Arab Open University
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

" Guidance Manual for Internal and External Quality Assurance at the Arab Open University in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia "

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Contents:

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Table of Drawings

Acronym	Definition
CQAC	Central Quality Assurance Committee
QAAD	Quality Assurance & Accreditation Department
BQAC	Branch Quality Assurance Committee
QAAC	Quality Assurance & Accreditation Coordinators
SIS	Student Information System
LMS	Learning Management System
IR	Internal Review Report
GCC	General Course Coordinator
TMA	Tutor Marked Assignment
MTA	Midterm Exam
AMR	Annual Monitoring Report
APE	Annual Program Evaluation
PMU	Performance Monitoring Unit Report

Introduction

The "Guidance Manual for Internal and External Quality Assurance at the Arab Open University in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" has been prepared to introduce stakeholders in the Arab Open University with the extent of the institutional commitment to quality in all aspects and activities of the University. It explains the concept, objectives and policies of quality assurance systems at the university and the organizational quality standards. It also sheds light on practices and procedures used to ensure internal and external quality. This guidance based on the regulations, affirmations and circulars issued at the University to organize work and ensure the quality of practices and procedures.

First: Introductory Definitions

- **Arab Open University:**

  The Arab Open University was established in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the royal approval no. (7 / B / 17813) dated on 2002. The university is a non-profit educational institution. Riyadh was chosen as its headquarters and the study in the university started from the second semester of 2003 (Arab Open University 2010). The company offers its programs in all its branches in Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, Hail, Al Ahsa and Medina.

- **Quality Concept:**

  The issue of quality is not a new subject, it is old man's foot itself and the Islamic religion was interested in quality before the West. As Allah's said "[It is] the work of Allah, who perfected all things" Al Naml, verse No. (88). as mentioned in hadeeth of Aisha said the Messenger of Allah said "Allah loves someone who when works, he performs it in perfect manner".

  Philip Crosby (Quality Assurance, 2016), the most famous American quality pioneer, has defined quality, as it is the conformity of requirements. Quality for him means the suitability of the product and the service for the purposes that have been developed in order to match with his needs. Awadallah (2014) defined it as international standards for measuring, recognizing and moving from an inferiority culture to a culture of excellence and perfection, consider the future as a goal and transition from past consecration and the past view to the future in which the generations that are learning now live.

  From the above, it is clear that no matter how many definitions of the researchers on the quality concept, they agreed in one content is to match the requirements. Whether from the point of view of the factory to match the specifications of what is manufactured with specifications designed in advance or from customer point of view is to meet the needs of the customer via providing high quality services that exceed its requirements and expectations.

  The following figure (1) reflects the role of quality processes in the productivity of institutions of all kinds. From the figure, it is clear that the institution is a tree with roots, stem, leaves and fruits. At the root of the institution are the policies, systems, administrative and academic regulations, procedures and good practices. While the role of quality assurance systems and processes in the form of fertilizers, optimizers, tonics, tools and means injected into the roots of the tree to improve performance and production and graduate students able to participate actively in society. Leaders' role is to support quality processes, encourage innovation, development, continuous improvement and participate collectively in improving quality.

Quality is not an administrative unit as some think, but it is a process of commitment to continuous improvement and collective responsibility from all levels of the institution.
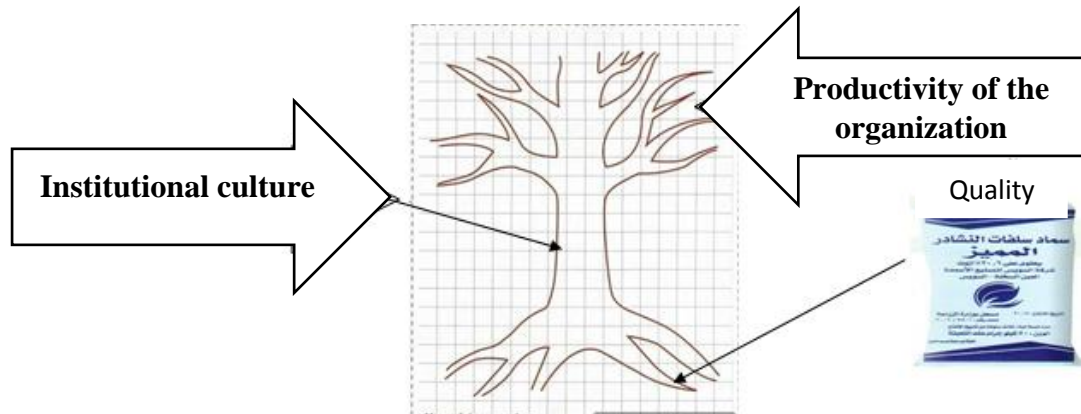

Diagram No. 1 Quality in the organization

- **Quality Concept at the Arab Open University:**
  Quality concept adopted by the Arab Open University is to ensure that quality assurance systems and mechanisms are objective in monitoring and reviewing the structure and quality of educational programs, educational regulations and that the learning and teaching environment is appropriate for the purpose. In other words, quality concept in the Arab Open University requires that all processes, procedures and academic and administrative services are appropriate for the purpose and meet the requirements and standards set in advance in all branches in the Arab world.

  The main task of quality is to work to adhere the internal and external quality practices to be embedded within the system, specifically in the policies, systems, regulations and procedures of the university. Quality role of management department in the university remains to ensure the implementation of quality, through quality systems, continuous monitoring and monitoring and documentation of the reality, to propose the gradual, simple, continuous and affordable improvement and development of all elements of university system and all its activities. This does not necessarily have to be accompanied by the use of high-cost technology or the implementation of high-cost mega projects and programs.

  Second: Quality Assurance Policies in the Arab Open University:
  Standards of the Open University / UK, the standards of the National Center for Evaluation and Measurement and the instructions of Ministry of Education are a reference framework deriving from the quality policies of the Arab Open University in Saudi Arabia.

Policies include the following:

- The administrative and academic activities should lead to the achievement of the university's goals and mission.
- Quality Assurance Control Systems ensure that procedures are maintained throughout the University.
- Deanships should keep informed of the needs of current students and prospective students, and taking into account those needs when designing and developing programs and educational units.
- Benefit from questionnaire results in improving education and evaluating students.
- Deanships will continually evaluate programs from specialized experts to ensure that they are relevant to the needs of community, labor market and all partners.
- Utilizing technology to improve the university's integrated learning methodology.
- Provide training and professional development opportunities for faculty members to assist them in teaching and evaluating student achievement according to university regulations.
- Spread quality culture among all university employees in several ways.
- Enhancing communication between deanships to exchange experiences, good practices, solving problem using modern media, meetings and forums.
- Use multiple media to get feedback from students via the university website, ads and student council.
- Continuous development of Arab Open University systems and regulations to suit local and international accreditation requirements.
- Develop student information system to collect information about students and analyze them to adopt the quality system on them.
- Enhancing communication locally and externally with quality assurance organizations and associations in higher education to conduct reference comparisons with universities that adopt a structured learning approach.

In summary, Arab Open University's Quality Assurance Policy aims to ensure that all processes, procedures, academic and administrative services are adequate and meet the pre-defined requirements and criteria.

Third: Objectives of quality assurance systems at the Arab Open University:

The University has a great commitment to quality of work through preparation of five strategic plans so that the plans periodically and adopt future based on the results of statistics and surveys of opinion, based on it in the process of academic and administrative decision-making. The strategic plan of the Arab Open University in Saudi Arabia (2017 -2022) was prepared according to 2030 vision of Saudi Arabia and the future plan for university education in Saudi Arabia (Afak) 2029.

The University has a strategic objective for the years 2017 -2021 to ensure the overall quality of all activities of the university, especially in the academic and information systems. Quality Assurance Systems and Mechanisms in the Arab Open University aim to ensure that all inputs, processes, and academic and administrative services are suitable for the purpose and meet the predefined requirements and standards set forth in the Quality Assurance Manual of the Arab Open University. There are a number of objectives for applying quality:

- Continuous improvement of academic and administrative processes.
- Facilitate the efforts towards obtaining the university and all its branches for local and international accreditation.
- Ensuring uniformity and integration of applying regulations practices among all branches of the Arab Open University in the Arab World.
- Supporting deanships' efforts in development of academic standards and enriching the experience of student learning and professional development of employees.
- Ensure that the university has student support systems.
- Communicate and coordinate with local and international quality institutions to apply quality standards and practices.
- Spread quality culture among employees of the university by various means (Arab Open University, 2017).

Fourth: Organization of quality assurance processes in the Arab Open University:

To ensure the internal and external quality of the Arab Open University, quality processes are managed through the following organizational sequence:

- Branch Quality Assurance Committee.
- Quality Assurance and Accreditation Unit.
- Quality Assurance and Accreditation Coordinators in branches of the Arab Open University in Saudi Arabia.

The following is a detailed description of each:

❖ **Branch Quality Assurance Committee (BQAC):**

It formed upon the decision of university master for one year. The committee shall hold a meeting twice in the semester. Head of the Quality Unit shall present a report on the work. The report shall be presented to Branch Director before being subject to the Committee for discussion and approval. The Committee includes members of the University:

1. Director of the Arab Open University.
2. Director of Quality and Accreditation Unit.
3. Dean of an academic program.
4. Member of faculty members.
5. Branch Manager.

⬥ Tasks of the Committee:

1. All aspects of operations and services are supervised in the branches to ensure the application of quality standards.
2. Supervising the implementation and monitor of decisions of the Council of the League on matters related to quality assurance.
3. Enhance the development of quality culture among employees in all branches.

❖ **Quality Assurance and Accreditation Unit in the university:**

The unit performs the following tasks:

1. Develop, apply, and evaluate organizational quality development frameworks, practices, and principles.
2. Identify the needs of students and employees to design a system that meets these needs.
3. Conduct research on exploratory studies to measure all aspects of student and employees services and propose corrective measures.
4. Conduct annual internal review of operational practices and procedures at branch level and provide branches and university councils.
5. Examine the quality of student's learning experience and scientific achievement in context set by mission and the goals of the university and programs objectives.
6. Develop and set performance indicators for academic and administrative services.
7. Advising and monitoring the effective apply of evaluation procedures at level of courses and programs in all academic faculties.
8. Supervise and facilitate activities in compliance with local and international requirements.

⬥ **Tasks of Quality Assurance and Accreditation Unit in the branch**:

(1) Operations control tasks such as:

- Training programs for employees and students.
- Quality of teaching through course coordinator in the branch.
- Assignments through the course coordinator.
- Administration of Examinations and Student Evaluation (Form for opening questions by student - Send answer key after completion of the exam).

- Academic guidance process.
- Providing health and safety services and providing services for people with special needs.
- Student Support Services consists of three systems: (Student Information System / Learning Management / Student Services).
- Applying employees' performance evaluation and professional development plans.
- Implement university policies and regulations.
- Students' appeals and complaints systems.

(2) Evaluation Tasks, then adjustment the operations such as:

- Identify and report potential risks based on monitoring and evaluation of different aspects of judgments and processes of the University.
- Data collection and analysis.
- Conduct internal review to identify and disseminate good practices for quality improvement.
- Make recommendations for improvement based on internal review results.
- Department of Student Surveys.
- Applying student and employee surveys.
- Introduce and adapt employees to quality assurance procedures and systems.
- Report any violation of data safety.
- Report non-compliance with regulations or policies.
- Coordinating and organizing meetings of quality assurance committee - at least twice in the semester - and monitoring the implementation of decisions of the meeting.
- Report changes in regulations and policies.
- Participate in the development of quality assurance culture.

(3) Documentation and reporting tasks such as:

- Writing reports supported by statistical data on the academic performance of the students.
- Writing a report on students' appeals and complaints systems.
- Documenting non-compliance with standards and reporting to relevant authorities.
- Facilitate the task of the academic programs coordinators to write the annual report on programs (Annual Monitoring Report).

- Managing the internal review process.
- Prepare all documents towards strengthening internal quality systems and processes.
- Collection of evidence and documentation required for Local accreditation or renewal of accreditation from the Open University / UK

❖ **Quality Assurance and Accreditation Coordinators in branches of the Arab Open University in Saudi Arabia:**
The Director of the Arab Open University appoints quality and accreditation coordinators, by an administrative decree issued annually. Quality and Accreditation Coordinators supervised directly by the Director of the Quality and Accreditation Unit.

✚ **Tasks of Quality and Accreditation Coordinators**:
A number of tasks assigns to Quality and Accreditation Coordinators, such as:
- Monitoring admission and registration process for first and second semester and writing a comprehensive report thereon.
- Follow-up of the implementation and evaluation of the program for the preparation of new collaborating professors.
- Follow-up of the implementation and evaluation of the program for the preparation of new students.
- See the students' grades for the two semesters and check them before sending them to the university administration.
- Monitoring of final exams conduct for the first and second semesters and write a comprehensive report thereon.
- Supervising the organization of meetings to introduce the students and employees of the branch by definitions and objectives of quality.
- Follow up the implementation of security and safety plan in the branch and services for people with special needs.
- Periodic review of academic and administrative performance and consultation with branch manager to develop a performance improvement plan.
- Preparing an annual report about the most important achievements of the branch, the difficulties and the way to overcome them according to the operational plan of the university.
- Accomplish any additional tasks assigned to him in the field of quality and accreditation.

Fifth: Quality Assurance Systems in the Arab Open University:
Quality Assurance systems can be classified as an internal and external quality assurance system. The following procedures are explained to ensure each of them:

(1) Internal Quality Assurance System and its enhance:
It includes several axes within the university such as, teaching and learning experience quality, the quality of the student's evaluation, administrative services quality and infrastructure support services, quality of resources and facilities, quality of research and community service.

The following is a brief description of procedures to ensure internal institutional and educational quality:

Quality of academic programs and courses:

All programs at the Arab Open University in Saudi Arabia are programs derived and approved by the Open University / UK. Each program has requirements represented in a certain number of study hours, namely specialization requirements, elective requirements, and mandatory requirements (18) hours represented in the study of courses such as, Arabic language skills and English skills, self-learning and distance learning. What distinguishes the Arab Open University is the lack of programs for preparatory year.

Quality of administrative and academic procedures:

The administrative structure and authorities consist of a number of organizational levels and standing committees such as, Board of Trustees, Board of Deans, University master in the Branch, General Coordinator of the Course, Dean of the Program in the Branch, Course Coordinator in the Branch, Professor. As for committees structure, there are the academic committee, the central exams committee, the central quality committee, the central scientific research and development committee, the exams committee in the branch and the evaluation committee of the courses.

Quality of admission and registration processes by quality coordinators:

In order to ensure the quality of admission and registration process, the quality coordinators in the centers monitor the progress of the admission and registration process according to the observation form. The form covers six aspects are: (1) Planning and organization for admission and registration, (2) Services, facilities and equipment, (3) Reception and admission of students, (4) placement exam in both languages, (5) Academic guidance for new and ongoing applicants and (6) Registration of courses, payment of fees and delivery of bags. A comprehensive report shall be prepared after the completion of admission and registration period, containing the most important strengths and weaknesses and proposals for improvement. The report shall be submitted to University mater for informed and briefing. A meeting will hold with Admissions and Registration Director to avoid negative points and find solutions before the next semester.

Academic Guidance for Students:

Academic guidance is an important step in the student's scientific progress. The mentors help them choose courses within their study plans.

Quality Adjustments by Quality Coordinators:

Quality coordinators check the adjustment reviewing process for courses according to a model prepared by quality and accreditation unit. A simple report prepared by the accepted number of requests for adjustments in the academic programs, which rejected due to lack of requirements.

Quality of student service systems:

There are a number of electronic systems such as:

- **Student Information System (SIS):** It is a system on the Internet where all the information about the student is kept. It represents the entire life cycle of the student (from admission to graduation).
- **Complains system:** There is an automated student complaints system through the Student Information System.
- **Appeals system**: It is a system specialized for exams. Appeals are processed through the automated system more quickly and effectively using the following steps: The student submits an appeal and his application will be reviewed. The results are documented with special recommendations and the Academic Assistant Director and Branch Director approve the final decision.
- **The Learning Management System**: The University uses the Learning Management System. It is an online communication system between teachers and students. This system allows students to view course schedules, data and presentations. They can participate in activities such as chats, SMS, blogs and wiki features, using Learning Management System to provide tasks and receive feedback from teachers. It is also used in midterm online exams or final exams for some general courses.
- **Awareness system:** The awareness system involves the inclusion of awareness and introduction cards in the learning management system with a card each week throughout the year. It is about guiding students to regulations and laws regarding their collection or behavior on the campus.
- **Student Surveys:** University relies on surveys that are included in the e-learning management system. Surveys are varied, such as student feedback on courses, teachers, services, and learning experience. The results are analyzed in order to analyze and improve the work.
- **Services for people with special needs:** University buildings and facilities take into account the availability of services for those with special needs from their students. In addition, there is support for this group in class meetings and during exams duration.
- **Internal Review Report**: is a questionnaire survey submitted to heads of administrative and academic departments with closed and open questions to describe all aspects of administrative, academic and technical work, which are used to know the current status of the university and the quality department is accredited at its headquarters.

- **Quality of faculty members:**
- **Selection and appointment:**
  A committee is formed at the university to attract full-time faculty. The committee formed its membership from the University master, his assistants, deans of the faculties, some faculty members and the director of human resources management. The committee works according to the instructions of the Ministry of Education in this regard.
- Follow-up of teacher performance through course coordinator and the general coordinator of the course and Dean of the College, which is illustrated in the following figure:

1. **Dean** →	Follow-up the Academic Course

| 2. **General Course Coordinator** → | Select / Modify Course | Develop the quarterly plan and distribute course units | Develop quarterly and final tests and assignments for the course | Follow up the observations and proposals of branch course coordinator and program |

| 3. **Program coordinator in the branch** → | Responsible for managing the program and follow up program application according to the study plan at the branch | Provides the Deanship with feedback from faculty members |

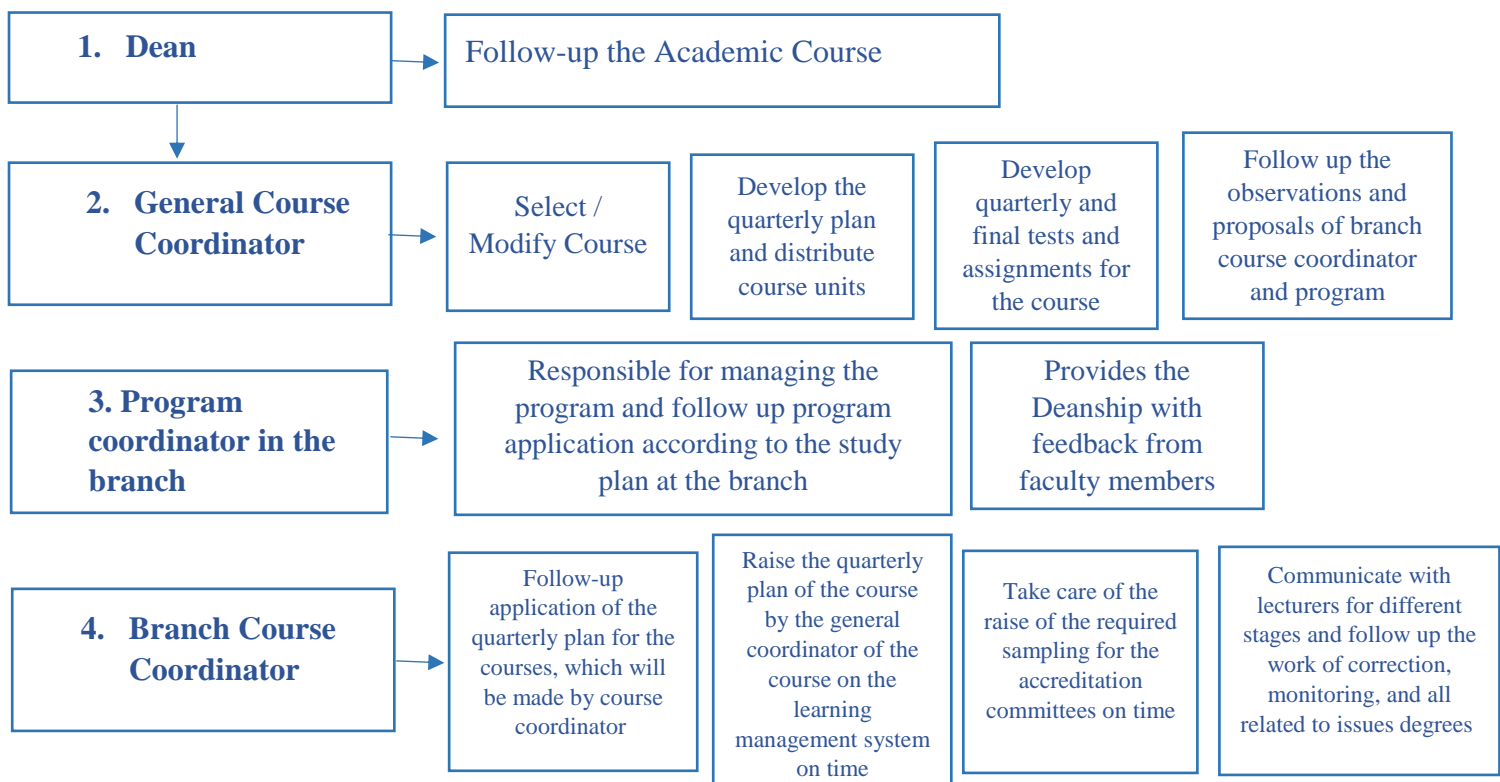| 4. **Branch Course Coordinator** → | Follow-up application of the quarterly plan for the courses, which will be made by course coordinator | Raise the quarterly plan of the course by the general coordinator of the course on the learning management system on time | Take care of the raise of the required sampling for the accreditation committees on time | Communicate with lecturers for different stages and follow up the work of correction, monitoring, and all related to issues degrees |

Diagram No. 2 Supervision and follow-up of academic courses

- **Implementation of workshops for preparation of new full-time and collaborative professors:** the workshop implemented at the beginning of each semester as required. The workshop covers important topics such as academic, administrative and technical systems, the university's integrated learning curriculum. The quality coordinators monitor its quality, and then write a comprehensive report on it to the University master.

- **Exchange of visits between professors:** University applies method of exchanging visits according to a plan prepared by dean of the college in order to develop the performance. There are special models for observing the teaching performance in the class visit, which is not less than one hour.
- **Application of fingerprint system to full-time and cooperative faculty members:** University has adopted a fingerprint system for all faculty members to ensure the regularity of the educational process.
- **Professors' surveys, similar to those of the students:** University relies on surveys that are included in the e-learning management system for teachers. The surveys are varied, such as professors' opinion about the courses, the education sources and characteristics of the students. The results are analyzed in order to analyze and improve the work.
- **Performance Evaluation:** The performance of the faculty members is evaluated annually according to a special model that achieves a high level of performance. It takes into account the basic teaching work items such as scientific production, participation in teaching, development of the educational process and participation in services of university and local community.
- **Promotion:** University has developed regulations for promotion of faculty members. The faculty member promoted according to the following criteria: researches, publishing, scientific patents, teaching and participation in supporting the educational process, serving the university and society.
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Quality of learning and teaching processes:

- **Learning and Teaching Methodology:** Arab Open University considered a non-traditional university, as it applies the mixed and differentiated education curriculum to the educational institutions in the rest of the public and private universities in the Arab world. This curriculum combines three teaching and learning principles:
  - The first principle is the "open education system," which offers university entrance opportunities with flexible admission criteria without limits or temporal and spatial constraints for all adult learners regardless of gender, nationality, high school graduation or residence and anyone who wishes to develop their skills,
  - The second principle is "self-learning", which develops in the student self-reliance, initiative and make effort.
  - The third principle is "distance learning", which reflects learning through a variety of services: the diversity of teaching methods, the variety of indirect means of communication using the Internet, postal, radio, television, computer, telephone and press media (Arab Open University, 2010).
- **Attendance rate in direct classroom meetings:** The university regulations stated that attending educational meetings for each course is obligatory and the student absence rate does not exceed (25 %) of scheduled meetings number. The student considered failure when this percentage is exceeded. The university stressed the necessity of obligating students to attend (75 %) of the direct meetings and issued an internal circular. The internal circular also emphasized the commitment of faculty member to monitor students' attendance through the learning management system. The Quality Unit also includes awareness cards for students about the importance of

attendance and the Department of Academic Affairs works to monitor students and monitor attendance rates.

- **Learning Resources:** The Arab Open University places great importance on its role in achieving the educational objectives of the programs, its investment by faculty members in the work of scientific research and the library icon in the learning management system. The databases are accessed in scientific disciplines in both Arabic and English.

Student Evaluation Quality:

- **Assignments, midterm and final exams of the courses:**
    1. The Dean selects a General Course Coordinator specialized in the same subject.
    2. The General Material Coordinator writes three models for the Tutor Marked Assignment, the Midterm exam and Final exam. Models of assignments for each course will be uniform at the level of the Arab world.
    3. These forms are sent to the Deanship to ensure their quality and the conformity of their outputs.
    4. These models are directed to External Examiners to ensure the extent to which the questions are compatible with the educational outcomes, are free from errors or repetitions and then authorized them.
    5. Questions models are returned to the academic deanships.
    6. Assignments are loaded on the learning management system.
    7. Students will load the assignments through (Turn it in) program to measure similarity and ensure that the assignment is done by the student himself to preserve the literary rights of other authors.
    8. The professor enters the Learning Management System and corrects the assignment.
    9. The teacher raises the degree of assignment with feedback to the student to show him the strengths and weaknesses in the assignments.

- **Selection of observers from outside the university**: In order to achieve the integrity of the supervision and student performance quality in the midterm and final exams, the students are supervised by external observers, according to certain qualifications in terms of qualification, experience, age, English proficiency and no relationship between the observer and any student at the university.

- **Midterm and Final Exams:**
    1. All midterm and final questions will be uniform at the level of the Arab world. The professor of the subject does not prepare the questions.
    2. At specific times, the Deanship sends questions to the Examinations Department with password to print them.
    3. Questions are printed and placed in high security envelopes that are not open.
    4. Exam questions envelopes are distributed according to the number of students and exam locations.
    5. The envelopes of questions are opened inside the examination hall and a student in the hall signs the opening of envelopes.

6. After opening the envelopes inside the examination hall, the course professor has the right to view the questions and call them to answer the students' questions, if any.

- **Correction of midterm and final exams:**
    1. The collective correction of the answer papers in the midterm and final exams is approved inside the campus according to the approved correction key sent to the professor after exam completion.
    2. Degrees are grading under the supervision of a committee composed of: Academic Coordinator, professor of the course and Quality Coordinator.
    3. Random samples are taken from the quarterly assignment and the answer papers for the midterm and final exams are sent to external examiners after the end of the exams period.
    4. External examiners shall verify the accuracy of the correction and the conformity of the performance quality to the correction quality standards.
    5. Degrees approved and determined the appropriate grades (Letter Grade).

- **Monitoring Final Exams by Quality Coordinators:** The quality coordinators, who are outside the examination committee, monitor the exams progress according to a form of observation covering four aspects as follows: First planning and organizing the exams, second services, facilities and equipment, third supervisors and administrators, and finally the examination conduct. Then the quality coordinators prepare a comprehensive report containing the strengths and Weaknesses points and methods of improvement. The comprehensive report shall be submitted to the University master for information and briefing. Then a meeting shall be held with the Examinations Committee to avoid negative points and find solutions before final exams for the next semester.

- **Set awareness cards on the learning management system to inform students about the exams:** Such as, the need to bring the university card, good study and sleep early.

- **End of Exam Report:** It is a set of closed and open questions answered by examination committees, academic departments and the quality unit, and then sent to university master at the end of the final examinations in each semester.

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Quality of management, facilities and services:

Safety and Security Plan: The quality coordinators at the University's branches monitor the security and safety of the building according to a checklist prepared by the headquarters. The form covers the following aspects: health clinic, hygiene and maintenance and inspection standards, fire prevention, health and safety and security training. A comprehensive report will then be prepared, which will be submitted to University master for information and briefing and action on matters that need to be improved.

Quality of Scientific Research and Community Service:

The research conducted at the institution level is related to achievement of goals and objectives in the institution, such as research on the problems of ongoing and new students and e-learning systems. The scientific output is monitored at the university through the annual performance evaluation model of the faculty member, as well as documentation of

data through quarterly reports, to monitor the scientific and intellectual output and activities of faculty members to serve the community every three months throughout the academic year.

(2) External Quality Assurance System at the Arab Open University:
The external quality assurance system based on four sources: accreditation from local accreditation institutions, partnership with the Open University / UK, feedback from graduates and employers, and performance monitoring unit, as follows:

➕ **Obtaining accreditation from local accreditation bodies represented by the National Center for Academic Evaluation and Accreditation:**
In terms of compliance with local quality standards, the Arab Open University is currently working closely to finalize the institutional and programmatic requirements of the National Center for Evaluation and Accreditation.

➕ **Partnership with the Open University / UK:**
Partnership with the Open University / UK is generally the result of the Arab Open University gaining accreditation from the Open University of Britain, which is the largest academic institution in the UK and Europe in terms of number of students. The Trustees Board of the Arab Open University under the leadership of Prince Talal Abdul Aziz has considered cooperation with the Open University in the United Kingdom because of the similarity of the University's vision and mission with the vision and mission of the Arab Open University since its establishment in 2003 and up to date. The Arab Open University has awarded the institutional and program Accreditation Certificate for 2003 and has been renewed in 2007, 2012 and most recently in 2017.

Cooperation is reflected in the following points:
1. Support the Arab Open University in opening new programs by providing it with study plans and describing programs and courses in accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia.
2. Participate in some academic committees formed by the Arab Open University in order to enrich academic quality, such as committees of external examiners.
3. Awarding bachelor's degrees to graduates of the Arab Open University.

- Monitoring the quality of the educational process and academic procedures through number of activities:
  - **Annual Academic Programs Report (Annual Program Evaluation)**: It is a comprehensive annual descriptive and statistical report on all aspects of the program and the number of enrolled, failed and withdrawn students and their ratios to the target number of each program and sent to the Open University / UK.
  - **External examiners Reports**: Quality is based on the objective independent verification of the quality of the courses and students evaluation. Therefore, they use external examiners to review programs, courses, and provide feedback on strengths and improvement points. They provided with samples of student papers in

assignments and exams to review and write performance reports to the Course Evaluation Committee before the approval of the grades.

- o **Submit a self-evaluation report for performance of the branch of the Open University / UK:** It is a comprehensive report prepared every five years upon renewal of accreditation from the Open University of Britain. The report consists of eleven (11) sections each section begins with a summary sheds light on the key points. The first section includes the external environment reports. The second section provides information on the internal institutional context. The third section contains some information on quality assurance management, as well as proposals and decisions taken by the Quality Assurance Committee and, finally, a list of good practices and achievements. The fourth section provides full details of learning and teaching process started from the offered programs and provide academic advice to complete the programs. The fifth section describes the life cycle of students from acceptance, complaints, and financial support. The sixth section contains information on human resources, with regard to adequacy, student-to-employees ratio, workload and research activities. The seventh section provides a brief description of facilities and equipment. The eighth section provides some information about financial performance. The ninth section explains the Arab Open University contributions to the Kingdom in serving the community through training programs. At the end of each section, there is a list of points for improvement, which will incorporate into the improvement plan. The last section describes future plans and projects for quality improvement.

- o **Submit annual performance report of the university (Annual Monitoring Report):** Write an annual analytical report to apply evaluation tools in any institution helps to raise institutional self-awareness about the importance of evaluation and its role in diagnosing strengths in the performance of each aspect of the system, in addition to identifying weaknesses and developing plans for improvement. The ongoing evaluation process puts the organization in a state of development from year to year and enhances the competitive situation in the local or international market. Therefore, the university's performance is prepared, which is a comprehensive, descriptive and analytical annual report. The report consists of eleven (11) sections each section begins with a summary sheds light on the key points. The first section includes the external environment reports. The second section provides information on the internal institutional context. The third section contains some information on quality assurance management, as well as proposals and decisions taken by the Quality Assurance Committee and, finally, a list of good practices and achievements. The fourth section provides full details of learning and teaching process started from the offered programs and provide academic advice to complete the programs. The fifth section describes the life cycle of students from acceptance, complaints, and financial support. The sixth section contains information on human resources, with regard to adequacy, student-to-employees ratio, workload and research activities. The seventh section provides a brief description of facilities and equipment. The eighth section provides some information about financial performance. The ninth section explains the Arab Open University contributions to the Kingdom in serving the community through training programs. At the end of each section, there is a list of points for improvement, which will incorporate into the

improvement plan. The last section describes future plans and projects for quality improvement.

o Periodic inspection visits by the review team at the Open University / UK during the renewal period to determine the status and academic and administrative procedures.

➕ **Performance Monitoring Unit Report:**
Performance Monitoring Unit is an independent administrative unit affiliated to Prince Talal Abdul Aziz office. It works to request periodic reports on the latest developments in the university and to monitor development and improvement of the university employees' performance at the administrative or academic level.

➕ **Feedback from Employers and Graduates:**
The fourth source of external quality assurance is graduates and employers. The Arab Open University in Saudi Arabia issued an administrative decision on 20/3/2017 regarding the establishment of a special unit for graduates to supervise the operations and procedures of graduates' affairs in strict confidence. The Unit also oversees the graduates Club, maintaining channels of communication with them and investing their expertise in helping their fellow students.

From time to time, the university is keen to apply questionnaire opinion for employers about the efficiency of graduates, to obtain feedback from employers and graduates. As well as, the university participate in the day of profession and exhibitions of higher education local and global to know the needs of the labor market of competencies in quantity and quality.

Sixth: The use of performance indicators within the strategic plans for quality control:
The Arab Open University since its establishment in 2003 in the previous strategic plans and the fourth strategic plan for 2017 -2022 has set a strategic goal for quality, which is "to ensure the overall quality of all activities of the university, especially in the academic and information technology systems". The strategic plans also included a number of quantitative and qualitative performance indicators to monitor achievements, monitor progress towards strategic objectives and the way needs to be done to improve performance, both in financial, customer service, internal and regulatory aspects. All performance indicators included in the University's Strategic Plan.

Conclusion:
We hope that this guidance manual on internal and external quality assurance systems at the Arab Open University in Saudi Arabia has achieved its objectives in introducing the concept, policies and objectives of quality assurance systems at the university and the organizational quality standards, as well as procedures for ensuring internal and external quality.

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