within one week of announcing the course's approved results, and payment of fees specified thereof.
- B) The Branch Examinations Committee shall study the student's objection; verify absence of material error in computing or entering of the student's course marks, as well as the absence of unmarked questions. The student shall be notified of the Committee's decision within one week of his application date. The said decision shall be conveyed to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- C) The student may object to the Branch Examination Committee's decision through applying to the competent Faculty Examinations Committee via the Branch Director within one week of the Branch Examinations Committee's decision date.
- D) The Faculty Examinations Committee shall study the student's objection and verify the absence of material mistakes. The student shall be notified of its decision through the Branch Director within one week of the Committee's receipt of the student's objection. The Vice President for Academic Affairs shall be also notified of the Committee's decision.
- E) Modification of the student's result in any course shall be approved via a decision of the Central Examinations Committee pursuant to the recommendation of the competent Examinations Committee.

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F) The result of the student in any course shall be deemed final and irrevocable after the laps of one semester.

Article (10)
Language Placement Test

- A) All freshmen shall sit for the Language Placement Test in Arabic and English pursuant to standards approved by the University Council.
- B) Non-Arabic speaking freshmen shall be exempt from the Arabic Placement Test and shall be treated pursuant to standards approved by the University Council.
- C) The following are exempted from taking the English Placement Test:
- Students who have obtained a score of 550 or more, in the paper-based TOEFL.
 - Students who have obtained a score of 213 in the Computer-based TOEFL.
 - Students who have obtained a score of 79 in the Internet-based TOEFL.
 - Students who have obtained a score of (6.5) in the IELTS test.

Provided that a period of no more than two years has lapsed since such language proficiency tests had been taken.

- D) Students shall be exempt from pursuing one or more Arabic or English compulsory university required courses or both pursuant to scores obtained in Arabic or English Placement Tests, TOEFL or IELTS in accordance with the standards approved by the University Council.
- E) The freshmen's academic record shall contain an entry of all courses from which the freshmen have been exempted. Such exempt courses shall be marked (CR). However, the credit hours due to such courses shall not be included in the student's cumulative average.

Article (11)
Cheating in the Final Examinations and Plagiarism in TMAs

A) Any student found to be committing any act of cheating or plagiarism shall be referred to the competent disciplinary committee,

which shall take its decisions in accordance with “Students’ Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures Bylaw” in force at AOU.

B) The following acts represent cases of cheating and plagiarism:

- Verbatim copying of printed or Internet materials including tables and graphics, and submitting them as part of TMAs without proper academic acknowledgement and documentation.
- Copying other students’ notes or reports.
- Using paid or unpaid material prepared for the student by individuals or firms.
- The use of materials or tools that are prohibited in examinations, or attempts to do so.

Article (12)
Branch Examinations Committee (BEC)

A) A Branch Examinations Committee shall be formed at the beginning of each academic year comprising:

- Branch Director/Chairman.
- Academic Assistant of Branch Director.
- An Academic Programme Coordinator at the Branch (on rotating basis).
- Admission and Registration Officer at the Branch.
- Branch Quality Assurance Coordinator.

B) The Branch Examinations Committee shall assume the following major functions:

1. Organize the administering of examinations at the Branch.
2. Devise a plan for conducting and marking the final examinations and entering their results pursuant to procedures adopted by the University and its competent Deanships.
3. Review final course results and recommend their approval and submitting the same to the Admission, Registration and Examination Department in the Headquarters.
4. Consider student objections concerning their final marks pursuant to endorsed procedures.
5. Review graduates lists, and issue recommendations thereon.

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C) The Vice President for Academic Affairs shall be notified of the BEC formation decision.

Article (13)
Course Assessment Committee (CAC)

A) The Course Assessment Committee shall comprise.

- General Course Coordinator (GCC)/Chairperson.
- Two Branch Course Coordinators. (as members)
- The Programme's External Examiners. (as members)

B) The Course Assessment Committee shall conduct the following main tasks:

1. Review TMAs, MTAs and Final Exam samples
2. Deliberate on the course results

C) The Course Assessment Committee shall submit its report to the Faculty Examinations Committee.

Article (14)
Faculty Examinations Committee (FEC)

A) The Faculty Examinations Committee shall be formed at the beginning of each academic year and shall comprise:

- Competent Studies Dean / Chairperson.
- Two Faculty members at the Deanship.
- The Chief External Examiner.
- Director of the Admission, Registration and Examinations Department.

B) The Faculty Examinations Committee shall be entrusted with the following main tasks:

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1. Study the final course results and make the necessary recommendations thereon to the Central Examinations Committee for approval.
2. Consider student objections to their marks as referred to it by the Branch Committees, resolve such cases, and refer them to the Central Examinations Committee for approval.
3. Consider external examiners' and CAC reports and submit the necessary recommendations thereon to the Central Examinations Committee.
4. Approve graduates lists and make recommendations thereon to the Central Examinations Committee.

Article (15)
Central Examinations Committee (CEC)

A) The Central Examinations Committee shall comprise:

- The Vice President for Academic Affairs / Chairperson.
- Deans of Academic Programmes.
- Director of Admissions, Registration and Examination.
- Director of Quality Assurance and Accreditation Department or his / her Deputy
- Chief External Examiners as required.

B) The Central Examinations Committee shall assume the following tasks:

1. Approve the standard forms for entering marks at the Branches, for review purposes by the various examinations committees.
2. Approve final course results as per recommendations from Branch and Faculty Examination Committees.
3. Approve any modification to students' grades as received from a Faculty Examination Committees.
4. Approve Graduates list.
5. Devise general frameworks and policies pertaining to university examinations without prejudice to the relevant provisions of university bylaws and regulations.
6. Study any obstacles impeding the implementation of examination rules and procedures and submit appropriate proposals for resolving thereof to the University Council.

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Article (16)
General Provisions

- A) The University Council shall decide on any conflict arising from the implementation of the present bylaws, or when needed, resolve any other issues related to examinations and marks, for cases which are not covered by the provisions of the present bylaws.
- B) Deans, Branch Directors, and Director of Admissions and Registration as well as Director of Examinations shall be responsible for implementing the present bylaws.
- C) The present bylaws shall abrogate all previous regulations governing examinations at AOU.

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