



The Bachelor Award Examinations and Assessment Bylaws

**Approved by AOU University Council
No.67, on 25 September 2019**

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Article (1): Title

The current bylaws are named "The Bachelor Award Examinations and Assessment Bylaws at the Arab Open University"

Article (2): Definitions

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

University	The Arab Open University (AOU).
Headquarters	The University's Headquarters (HQ)
Branch/Campus	An AOU Branch/Campus
President	The University President
Vice-President Academic	The University's Vice President for Academic Affairs & Scientific Research (VPAA & SR)
Programme	An academic specialization recognized for awarding the Bachelor Degree
Director	Director of an AOU Branch/Campus.
Deanship	The Competent Deanship of an Academic Programme.
Dean	The Dean of an Academic Programme
Faculty Member	A Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, or Lecturer appointed at AOU HQ or at any Branch thereof
General Course Coordinator	A Faculty member responsible for coordinating course requirements in all branches.
Branch Programme Coordinator	A Faculty member responsible for administering the implementation of a Programme at a Branch.
Branch Course Coordinator	A Faculty member responsible for coordinating course requirements at a Branch.
Academic Committee	A permanent committee formed by the University Council for academic affairs
Central Examinations Committee (CEC)	The Central Examination Committee at the University Headquarters
Faculty Examination Committee (FEC)	The Faculty Examination Committee in the respective deanship
Branch Examination Committee (BEC)	A Branch Examinations Committee.
Course Assessment Committee (CAC)	A Committee to Assess a Course.

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Article (3): Examinations and Assessment

- A.** The total mark for each course is (100), evenly distributed between results of continuous assessment and a final examination.
- B.** The (50) marks allotted to continuous assessment shall be distributed as follows:
- A minimum of (20) marks for Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs), as stated in the approved Course Study Calendar.
 - A maximum of (30) marks for Mid-Term Exam(s).
- C.** According to the nature of a course, the respective Deanship may exclude any course from the distribution of marks stipulated above in paragraph (B), provided the Academic Committee approves this exclusion.
- D.** The minimum number of TMAs is one per course, per semester. The Deanship may determine the upper limit.
- E.** The maximum number of Midterm exams (MTAs) per course, per semester is two.
- F.** Each deanship shall prepare TMAs, MTAs, and Final Exams for each course.
- G.** TMAs, MTAs and Final Exams shall be unified in all branches and endorsed by the respective Dean.
- H.** A deanship may hold more than one MTA in a single semester.
- I.** The MTA and Final Exam of each course are held concurrently (at the same date and time) in all branches according to special instructions issued by the University Council. However, exceptions which dictate change are allowed in special cases.
- J.** All final exams, MTAs and TMAs are subject to Group Marking and Cross Branch Marking (CBM).

Article (4): 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) As for local programmes, the branch deanship members shall prepare TMAs and their marking guidelines as well as criteria for student assessment.

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- C) 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.
- D) Students shall comply with deadlines set for submitting each TMA on its due date as declared in the approved course calendar.
- E) Students with special needs whose condition impedes writing their TMAs and/or other required assignments, must submit their case to the Branch Programme Coordinator, who shall refer such documents to the Branch Rector, in order to be considered by the Examination Committee and adopt an appropriate decision.
- F) For each TMA not submitted on its due date, the student shall receive a (0-zero) mark unless he presents a valid excuse to the body assigned by the University. In this case, the student may be given a grace period of seven days including a weekend after the TMA submission due date.
- G) Each TMA shall be marked and returned to the student following entry of remarks thereon by the course tutor. The student's mark shall be entered in the Student Information System (SIS) within a period not exceeding two weeks from the TMA due date.
- H) 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.
- I) The student may apply for reconsideration of his/her TMA mark in accordance with Article 10 of this Bylaws or according to student appeal procedures adopted by the University. The student is informed of the result of his/her appeal within one week of his/her application.
- J) Pursuant to deanship requests and directions, samples of the TMAs and exams shall be sent by BCC's to the General Course Coordinator (GCC) for review and follow-up.
- K) The student TMA mark may not be modified unless a written application to this effect is submitted by the Branch Programme Coordinator, specifying reasons of the modification request. Such application should be approved by the Branch Rector and be submitted within a maximum period of one week following the date when the TMA was returned to the student.

Article (5): Midterm Assessments (MTAs)

- A) The MTA for each course shall be held concurrently for all study groups of the said course each semester, and the respective Deanship may unify the content and timing of examinations in all branches.

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- B) MTAs shall be held under the supervision of the Branch Course Coordinator (BCC).
- C) The duration of the MTA is determined in accordance to each course credit hours, as in the following table:

No of credit hours	MTA Duration
3-4 credit hours	A maximum of 90 minutes
5-8 credit hours	A maximum of 120 minutes

- D) Should a student fail to sit for the MTA, he/she will be given (0-zero) mark unless he submits a *force majeure* excuse within seven calendar days (one week) of the MTA date.
- E) If his/her excuse is found valid, the student may sit for an alternative MTA at a date assigned in the university approved Academic Calendar.
- F) The MTA is marked by the course tutor and the BCC reviews samples of students' answer scripts in each section of the course in order to verify the marking process and the distribution and compilation of marks.
- G) The MTA mark is entered by the course tutor in the Students Information System (SIS) under the supervision of the Branch Course Coordinator (BCC).
- H) Results should be announced not later than 10 days following the date each MTA is held.
- I) A student may appeal his/her MTA mark in accordance with Article 10 of this Bylaws or according to the appeals procedures determined by the University. He/she will be notified by the result within one week from the date of submission of the appeal.
- J) A student's MTA mark shall not be modified except following a written request by the Programme Coordinator (PC) and the approval of the Branch Rector.
- K) The student's marks in continuous assessment (MTAs and TMAs) for each course are entered onto the SIS progressively so that the aggregate of this type of assessment is entered not less than one week before the date of the final exam.
- L) Students' MTA papers are stored for one semester for further reference as necessary.

Article (6): Final Examinations

- A) Each Deanship shall prepare two different versions of the Final Examination (or more as necessary) for each of its courses; prepare the Answer Key as well as

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Student Assessment Guidelines for each version pursuant to the standards and procedures adopted by the University Council.

B) Each Deanship shall provide the Head of Examinations in each AOU Branch (or any other staff member named by the Branch Rector) with the final examination questions for each course, in good time which allows for preparing copies according to the number of students enrolled in study groups/sections in all branches.

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 the same course shall be identical for all the study groups taking the course at all branches. They shall also be held on the same date, day and time.

E) The students' answers written on the Answer Booklet which is approved and sealed by the University, are endorsed. However, in cases where the answers are written on the original exam scripts, each student's script ought to be sealed.

F) The Final Examination question sheet must indicate the marks allocated for each question and the time allotted for the specific exam pursuant to the following table:

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

G) Students with special needs must inform the Branch Examinations Committee, through the body assigned by the University's administration, about their needs in order to be studied and assessed. They should submit such requests at least one week prior to the date of the test for chronic illness cases. However, emergency cases may be accepted up to 3 days before an exam or before the submission of an assignment/project so that responsible officers may have enough time to deal with the situation by providing necessary equipment or by extending the time allocated to the exam.

Article (7): Receipt of Final Examinations, Marking and Grade Entry

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A) Final Exams shall be marked at the branches, according to the following standards and procedures:

1. The student's name and registration number should be concealed on the exam script in the exam hall before the marker receives the scripts.

2. The exam scripts are received from the Exam Steering & Control Committee by the Branch Course Coordinator (BCC). This is done by filling out a form that records the number of sections, and answer booklets/scripts received, as well as the date of receipt.

3. The University is keen on marking final exams within the University campus. No exam scripts are allowed to be moved outside the University campus, even in the case of individual marking or cross-branch marking.

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 regulations¹.

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

6. The Branch Course Coordinator shall review random samples of the marked answer booklets, the number of which should constitute at least 10% of the total marked booklets.

7. Specific procedures are made for handing out and receiving answer booklets between the marker and the BCC throughout the marking stages stating the course title and code number - if possible - together with the number of scripts and the date of receiving these scripts. The receiver's name and signature should also be included.

B) The BCC shall also monitor the marks that the students had obtained, and which had been entered by the tutor onto the Student Information System (SIS). These marks cannot be changed after this stage.

C) The final exam scripts are stored at each branch for two semesters for review if necessary.

¹ Appendix 1- Co-ordination , Marking and Sampling

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D) A student who fails to attend the final examinations shall be given a (0-zero) mark unless he/she submits a force majeure excuse within a week following the exam date.

E) In case the excuse was found valid, letter (I) – Incomplete – shall be entered onto the student’s academic record. An (I) student shall be permitted to re-sit for the exam on the first subsequent exam session.

F) If the student fails to sit for the same exam on its first subsequent session, the symbol (I) in his/her academic record shall be converted to (F), which means fail.

G) If the student fails to pass the last course in his/her study plan before his/ her graduation, he/she may re-sit for the next final exam according to the following conditions:

1. Having passed the continuous assessment, and
2. That the course is registered in the graduation semester, i.e. his/her last semester at the University, and
3. His/her new grade for this course should be capped by (C).

Article (8): Samples

Each branch shall supply the Deanships at HQ with samples of TMAs, MTAs and Final Examinations to be reviewed by the external examiners. The samples should represent variations of students’ performance levels.

Article (9): Results

- A) A Student’s final mark in any course shall comprise the total marks earned in the Continuous Assessment and the Final Examination.
- B) The final marks shall be dispatched by branches to the Admission, Registration and Examination Department at the Headquarters, following their approval by the Branch Examination Committee, pursuant to the procedures adopted by the University Council.
- C) The Respected Deanships at HQ, or whoever is assigned by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, shall process the final marks as received from branches for each course, in accordance with the following grading system and the method approved by the University Council:

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Letter grade	Grade Range
A	90 and above
B+	82-89
B	74-81
C+	66-73
C	65-58
D	50-57
F	Below 50

D) The respective Deanships may amend the figures in the above table as they find necessary and in line with the course's results and nature.

E) The points which correspond to the above values are determined as follows:

Letter Grade	A	B+	B	C+	C	D	F
Points	4	3.5	3	2.5	2	1.5	0

F) Grade D shall be the minimum pass rate.

G) A student is considered fail in a certain course in any of the following cases:

1. If his/her mark in the continuous assessment is lower than 30% of the overall mark assigned to it. In this case hi/her record shall bear the value of "FC" which means *failed in continuous assessment*.

2. If he/she failed to take up the final exam, in which case he/she shall be assigned the value of "FA" which means *failed for absence*.

3. If his/her mark in the final exam is lower than 40% of the overall mark assigned to it, in which case he/she shall be assigned the value of "FF" which means failed in the final exam.

4. If his/her final mark, which represents the aggregate of what he/she obtained in the continuous assessment and the final examination, is under 50%. In this case the student shall be assigned the value of "F" which means *failed*.

H. The results of any course shall be finally endorsed by the Central Examination Committee (CEC) following a recommendation by each of the Course Assessment Committee (CAC) and the Faculty Examination Committee of the respective faculty.

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Article 10: Objection to Results and Modification

This article should be read in conjunction with article (22) of the Bachelor Degree Award Requirements Bylaws.

First: Formation of Appeals and Re-Appeals Committees

A. Branch Appeals' Committee (BAC):

For Each Academic Programme a respective Branch Appeal Committee shall be formed comprising:

- Respective Branch Programme Coordinator /Committee Chair
- Two Academic Staff Members including the BCC or GCC if possible.

B. Branch Re-Appeal Committee (BRC)

For each Academic Programme a specialized Branch Re-Appeal Committee shall be formed comprising:

- Assistant Director for Academic Affairs (Chairman)
- Two members of the teaching staff of the respective course that were not members of the respective appeal committee.

Second: Duties and Procedures of the Appeals Committee and the Re-Appeals Committee

- A student may request that his/her final grade in any course be reviewed within seven calendar days from the date of posting the approved course results through the online appeals system, upon completing the relevant procedures as set by the university.
- The Branch Appeal Committee (BAC) shall study the student's objection, verify absence of error in adding or entering of the student's marks in the course, as well as the absence of unmarked questions. The student should be informed of the committee's recommendations which will then be forwarded to the Central Examination Committee to be endorsed within the second week following the declaration of results.
- The student may object the Committee's decision and re-appeal through the AOU-Branch Rector to the competent Re-Appeal Committee within the third week after the declaration of results.
- The Branch Re-Appeal (BRC) Committee shall study the student's appeal to make sure that there is no material error. The student shall be informed of

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the committee's recommendations within the fourth week after the declaration of results. The ruling is then submitted to the Central Examination Committee (CEC) for approval and endorsement.

e) The BAC and BRC may consult with the Respective General Course Coordinator (GCC) or the Deanship of the academic programme if deemed necessary.

f) If either of the two committees' rules that the student's mark ought to be altered, the Rector shall convey the recommendations to the VPAA within the fifth week after the declaration of results, and the VPAA shall ask the Central Examination Committee for a final endorsement.

g) The VPAA brings to the attention of CEC members all the appeal and re-appeal cases that he had received from AOU Branches for their approval and endorsement.

h) Following the approval of the CEC, the student's mark is altered by the authorized persons as required provided that the changes are recorded in the student's file.

l) The student's right to appeal or re-appeal concerning his/her case shall be waived if he/she did not abide by the deadlines noted above in Articles A and C.

J) The student's result should be confirmed as final and irrevocable one semester after its adoption. In this case it shall not be altered at all.

Article (11): Language Placement Test (LPT)

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 the standards approved by the University Council.

C) The following are exempted from taking the English Placement Test:

Level	TOEFL			IELTS	Exempted from
	Internet Based (IBT)	Computer Based (CBT)	Paper Based (PB)		
EL097	30	93	397	3	EL097
EL098	41	123	437	4	EL098
EL099	53	153	477	4.5	EL099
EL111	65	183	513	5,5	EL111
EL112	79	213	550	6.5	EL112

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					Exempted from LPT
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D) Students shall be exempted from studying one or more of the University-required Arabic courses as per their results in the Arabic Placement test and according to cutoff points approved by the University Council as shown in the following table:

Student's Grade in the Placement Test	Exempted from
0-59	No exemption
60-89	AR111
90 and above	AR112

For students who are taking the Updated University requirements, the exemption will be as follow:

Student's Grade in the Placement Test	Exempted from
0-74	No exemption
75 and above	AR113

E) The symbol CR (credited) is entered onto the transcript of a freshman to mark exemption from the courses that the Arabic Placement Test (APT) determined he/she does not have to study. The number of credit hours of such courses shall not be computed in calculating his/her cumulative average.

Article (12): Cheating and Plagiarism

Any student found to be committing any act of cheating or plagiarism shall be referred to the "Students' Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures Bylaws" in force at AOU.

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

- Verbatim copying of printed or Internet materials, and submitting them as part of TMAs without proper academic 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 attempting to do so.

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Article (13): Branch Examinations Committee (BEC)

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

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

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 final examinations and entering their results pursuant to procedures adopted by the University and its competent Deanships.
3. Review final results of various course examinations, recommend their approval and submit the same to the Admission, Registration and Examination Department at HQ.
4. Consider student objections pertaining to their final marks as per endorsed procedures.
5. Endorse lists of graduates, and issue recommendations thereon.

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

Article (14): 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 Examiner. (as a member)

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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 (FEC).

Article (15): 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:

1. Study the final course results and make the necessary recommendations thereon to the Central Examinations Committee for approval.
2. Consider external examiners' and CAC reports and submit the necessary recommendations thereon to the Central Examinations Committee.
3. Approve graduates lists and make recommendations thereon to the Central Examinations Committee.

Article (16): Central Examinations Committee (CEC)

A) The Central Examinations Committee shall comprise:

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

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

1. Approve final course results as per recommendations from Branch and Faculty Examination Committees.
2. Approve any modifications of students' grades as received from Faculty Examinations Committees or Branch Appeals/Re appeals Committees.
3. Approve expected graduate lists.
4. Approve unified forms of recording marks at the branches to prepare them for viewing by different exam committees
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.

Article (17): General Provisions

- A) The present bylaws shall abrogate all previous regulations governing examinations at AOU.
- B) The Vice Presidents, Deans, Branch Directors and Directors of Admissions, Registration and Examination, shall be responsible for implementing the provisions of the current bylaws.
- C) The University Council shall decide on any cases that are not covered by the provisions of the present bylaws.

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Appendix (1): Coordination, Marking and Sampling

1. Group marking means the participation of more than one marker in the marking of an exam script. This can be done by assigning each marker to mark certain questions in all scripts. Thus, all scripts will have been marked by more than one tutor. In case a course has only one tutor, the Programme Coordinator asks another tutor to review the marking of the scripts.
2. Before group marking begins, a coordination meeting shall be held comprising course tutors and the Branch Course Coordinator to discuss the answer key and the full marking of a random sample of exam scripts by each tutor to agree a unified system of marking and to assign a marker for each of the exam questions.
3. There should be minutes for each course meeting which shows the names of markers, the question(s) he/she shall mark and his/her signature.
4. All markers shall fully abide with the answer key and the marks allotted to each part of the answer in order to guarantee marking objectivity and uniformity in all AOU branches.
5. All markers must calculate the marks given by adding them and ensuring that they are correctly transferred to the cover of the exam booklet.
6. The marks attained by the student must be recorded on the cover of the exam booklet and inside it in one language to avoid mistakes which happen when marks are added up. The mark should also be written in letters.
7. Emphasis ought to be placed on distributing the marks of each questions to parts thereof in accordance with the marking instructions/sample and avoid writing a single overall mark.
8. When group marking is finished, the course coordinator chooses random samples to be reviewed by him in order to ensure marking objectivity and precision.
9. The marks reviewing process is made by exchanging scripts between markers in a documented manner.
10. There must be documentation of receiving and exchanging scripts in which the number of these scripts is recorded together with the course title, its number, the date of the action, and the name and signature of the person who received the scripts throughout all marking stages.
11. An adequate number of TMAs, MTAs and exam scripts for each marker must be sent to the deanship concerned. The marker's name should be written on all samples.
12. Samples must be scanned and sent on a CD, which should be checked to confirm that it functions properly before it is sent to the deanship concerned in good time.
13. The use of examination seals should be the responsibility of one or more members of the control committee.

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