FACULTY OF LANGUAGE STUDIES

(FLS)

Student Handbook

January 2017
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"Enhancement, Expansion, Diversification"

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1. Welcome & Introduction

Dear FLS Student

Welcome to the Arab Open University (AOU) in Kuwait, and to the Faculty of Language Studies (FLS). We congratulate you on being admitted to both our faculty and our university. By joining FLS, you have joined a community of learners who are extremely committed to knowledge and advancement, as well as to learning in different and more effective ways.

This is our student guide. The Arab Open University (AOU), we believe, is not only the correct choice for high-quality education and training, but also the gateway to future career opportunities. This guide gives you all the information you need to understand what the AOU can do for you: details of entry requirements and general course requirements, which show how the University will help you develop your language and computing skills, and improve your independent learning skills.

It also gives you an overview of the University: its foundation, objectives, programmes, general rules and systems of learning and teaching. It introduces you to the courses, examinations, and assessment systems, and answers many frequently asked questions. It also gives all the information you need about FLS and your specialization.

Your tutors will provide you with the necessary academic advising to guide you through the academic process. We also have dedicated administrative staff here to assist you. You can link up with your tutors and the University through multiple channels, explained later in this guide.

In return, what we expect from you is commitment to the ethos of the AOU, to its academic achievements, and to its high standards.

The AOU, you should know, is a partner of The Open University, UK www.open.ac.uk. The AOU student guide and the OU's "Student's guide to studying on a programme validated by The Open University" complement each other and should be read by all AOU students and staff. Both guides are available on our website www.aou.edu.kw More information about validation by The Open University, UK, can be found at www.open.ac.uk/validate.

We wish you a very rewarding and fulfilling experience at AOU.

2. Message from the FLS Deanship

It gives the Deanship a great deal of pleasure to write this introductory message which gives you an idea about what FLS is about. It is indeed an honour and a privilege to be a member of the AOU family: a family of diligent and distinguished professors, scholars, administrators, and students who all are intent upon making a difference in their lives and in the world. "Making a difference" is both our mission and our target.

When FLS was established about 19 years ago, it was with the aim of offering an experience in language learning that is not offered in much (if not all) of our part of the world. It was not intended to be "just another faculty." Additionally, the idea of "open" education in the sphere of languages, in particular, is not only an elegant and advanced idea, but also – one would argue – a necessity. We can no longer afford to continue to teach and learn in traditional, old-fashioned ways. The world we live in, which has changed dramatically in the past two decades, offers so much potential and so many new tools and variables. We have to "open" ourselves to this potential and we have to make use of these tools; and, naturally, adapt to the variables and use them to our advantage. Undeniably, some levels of the traditional face-to-face methods of delivery are still relevant (in some ways, even necessary); but many levels are simply outdated, simply a waste of time. We have to tutor and learn in new ways.

We at FLS are committed to the basic principle of supported open learning, which is strongly-tied to the principle of education for all, which itself is part and parcel of the concept of lifelong learning and of the educational institution "coming" to where the students are rather than the students "going" to where the institution is. We implement the learning-outcome approach, enabling students to learn according to a carefully-drawn roadmap and assess what students actually learn, rather than "teach" what professors presume the students should be learning and assess what they assume the students have learned. We also champion students' self- or independent learning, rather than instruction and spoon feeding, which are so prevalent in face-to-face education in our region today. In fact, we at FLS consciously and conscientiously attempt to strike a balance between face-to-face education and on-line learning, thus privileging the blended-learning approach over any one single mode of learning. While all of the above principles and premises could be mere slogans at many other faculties, they are a concrete reality at FLS. And this is something to be truly proud of.

We take this opportunity to congratulate all of the FLS family members (including our dear students), past and present, on their much-valued contributions and successes to date. Clearly, a lot of effort has been exerted, and a lot of progress has been made. In the days ahead we intend to build our approach on three premises: enhancement, expansion and diversification. One of our immediate aims is to further develop the quality of the programs we offer, at both the graduate and postgraduate levels, making them world-class. And we have the will, the means and the capability to do so.

Another is to expand and diversify the programs and the pathways we offer (at the level of both new languages and new concentrations), enabling students to choose what is relevant to their needs and the needs of our society. These will include programs and pathways which qualify the students for the marketplace and for the changing societal needs and demands. A third is to enhance communication with students, making their involvement and feedback a priority. A fourth, which is a natural outcome of the former three, is to attract more students. We want FLS to be a hub for learning languages in the region.

Furthermore, we plan to contribute to scientific research, especially at the institutional level, in more ways than we have done so far, in the service of the learning process at FLS, of the needs of the Arab society (which we owe a lot), and of human knowledge more generally. The production and dissemination of knowledge in our sphere is our responsibility. There is a lot ahead of us in this brave new FLS, in facing a brave new world... But by capitalizing on the will and willingness of our faculty and students, and on our collective thinking and talent, we are determined to boldly go where no one has gone before, always exploring new territory and always adding to our successes.

Deanship of the Faculty of Language Studies

3. Academic Calendar

The branch registration calendar is an essential piece of information for students. It contains information about registration dates for new and continuing students, instalment periods, deadlines for add and drop period, as well as dates for the start of classes, final exam days and results announcements, etc. It is designed in accordance with the unified academic calendar of AOU, for each future term of the academic year; which includes two main semesters – fall and spring – each consisting of 16 weeks, and an additional (optional) summer semester lasting 10 weeks. Students can successfully complete their study within an average period of <u>four</u> years. According to the bylaws, students should register for at least (8) or a maximum of (21) credit hours for the main semesters, which means that the overall study period can be extended or compressed depending on the student's capabilities. That being said, students can shorten the four-year study time frame to 3.5 years when registering for the summer semesters, as well as may extend it up to 8 years maximum, in line with the university's regulations. For the optional summer semester however, students may only register for 12 credit hours. In general, the fall semester typically takes place in September and ends in January, while the Spring Semester runs from February until June. The Summer Semester, on the other hand, takes place between July and August.

In addition to the generic calendars, each course comes with a modular calendar (course syllabus) which is accessible through LMS. The calendar corresponds to the academic calendar of AOU and serves as a guide for students on what topic is to be covered in each week of study.

For more details, refer to the University website. (Copy the link below to your internet browser to access the page).

https://www.aou.edu.kw/students/Pages/academic-calendar.aspx

4. List of programme Academic Staff, their contact details and availability arrangements

FLS prides itself on having tutors who are extremely competent in methods of open and blended learning, and of the material taught in their courses. They constantly challenge their students to new horizons of thinking and knowledge. Besides their competence in their fields of specialisation and diligence, however, the tutors are also extremely supportive of students, always going out of their way to make them feel welcome and to offer prompt assistance when needed. FLS will continue to prioritise hiring not only outstanding tutors but stars in the field. The ELL modules in the ELL, are delivered by thirty-five academic staff (20 full-timers and 15 part-timers) most of whom hold Ph.D.'s from well-known international universities.

#	TUTOR	EMAILS
1	Dr. Maher Ben Moosa	binmousa@aou.edu.kw
2	Dr. Chekra Allani	callani@aou.edu.kw
3	Dr. Ismail Safiah	isafieh@aou.edu.kw
4	Dr. Yusuf Shadouh	yshudooh@aou.edu.kw
5	Dr. Banan Draiseh	banan@aou.edu.kw
6	Dr. Marine Milad	marine@aou.edu.kw
7	Dr. Hend Hamed	hezzeldin@aou.edu.kw
8	Dr. Rania Yaqoub	ryacoub@aou.edu.kw
9	Dr. Isra Al-Daraiseh	idraiseh@aou.edu.kw
10	Dr. Nour Daqaq	n.dakkak@aou.edu.kw
11	Ms. Nay Hannawi	nhannawi@aou.edu.kw
12	Mr. Abolfazl Simkesh	asimkesh@aou.edu.kw
13	Mr. Salama Affifi	safifi@aou.edu.kw
14	Mr. Shadi Al-Rabadi	srabdi@aou.edu.kw
15	Mr. Mohammad Farran	mfarran@aou.edu.kw
16	Ms. Haneen Shelbayeh	haneen@aou.edu.kw
17	Mr. Mohammad Yaseen	myaseen@aou.edu.kw
18	Ms. Fatma Fayez	ffayez@aou.edu.kw
19	Ms. Sheikha Al-Dosary	sheikha@aou.edu.kw
20	Mr. Khaldun Nur. Said	ksaid@aou.edu.kw

Our academic staff at FLS is available to you during the 25% face-to-face tutorial sessions and during office hours. Each tutor is required to maintain two weekly office hours for each taught section. Tutors can also be reached through WhatsApp Business for advising and other enquiries. The contact details are available to students on the website, social media and banners across campus.

الارشاد الاكاديمي – اللغة الانجليزية وآدابها
Academic Advising - English Department

Dr. Chekra Abd El-Hamid	24394337
Mr. Amir Simkesh	24394357
Dr. Banan Al-Daraish	24394396
Dr. Maher Binmousa	24394331
Ms. Fatma Fayez	24394333
Ms. Haneen Shelbayah	24394355
Ms. Sheikha Al-Dosary	24394397
Dr. Ismail Safeh	24394353
Mr. Khaldoun M Nur Said	24394398
Dr. Marien Milad	24394359
Dr. Hend Hamed Ezzeldin	24394331
Dr. Israa Draiseh	24394338
Mrs. Fatima Ghalib	24394340
Mr. Mohammed Farran	24394351
Mr. Mohammed Yaseen	24394253
Mr. Shadi Al-Rabadi	24394346
Mrs. Nay Hanawi	24394341
Mr. Salamah Al-Afify	24394348

يمكنكم التواصل مع الاقسام من الساعة 8 صباحا الى الساعة 3 مساء عن طريق الواتساب فقط
You may contact departments from 8 am to 3 pm using _whatsapp_ only

AOU_KW   AOU_KW   AOUKWTBRANCH   24394400

5. List of Support Staff (Technical and Administrative)

Support staff at the branches are ready to support you in your studies. Their email contact details are given in the table below:

#	NAME	EMAIL ID
1	Ms. Zainab Khalil– FLS Admin Coordinator	zkhalil@aou.edu.kw
2	Ms. Fatma Al Amer	falamer@aou.edu.kw
3	Aamir Ahmed – LMS	aahmad@aou.edu.kw
4	Basharat Riaz – AV Tech Support	briaz@aou.edu.kw
5	Asif Ali – Tech Support	aishaq@aou.edu.kw
6	Fahad Baig – Tech Support	fbaig@aou.edu.kw
7	Qasim Mubeen – Tech Support	qasim@aou.edu.kw
8	Kaleem Ahmad – Tech Support	kaleem@aou.edu.kw
9	Rahamathulla – Web Developer	rahamathulla@aou.edu.kw
10	Zain Javed – Tech Support	zain@aou.edu.kw
11	Muhammad Adnan – SIS Admin	madnan@aou.edu.kw

6. Details of External Examiners

The AOU assessment strategy is based on general principles and procedures designed to organize and monitor the examinations at AOU. Among AOU regulations are validation (pre-assessment moderation) of exam questions and answer keys by external examiners (EE), audit of tutor marking, post-assessment moderation, and a four-level examination committees.

Summary of External Examiners

NAME	TITLE	POSITION	AWARD AND MODULES	INSTITUTION
Prof. John Strachan	External Examiner **Chief External Examiner**	Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise, Dean of Graduate College and Director of the Corsham Court Campus	**BA (HONS) ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE (ELL)** A230A, A230B, EA300A and EA300B	Bath Spa University
Dr. Kelechukwu Ihemere	External Examiner	Senior Lecturer in English Language and Linguistics	**BA (HONS) ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE (ELL)** E302A, E302B, E304A and E304B	University of Westminster, London

		Director of Studies Course Leader: BA (Hons) English Language; BA (Hons) English Language and English Language Teaching	**BA (HONS) ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE (ELL)** U214A and U214B	
Ms. Sara Etchells	External Examiner			Anglia Ruskin University

7. The AOU: A Brief History

The Arab Open University is a non-profit educational institution, envisioned by HRH Prince Talal Bin Abdul-Aziz, may he rest in peace, under the initiative of the Arab Gulf Development Programme (AGFUND). The idea of establishing a non-conventional academic organization roots back to 1996, when HRH Prince Talal introduced the concept of AOU as an educational platform equitable quality education services to a large heterogeneous population of all age groups.

In 2002, AOU commenced operations in strategic partnership with the Open University (OU) in the United Kingdom. It currently encompasses nine branches in Kuwait, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Jordan, Bahrain, Oman, Sudan and Palestine, with its headquarters being located in the State of Kuwait.

8. University Mission, Vision, and Goals

Mission Statement

The Arab Open University in Kuwait is a higher education institution delivering a blended education model of learning. The University is mandated to serve local and regional communities by offering market-driven programmes of study and research at the Pan-Arab level. The University, which is student-centred, promotes education for all and seeks to disseminate knowledge through carefully chosen undergraduate programmes delivered by highly qualified academics and supported by state of the art technology.

The AOU's Vision

The AOU is realising HRH Prince Talal Bin Abel Aziz's vision of a sustainable education project by extending its services, and opening opportunities, in as many Arab countries as possible.

The AOU in Kuwait seeks to offer opportunities to those who would not otherwise have access to higher education. It is committed to offering high quality programmes which respond to the market needs of the Arab world in business, languages, and technology.

Consistent with its mission and driven by the concept of lifelong learning, the AOU offers a platform for continuing education through a combined approach in which learning is implemented through online interactive learning.

The AOU Goals

Based on the vision stated above, the AOU has adopted a set of objectives for its mission. These include:

- Offering opportunities of high quality higher education to a large and diverse population of students.

- Developing a centre of excellence for open education and blended learning.

- Providing a forum for continuing education across the region which will meet the needs of individuals and local communities.

- Providing opportunities for professional training according to market demands

- Providing special opportunities in higher education to disadvantaged groups of potential students (e.g. women and those residing in remote areas).

- Participating, as a contributing partner, in promoting research and scholarly activities in areas of special concern to Arab society.

- Promoting humanitarian and Islamic values and ethics.

9. Joining AOU

The AOU is unique in the Arab world by virtue of its partnership with The Open University (UK), where its graduates receive two degrees, one from the AOU and a validated award from the OU (UK). Furthermore:

- The learning system of the AOU is a blend of face-to-face tutoring and self-instructional textbooks designed for distance learning by OU in the UK, using the latest electronic technology to ensure that students have the best possible learning experience.

- High quality academic programmes are carefully selected and designed to meet the needs of both local and international markets.

- Only 25% student attendance is required, compared to traditional modes of higher education, which helps students who have time constraints, and other commitments such as family obligations (e.g. children), or who have disabilities.

- Courses are designed to accommodate working students and those commuting from remote areas.

- High quality interactive educational materials are employed.

- Mobility and opportunities for credit transfer across branches are possible provided the local bylaws of both countries does not contradict with AOU bylaws.

The AOU encourages its students to become independent learners whereby self-learning is emphasized throughout their studies. This enables students to become lifelong learners beyond graduation.

The language of instruction at the AOU is English, which not only improves students' proficiency in the English language, but also ensures better job opportunities after graduation**.**

9.1 Criteria for Admission

AOU, based on its belief in equal-opportunity education and the two interconnected principles of lifelong learning and education for all, tries to reach out to as many learners as possible making education available to those who may not have an opportunity otherwise. AOU's criteria for admission are among the most liberal in our region. The only requirement it has, for a student to apply and compete for a seat, is a high school certificate (or equivalent), a fundamental condition by the accrediting governmental agency in Kuwait. Beyond this, admission – pending the availability of seats on the basis of high-school grades – is open to people of all ages, gender, religious orientation, ethnic origins, etc.

To be admitted in any BA programme the student should fulfil the following conditions:
- Obtain a general secondary school certificate or equivalent.
- Fulfil any other conditions determined by the University or competent authorities of the Branch country.

The following e-brochure will provide you with more information on our admission criteria:
https://www.aou.edu.kw/about/Lists/Brochures/Attachments/1/Admission.pdf

9.2 Language Placement Test

AOU administers Language Placement Tests in English, not as admission requirements but as indicators to help place students at the appropriate level of language development. Based on the test scores, students will be assigned courses, which aim to develop the students' proficiency in English in order to undertake the full course load in their respective areas of specialization.

10. FLS in Brief

10.1 History

The Faculty of Language Studies (FLS) was established in 2002, at the very start of AOU. At present, it offers a BA (Hons) in English Language and Literature, with plans to expand in the near future. The programme is based on the Open University courses in the UK and uses textbooks and approaches of the highest international standards. There is a growing demand for this programme because it is relevant for both intellectual and knowledge growth as well as career needs. Additionally, students who opt for an ELL degree at AOU benefit from the fact that it is the only private university in Kuwait that offers English Literature, thus preparing them for teaching careers. Currently, there are market and feasibility studies being conducted to study the needs of the English language market.

10.2 Rationale, Philosophy

Why Study English

Programmes of English Language and Literature in our region date back to the late 1920s and early 1930s, when they were first introduced in Iraq and Egypt under the British "mandate." Since then, they have acquired a lot of popularity, attracting some of the best students throughout the Arab World. In addition to the prestige associated with these programmes (with some describing them, in terms of popularity, as the "medicine" of the humanities), they often guaranteed their graduates almost instant and excellent employment opportunities. The graduates of these programmes are normally proficient in language and communication skills, which are necessary in the workplace.

In addition, students who enrol in an ELL programme usually find the programme a horizon opener: in many ways it is the students' window to the world. Besides the language and communication skills, the programme has always provided students enrolled in it with other important skills: critical and intellectual skills – skills which further empower the graduates in both the workplace and society at large. When AOU started deliberating in 2000 the establishment of the ELL programme, it had that background and rationale in mind.

At present, the graduates of such a programme have even more opportunities in the marketplace and in society than before. This is due to the mounting importance and scope, for example, of the media and press sector, with the expansion of businesses that hire students with excellent language and other skills, with the increasing importance of NGOs, and with the spread of private schools that offer better pay, etc. The ELL programme is particularly successful because it combines the language, linguistic, and literary elements which aid students in learning English effectively and developing the necessary critical and analytical skills.

The BA (Hons) English Language & Literature aims to endow students joining it with the basic translation skills that enable them to benefit from beginner-level translation job opportunities available in the market. Students with high GPAs can also pursue postgraduate studies in the translation field to become more professional and competent translators. In addition to all of this, the ELL programme derives its importance at AOU from the obvious link to one of AOU's strategic objectives (among others, of course): "Instil in its students the spirit of upholding Arab-Islamic social and ethical values and an appreciation of other human cultures and heritages." As can be seen from such an objective, "an appreciation of other human cultures and heritages" is a fundamental premise at AOU. The willingness and desire to engage with foreign languages, cultures, and sciences is deeply rooted in the Arab-Islamic civilization. Today, as we embark on a globalized, multicultural world, knowledge of global cultures becomes a necessity. This very principle was underscored in the *Strategy for the Development of Arab Education* -- the monumental work prepared by Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization [ALECSO] published in 1979 – which proclaimed:

The Arab nation cannot afford to be isolated from the international community and from contemporary culture. Contrary to this, it has made throughout its history contacts with other peoples and cultures and should continue to do so in order to know the world at large and to assimilate the scientific and technological revolution… and take an active role in attaining international peace that is based on justice, right and equality.

It should be stressed in this context that we live in a diverse, multicultural world where, in addition to the many similarities we share as human beings, there are differences among cultures. These differences should be respected and appreciated, as much as we respect and appreciate our own.

AOU underlines the importance of a degree in English, also, because:

A) English is the global lingua franca, and thus a reasonable mastery of English is an essential requirement for productive international communication and cooperation. Today, there are more than 450 million users of English as a native- or first-language and as many as 350 million users of English as a second language in countries as different as India or Nigeria. It has been estimated that about 80% of the various uses of English do not involve native-speakers at all, but involve two or more non-native speakers using the language as their lingua franca. It is furthermore predicted that, given current population trends, there will be 50% more speakers of English as a foreign language than native-speakers within a decade, making English even more vital to international communication than it is today.

B) English is the language of science, technology, business, economy, aviation, industry, and tourism, as well as the language of great literatures, and thus a necessary tool for the economic, social, cultural and technological development of each and every Arab country.

C) Specialists in English Language and Literature are generally prepared to advocate Arab and Islamic culture, modes of thinking, and ideals to the global community by employing the rhetoric appropriate to different nations in different parts of the world. Who is more equipped to contribute to this tremendous task and this type of dialogue than someone well-versed in the world's "lingua franca"?

10.3 FLS Goals & Core Values

Goals

1. Offer quality learning packages across the linguistic, literary and cultural domains of the target world languages which FLS is espousing.

2. Provide opportunities for relevant and effective growth to all individuals – irrespective of age and background – seeking to improve and master the various language, communication, literary, cultural and analytical skills.

3. Diversify and update the offered programme, enabling students to concentrate on and choose from not only areas within the target language itself but also the related fields, such as translation, mass-communication, tourism, journalistic writing, etc.

4. Conduct original research across the major disciplines offered within FLS in line with the best international standards, with the aim of improving learning in the FLS programmes on the one hand and advancing knowledge on the other.

5. Attract the most committed and qualified tutors, those who are competent in the various methods of blended learning and who act as active facilitators to student-centred learning.

6. Build solid, two-way bridges with a host of institutions concerned with language, literature, and culture within the communities in which the FLS branches function.

7. Enhance regional and international collaboration with faculties of similar vision, mission and goals.

Core Values

1. Respecting diversity in admitting students and in hiring tutors.
2. Encouraging innovation and excellence.
3. Prioritising independent learning, especially at the on-line level.
4. Highlighting the contribution of the Arab-Islamic nation in language, linguistics, literature and culture.

5. Understanding and appreciating global contributions within the spheres espoused by FLS.

6. Empowering students through confidence-building measures and tools, and enabling them to progress.

7. Continually revising study plans and assessment methods for the improvement of learning.

8. Actively seeking out compatible and outstanding regional and international partners.

9. Promoting cross-cultural understanding and respect.

10.4 Continuous growth and development

FLS is still growing and developing with the aim of both matching developments in our fast-changing world, and catering to the diverse and ever-expanding needs of learners, wherever they are and no matter what their level in English is. A host of new programmes and activities are in the making, and they will be announced in due time. Among these will be the introduction of foreign languages, other than English – such as French, Spanish, and Chinese – both as joint specialisations with English and as elective courses for all desirous students.

10.5 Students Ready to Take the Challenge

FLS, like AOU at large, attracts students with great aspirations who value independent, open education. There is no doubt that face-to-face learning has its own value. But it also has its limitations. Too much of it tends to make students too reliant on tutors, which results in spoon-feeding, and dependence on personal contact. This is why FLS champions on-line, independent learning which not only weans students from tutors, but builds on students' own motivation to learn. Self-learning is the most effective form of learning because, among other things, it capitalises on students wanting to learn. But FLS, like AOU again, offers both face-to-face (25%) and self-learning (75%) – what we affectionately refer to as blended learning. Many of our students are mature students, who at once pursue a career and seek continuous growth.

10.6 Partnership with the Open University in UK

The AOU is approved by The Open University in the UK as an appropriate organization to offer higher education programmes leading to Open-University validated awards. OU-validated awards have parity of esteem with similar awards offered throughout the UK higher education. A validated award is exactly the same as an OU direct award in terms of employment or application for postgraduate study. Under this partnership, the OU provides the following to the AOU:

- Programmes and courses.
- Learning materials (textbooks, CDs, DVDs, etc.).
- Programme monitoring, external examining.

- Dual awards (BA/BSC), exit awards (diplomas and certificates) together with the AOU.

10.7 Institutional Accreditation on a Local Level

In addition to the OU recognition of programmes, the AOU in Kuwait is also licensed from the Private Universities Council, a local accrediting body in Kuwait. This means that the threshold to standards for qualifications are mapped to the national qualifications framework of Kuwait, as well as to QAA benchmarks of UK; therefore, ensuring fair, reliable and timely information is disseminated to students. The maximum accreditation period for any university set by the PUC is five years. All private universities, including AOU in Kuwait, must work within the guidelines and stipulations of the ministry and follow local regulations. It is noteworthy that the university has undergone reaccreditation of its programmes in 2019, with a grant of five years ending in 2023. This therefore, is a proof that the branch adheres to the higher education quality standards, thus reflecting the university's high standing in the local educational market.

10.8 Sustainable International Partnerships

The AOU is proud of the fact that it is strongly affiliated with the OU-UK which validate, accredit and assess offered education. And this is a major source of the university's strength. But FLS also seeks more collaborations with other academic institutions in terms of research, sharing good practices and others. In a world which has become visibly multicultural and global, global partnerships are a must – sharing experience and cooperating on several specific initiatives, projects and programmes. These international links will get a boost when we start introducing other foreign languages in the near future, either as joint degrees with English or elective courses which all AOU students could elect to study.

10.9 English Language Unit (ELU)

In addition to the specialisation programme, FLS houses the English Language Unit which is primarily responsible for both the English Orientation & Foundation programmes. These two programmes, which the students normally take in their first-year, are tailored for students who enrol at the university, with the dual aim of working on their problem areas in English and on enhancing their English communication skills, to enable them to pursue their studies at AOU successfully and to prepare them for the workplace later.

10.10 Attendance at Tutorials

With due regard to local accreditation conditions required from the university branch:

1. The minimum face-to-face classroom meeting hours allocated for tutorials in each course during a single semester shall be 4 classroom hours against each credit hour allotted to the course. In other words, 1 credit hour = 4 classroom hours.

2. Face-to-face tutorial classroom hours may increase in the case of certain courses having a special nature. This is determined by a competent Deanship or the branch with a view to fulfil local accreditation requirements, for instance.

3. Attending the face-to-face tutorial sessions of the registered course is mandatory by students. Absence from such tutorials may not exceed 25% of the prescribed tutorials as stated in the approved University calendar. A student whose absence exceeds this percentage fails the course.

10.11 Teaching and Learning system

The AOU learning and teaching model is based on high quality educational materials. The Open University-based courses offered at the AOU are taught in English and are licensed from the OU-UK. The following is a brief description of the model:

- Students receive 25% face-to-face meetings, supplemented by a distance learning system that includes virtual classrooms, electronic materials, and assignments.

- Learning is facilitated through a university-wide electronic Learning Management System (LMS).

- The branch is equipped with multimedia and computing laboratories to support students.

- Student assessment is carried out through two main components:

    i.   Continuous assessment, i.e. Mid-Term Assessments (MTA) and Tutor Marked Assignments – (TMAs), and

    ii. Formal end-of-semester examinations

    Each of the two components comprises 50% of the overall assessment score.

- Tutors provide comprehensive feedback on students' TMAs to direct them towards better understanding of the subject matter, and to enhance their learning experience.

10.12 Learning during the challenging coronavirus

The unprecedented coronavirus has disrupted the operational activities of many organizations worldwide, including the educational sector. The implications on AOU were however, less drastic. The reason for this is that it already functions on the concept of blended learning which made transferring to online studies easy and smooth. Classes were conducted online using virtual classes, and students were provided with recorded lectures (on MS Teams and website) and supporting electronic materials on LMS. This created the urge to use an effective, real time, video conferencing platform to support distance learning and teaching. The branch started with 'BigBlueButton' web conferencing system, and then shifted to MS Teams. These virtual meetings allow for live engagement and collaboration between tutors and their pupils through interactive tools. It also supports virtual office hours, sharing of slides, audio and video, etc., making distance learning experience more fun. Moreover, after finishing a live stream, the tutorials are saved on LMS for future use. To acquaint faculty staff members with the new software and its interactive tools, training workshops were arranged for the faculty every semester.

10.13 Opportunities available to students on completion of the programme

While the English Language and Literature programme is essentially made up of courses within the traditional, interrelated realms of language, literature and linguistics, it does venture also into the spheres of discourse analysis, pragmatics and culture. Clearly, a BA programme in English Language and Literature enables the graduates of the programme to be competent in the fields of linguistics and English Literature, two fields essential to any intellectual, well-rounded person's education and to any society's needs – stressing here that English literature has actually expanded over the years to include all literatures written in (or even translated into) English. Such crucial development comes with the aim of catering to students' global education and outlook – a must in today's world. But a degree in language and literature also qualifies students for the workplace. Graduates of literature and linguistics develop a command of the language that transcends their specific fields of study to include the language of journalism, media, the marketplace, politics, etc. After all, a programme in English Language and Literature graduates students in possession of excellent language communication skills, both oral and written. Recently, we have been working on developing the programme, giving students a more solid background in language and offering them more options. Toward the former end, we have just introduced a new course in Oral and Presentation Skills; toward the latter, we have introduced a new course on Children's Literature. Needless to say, during 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 all of our courses were replaced with new courses.

10.14 Opportunities and Support for Study Abroad

FLS plans, in the days ahead, to make available opportunities for exchange – short-term, study-abroad opportunities – for students who are willing. In addition to the exchange at the level of branches within the AOU, FLS plans to identify international partners who will be willing to host our students for a term or two. This has not happened yet, but it is already put in the FLS new five-year Strategic Plan as a future objective. This is part of FLS's internationalization drive.

11. Programme Specification

Students seeking a BSc Honours degree in English Language and Literature (ELL) at AOU must complete at least 129 credit hours that is divided into 21 university requirements, 96 specialization requirements (core modules) and 12 faculty requirements.

For programme specific details, please refer to the programme specification that is available on the website at:

https://www.aou.edu.kw/faculties/language/Documents/Programme%20Specification%20-%20FLS.pdf

12. Module Specification

AOU academic programmes are made up of modules (formerly called courses) made up of a variety of academic materials. Each module within a programme is designed to deliver content that achieves the desired learning outcomes and objectives consistent with the vision and mission of AOU.

You can browse the course catalogue for all modules offered in the study plan at:
https://www.aou.edu.kw/faculties/language/Pages/course-catalogue.aspx

13. Student support, guidance and advise

Students at AOU, including FLS students, are offered various methods of student support. These support services take academic and non-academic settings, as outlined below:

13.1 Academic support

13.1.1 Textbooks

The provision of study materials that include guides and audio-visual aids to support learning. It is important to note that most of ELL materials for specialization courses are OU-based.

13.1.2 University website

Access to the university website at www.aou.edu.kw, which embodies a lot of guidance and support materials such as: updated Course Guides (programme specification), Study Calendars, Brochures, recorded lectures (for some courses), as well as additional notes and information on courses.

13.1.3 Orientation arrangements

General and specialized orientation sessions organized at the beginning of each semester to introduce new students to the learning system, study programme and the support systems (LMS, SIS and e-library). The different arrangements include:

a) Student orientation day

Student orientation is a formal welcome event instituted for incoming new students to make them familiar with the campus services. It usually takes place in the first week of the academic semester to educate students about the important aspects of the University. The FLS faculty at the University makes sure to provide the necessary induction for its students. They advise and guide students on how to study effectively in the programme in specific and at AOU in general. The induction process involves briefings by the representatives of all branch departments The students are briefed on the registration policies for various courses, academic expectations, blended learning system, student environment and facilities. They are also provided with short LMS and SIS presentations to guide them on the core systems of the blended learning paradigm. Moreover, it is a great opportunity for freshmen students to discover the different clubs available at the university, thus giving them the opportunity to join the club/s in which they are interested.

Nevertheless, the induction process is a continuous process; therefore, FLS faculty at the branch level ensure that students understand the blended learning concepts applied in the programme; as well it assures that each student has an academic advisor at the programme level.

Developing awareness and necessary skills to undergo academic study through blended learning at AOU is carried out through these means:

1. Induction materials such as AOU Student Prospectus (available on the website) and program leaflets
2. Personal delivery of information through contacts with Admission and Registration and support staff during admission periods, either face to- face or through WhatsApp business.
3. Induction program presentations (LMS and SIS).
4. Providing information about AOU during foundation courses such as the credit course GR118, Life Skills, which addresses the requirements and skills of studying through open learning in general and AOU in particular.

Due to the **coronavirus situation**, however, the new student orientation took the form of a live orientation on December 3rd, 2020, to introduce new students to the online learning platform and give them space to ask questions. Kindly find the referenced link below:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXgtSiwGnGI

To further assist students, the registration department organized an open discussion meeting for all students to answer questions related to admission and the electronic services. The event took place on December 15, 2020, as demonstrated in the link below:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afNRuxRHYDY

b) Programme specific orientation

This form of orientation takes place during the first two weeks of the semester (post-generic induction), for each faculty respectively. It is more condensed than the generic orientation, thus giving tutors more scope to provide valuable information and useful tips on the programme, learning approach, assessment, study plans and modules; in addition to addressing answer student enquires. Since it takes place in the auditorium, tutors can assist their presentation with slide shows to enrich the session. Moreover, the event schedule includes LMS and SIS sessions in collaboration with the IT technicians.

Additionally, students can receive programme specific induction through office visits during the semester, providing them with more space to clarify concerns.

c) Technical orientation

(i) LMS/SIS workshops: As an extra and mandatory benefit, new students are also provided with **LMS** and **SIS** workshops at the beginning of each semester, which includes detailed demonstration of how to use both systems for registering courses, accessing e-files and exams, etc. In response to the coronavirus pandemic, however, the workshops were conducted virtually at the beginning of the spring semester 2020/2021, and consisted of two sessions. New students were informed by e-mail about the dates for both workshops. Students have also been sent instructions on how to use their designated email IDs to access MS Teams, where the workshop took place in February 2021. All of the workshops were video recorded to make them accessible to students who missed the orientation sessions, thus giving them the chance to acquaint the practical skills needed for using these core-learning systems, as well as to use it for the future semesters (see the links below):

LMS:
[LMS 1.mp4](LMS 1.mp4)

Email:
البريد.mp4

SIS:
7-خطوات التسجيل.pdf (registration steps)
كشف درجات.mp4 (how to request a transcript)
لمن يهمه الأمر.mp4 (how to request to whom it may concern letters)
صورة طبق الأصل للجدول الدراسي.mp4 (how to request a copy of the course schedule)

Other services such as how to drop a course, transfer between programmes, request an equivalency and withdraw from the University are accessible via the main SIS page (before logging in). The link is referenced below for easy access to the page:

https://sis.aou.edu.kw/onlineservices/

E-library workshop: In addition to the generalized information on the e-library features during the generic orientation, a training workshop on how to use the e-library and cite resources is organized for new students during the first two weeks of study.

Additionally, students can receive support throughout the semester from the lab assistants who are available from 8 am until 9 pm during the six-study days (Saturday-Thursday).

13.1.4 Tutorial meetings

A two-hour weekly (and bi-weekly) tutorials where students meet their tutors to cover the learning outcomes in a modern setting. A 25% class attendance is required as part of the University's policy to adopt a system of blended learning.

13.1.5 Personal tutoring (office hours)

A one-to-one support through office meetings where tutors maintain scheduled weekly office hours, which are intended to provide a more informal environment for academic support. Students are always given an opportunity to discuss, ask and answer questions during the office hours. Both full and part-time tutors are requested to hold two weekly office hours for each taught section.

13.1.6 LMS support

The LMS is the core system that connects students to tutors. It completes the distance learning aspect (75%) of the educational style at AOU. Through LMS, students can access the course learning resources (including e-books) and supplementary materials such as quizzes, presentations, videos and recorded lectures, anytime and anywhere. It functions as a hub, housing forums, discussion rooms, interactive study materials, and all student orientated bylaws and other related announcements. It also acts as a bridge to the distinctive e-library resources for both students and tutors. In addition, students receive (and submit) their TMA assignments and tutor feedback on LMS. Thus, in addition to face-to-face contact there is distance support for those students who cannot regularly meet their tutors in their office hours due to employment or domestic responsibilities. The privacy of this channel allows students to discuss with their tutors some matters that they may be uncomfortable discussing publicly in the classroom.

13.1.7 Student Information System (SIS)

Through this system, students can register for courses, add/drop modules, change sections, view schedules and grades, etc.

13.1.8 Academic advising

FLS, like other AOU faculties, provides students with very good academic advising services. Each incoming student is assigned an adviser who offers the student advising at two levels. The first is logistical help, in terms of which modules to choose, how to go about registering for them, how many hours to register, what to do if a course is not offered or if the student's study load is big, etc. This level of advising is done intensely and effectively prior to and throughout the module registration process. The other level of advising is academic advising.

The academic advisor provides the necessary advice if students are facing difficulties coping with the material, if their grades begin to fall below a certain average, if they find the assignments overwhelming, etc. FLS is trying to give the second level more attention by having advisers take the initiative to meet with students more often (rather than wait until the students come to them), to discuss with them how to deal with problems and to monitor students' progress on the basis of the advising they give.

More importantly, advisers are expected to offer advice on how to maximize the learning, how to enhance performance, how to conduct assignments properly, how to guard against plagiarism, how to enable excelling students (not just those who struggle) to progress and excel further, etc. Advising is an ongoing process throughout the academic year to ensure maximum benefit to all students.

Student can reach advisors either in person, through LMS, or by email (advising.eng@aou.edu.kw). In addition to that, a new approach to advising has recently been embraced by the University following the coronavirus outbreak through the use of WhatsApp Business service. Through this quick channel, students can easily connect with their tutors for advising and other enquiries, as below:

A detailed advising plan is also available for students on the website, and can be found by clicking on the following link:

https://www.aou.edu.kw/admission/PublishingImages/Lists/UndergraduatePrograms/AllItems/ITC%20Study%20Plan-Updated.pdf

It is also worth noting that during the lockdown due to coronavirus, students were offered virtual office hours (via the video conferencing platform) to supplement the virtual classes.

13.1.9 IT support

As part of their role as technical support, the IT technicians are dedicated to organizing workshops periodically (beginning of each semester) to provide the necessary training for faculty and students on the university's core systems (LMS&SIS). To ensure speedy response, the technicians are easily approached through email (lms1@aou.edu.kw) and direct interaction on campus. In addition, two labs have also been allocated solely for meeting technical demands such as how to upload TMA, view schedule, pay fees, etc.

For the list of IT support staff and their email IDs, please refer to [section (5)](#).

13.1.10 Guide to Virtual Learning Environment (electronic guides)

The University offers students a blend of electronic guides to support and enhance their learning experience at AOU. It relies on the website, social media and LMS as a hub for posting announcements and manuals, related bylaws and other services it provides. Learning is supported by recorded lectures, interactive exercises, e-library and e-books (for most of the courses). To further assist students during the recent coronavirus outbreak, the University had conducted virtual orientations and technical workshops (see orientation section), as well as designed a step-by-step electronic guides for new and continuing students on how to register courses through SIS (see below). Students were also assigned accounts on MS Teams for accessing the virtual classes, in addition to having weekly virtual office hours. Moreover, new students receive an email with a username, a password and a video demo on how to use the LMS once it has been activated. Further, students interested in learning more about the university and its services can browse the short demos available on SIS and LMS, as well as the **brochures** and leaflets available on campus and online (website). On the website are also important guides such as the recorded lectures, student prospectus, and advising plan, etc.

The related links include:

- Brochures:
  https://www.aou.edu.kw/about/Pages/brochures.aspx
- AOU student prospectus:
  https://www.arabou.edu.kw/university/Documents/Regulations/student/en/Student%20Prospectus%202020-2021.pdf
- OU guide:
- https://www.arabou.edu.kw/partnerships/ou/Documents/OU-Students-Guide-2020-2021.pdf

Step-by-step guides (for new students it is sent by email whereas for continuing students it is available on the website and SIS. *Please copy the below link to your internet browser:*

file:///C:/Users/satieh/Downloads/%D8%AE%D8%B7%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AA%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B3%D8%AC%D9%8A%D9%84-7%20(6).pdf

4.3 Registration
process for continui

LMS video demo

https://arabou-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/g/personal/support_tsm_aou_edu_kw/EZsYsiWv9ORDv2lqVo7pfL0BP6E_tS3sGsQ7hodhopPF5w?e=7Z8N42

13.1.11 E-services

The newly implemented measures since COVID-19 outbreak included:

1. Submission of admission related documents for new students is now online.

2. Students can apply online to obtain signed copies of all types of certificates and statements such as degree certificates – local and OU, mural certificates, 'To Whom it may concern certificates', grade transcripts, academic schedules and course description statements, etc., through SIS. The letters will be delivered to the student residence accordingly within two weeks.

3. Payment of graduation related fees. Student guidance to the steps for completing graduation related transactions is accessible via the website at http://www.aou.edu.kw/students/Pages/Graduate-Students-Transaction.aspx.

4. Requesting instalment fee.

5. Submitting temporary suspension and withdrawal requests.

6. Submitting requests for equivalencies.

7. Switching between tracks (for Business Studies Faculty) and/or changing the major (specialization). This process begins with students submitting a request for transfer on SIS, which should be approved by the academic advisor in order to process the request by the Admission and Registration Department.

13.1.12 Student communication channels

In order to facilitate rapid communication between students and tutor/key departments, each registered student has been assigned an email account that is owned by the university. Students can access their emails through Office 365, the university website – which offers a link to outlook – or through their smart phones. In addition to tutor/department interaction, the email is also used to access MS Teams for attending virtual classes. In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, however, a new channel 'WhatsApp Business service' has been launched to provide students with a uniform and efficient communication channel. The contact numbers for faculty members can be found in this handbook, the social media and banners at the FLS Department. Additionally, the branch uses SMS texting for communicating important announcements in a timely manner.

13.1.13 Support for students with special needs

As part of its policy of equal opportunity education, AOU ensures that all students are fairly treated and that they are provided with adequate support to guide their academic life at the university. Therefore, students with special needs are given due attention to help them fulfil the intended learning outcomes of their study in a friendly educational and social environment. Among the services provided by the branch is a psychological counselling office within the unit of Student Affairs that aims to help all students, especially students with certain medical conditions, to achieve social and psychological adaptation. A section has been recently added to the application form for students to address any medical condition/s they have. If there are any health issues, supporting documents are provided accordingly. This helps keep a record of all students with health or mental challenges.

Special needs students such as dyslexia, poor eye sight and temporary conditions (including pregnancy) are also given priority in classes and examination. If they wish to have certain arrangements during examinations such as extension of time, comfortable chair/table, larger font, etc., they should inform the Student Affairs Department at least one week before commencement of the exam. The Student Affairs will then, in consultation with the counselling office, inform the Examination Department of the necessary arrangements to be made. The branch also makes available assistants to help disabled students during examinations. Examples include:

- In case some students with special needs cannot write because of a physical disability, a person is assigned by the university to assist such students in their exams and under the supervision of the Examination Department.
- A special hall is allocated for students with health problems under the supervision of the Examinations Department.

In addition to the above, students with certain disabilities are included in sort of activities (cultural, social, art and sport activities). Each semester, the Student Affairs Department organizes an honouring ceremony to honour the distinctive students. Additionally, students with special needs who feel that certain circumstances have impacted negatively on their performance when completing their assignments should submit proof of this to their tutor who will discuss the matter with the appropriate authority. All services provided to our students are confidential and are not disclosed to a third party without the student's written consent

Apart from the academic provisions, physically challenged students are also provided with logistical support through ramps and elevators. There are also special parking spots allocated for them.

13.1.14 Complaint and Appeals systems

Online access to complaints and appeals services through the Student Information System (SIS). The **appeal system** is designed to tackle students' appeals against final course grades and disciplinary decisions. Students can appeal a final grade within one-week post grade announcements, according to the timeline set by the Examination department. The **complaint system**, on the other hand, formalizes any concern related to academic or non-academic aspects. It is always accessible to students and involves a direct channel of communication between students and the related departments. The process is monitored by the Quality Assurance Unit to ensure that each question/issue raised by students is answered.
The systems are accessible at https://sis.aou.edu.kw/onlineservices/Index.aspx.

13.1.15 Reading List

As a good practice, a suggested reading list – books or articles – is assigned by the concerned tutor for their students on LMS, as a method for encouraging them and helping them improve their English language skills.

13.1.16 Library Support

The campus is staffed with skilled support librarians to provide students with the necessary assistance/instruction for using the library resources. A brief on the physical and electronic libraries is provided below:

a) **Learning Resource Centre – Physical library:** The physical library at the branch is a storehouse of valuable academic resources that contributes to the overall enhancement of the teaching and learning systems. It offers a quiet and attractive area for studying, reading and researching practices, through its new modernized landscape as in the academic year 2017/2018.

There are two libraries on campus – one for females and one for male students – that accommodates over 8500 books and 100 journals from different disciplines: commerce, literature and general studies. The library is open to students, staff and academicians during the normal study days from 8 am - 8pm, and on Saturdays from 9 am to 3 pm. The library also extends its services off campus through an efficient borrowing system.

The new library enhancements include the following (total area):

i. New lightening and carpeting;
ii. A five-shelf unit to hold a larger number of books;
iii. New tables and chairs (about 112 seats) to provide more seating to faculty and students;
iv. Lounge seating to allow for social interactions;
v. **Twelve** desktop computers located throughout the library for student use;
vi. More study carrels to accommodate more students;
vii. **Eighteen** independent pallets for those who need a quiet area to concentrate **(**with two electrical sockets installed in each);
viii. Collaborative ample writing spaces to allow for collaborative work;
ix. Two 65-inch LCD screens mounted on a portable stand for workshops;
x. New service desk, and
xi. RFID security system

b) **E-library:** Both AOU students and staff are given access to e-library resources, which can be easily accessed through a special e-library portal via their LMS accounts, so they can do so from anywhere at any time. They are encouraged to use the e-library as extensively as possible, so as to effectively interface with AOU's blended learning model. FLS enforces the use of the e-library by requiring business students to provide good referencing in all its TMAs. Also, the University, in cooperation with KFAS, has set up two labs (female and male each) dedicated solely for e-library navigation. Technical support is provided through lab assistants devoted to helping students/tutors access and search through the different databases.

13.1.17 English Writing Centre

The FLS operates an English Writing Centre that offers intensive writing support to students. Both FLS and ELU tutors volunteer one hour per day according to a prescribed schedule. Students are given insight into grammar and vocabulary in order to be able to produce effective, high quality academic writings; thus helping them score better at their exams. However, since the pandemic, the centre has been operating virtually, providing support to students from a distance. Students can easily access these sessions through the LMS.

A link will take them to the Digital Writing Centre course page where they can access the conference link hosted in the Centralized Course Content. There, they will also find a timetable specifying when each tutor is available and what the focus area is.

13.1.18 English Speaking Centre

Following the success of the writing centre, a parallel speaking centre has been established as a result, which focuses on enhancing students' English speaking skills. It aims at creating stimulating speaking topics and activities that motivate students to talk, listen to English exchanges and present oral summaries of stories, etc. As with the writing centre, it is currently being conducted virtually due to the pandemic. It is run by both FLS and ELU tutors according to a prescribed schedule.

14. Non-academic Support

14.1 Support/Teaching/Management Staff

Access to support, teaching and management staff through email, social media, WhatsApp Business and in person.

For students enquires about registration, financial, technical, or other issues during or outside of registration, please contact the following email addresses:

- **Registration Office:** admission@aou.edu.kw
- **Technical Unit:** lms1@aou.edu.kw
- **Graduates Office:** Graduates@aou.edu.kw
- **Student Affairs:** malaska@aou.edu.kw
- **Financial Affairs:** finance@aou.edu.kw
- **Public Relations:** info@aou.edu.kw

Academic staff email IDs have been provided earlier in this report. Tutors may also be contacted through MS Teams, whereby each student has been assigned an MS Teams email account as of the academic year 2020/2021. To connect via Teams, you must change the domain name of the tutor's email ID (i.e. abc@tsm.aou.edu.kw). As for the technical and programme admin coordinator support staff, their email ID's were also included earlier in the report.

Additionally, the WhatsApp numbers and other related announcements are regularly published on the social media platforms (the related accounts are provided in the following section).

14.2 Social media support

The university has an active social media presence to address students concerns and provide them with relevant guidance. Students can learn more about the University and its services by following the designated social media accounts (see below), which is supervised by the Public Relations Department. The PR works closely with other departments, in order to collect relevant responses to students' questions. The related social media accounts are listed below:

Instagram: aou_kw
Twitter: @AOU_kwt
Facebook: @aoukwtbranch
YouTube: aou_kwt

On its part, the FLS has established an Instagram account **"englishataou"** for supporting its students whereby it engages FLS faculty, staff and students in an informal setting. It is used to share departments' activities, collective and individual, as well as students' achievements (current and/or alumni). The social media committee consists of four members.

In addition to the above, temporary campaigns were also launched to support and encourage students during the coronavirus period. Examples included:

i. **#stay at home for Kuwait campaign:** This campaign aimed at encouraging students to stay at home through awareness videos created by AOU-KW instructors and volunteer students including students from the sports team at the branch.

ii. **'We are all online' campaign:** This campaign was designed to encourage students morally by highlighting how online education allows them to meet study demands efficiently and effectively during the exceptional coronavirus outbreak. A number of students tagged videos in response to this campaign to motivate each other. There was also an active participation from representatives of students' clubs at the branch.

14.3 Club support

Students' different talents are embraced through special clubs supervised by the Students Affairs department and faculty members. These clubs are supported materially and intangibly by the university. Examples of clubs run by under the FLS include the English Language Club (ELC), Arabic Heritage Club and the Toastmasters, etc. It should be noted that the club membership is open to students from all faculties, and FLS students can also join any club established by other faculties. To increase awareness among new students, the club representative take part in the new student orientation held at the beginning of the semester to expose students to the club activities and collect memberships. Each club has a special page on the social media for related announcements.

14.4 Financial Advice and Support

Financial support is routed through the Student Affairs department who provides financial aid to needy students who meet special conditions. Announcements are published on the Branch University Website clarifying the procedures and deadlines for accepting applications, which are evaluated by the University's administration. Grants are normally paid before the end of the semester to qualified applicants. Financial assistance takes the form of instalments and/or grants through a special fund called "AOU student fund" for the purpose of financially supporting the students in need as well as honouring the distinguished students. Another option is also available which involves referring financially challenged students – or accepting applications – to charities to help them complete their undergraduate degree.

14.5 Training and Continuous Education Unit

The branch houses a special Training Centre and Continuous Education Unit dedicated for delivering professional training courses such as ICDL, CISCO, Photoshop, Advanced Excel, English teacher training program, and many more. Students are made aware of the offered training courses through special announcements on LMS, website and the display screens located at the main entrances. During this exceptional period, CEU is still commencing courses virtually at a reduced fee (through MS TEAMS) to ensure maximum benefit.

14.6 Career Advising

Access to career advising and networking opportunities with employers through job fairs organized by the Student Affairs Department. This event intends to connect students and alumni with potential employers for the purpose of promoting employment opportunities for full-time or part-time careers matching with ministry and company requirements. The general goal of the event is to assist students so that they make better career choices and can better identify their skills, competencies and values to excel in today's highly competitive global employment market. The Student Affairs Department, on its part, serves as a consultant for work-related concerns such as developing skills, career decision making, CV and cover letter writing, job interview skills and training and education. It also provides students with a list of potential employers in the form of links via LMS, as well as, make contacts with employers for potential vacancies for students and graduates.

As part of a good practice, the university hosted a virtual job fair on the 10th of August 2021 to provide students, especially graduates (and graduating) students, with employment opportunities in leading local companies.

14.7 ALUMINI

A comprehensive ALUMINI system has been launched as of the summer 2020/2021. This rich platform aims to provide in-depth data about graduates' qualifications and career status, thus helping the university make important decisions such as determining the credibility of the offered degrees in the market. At the same time, graduates are kept informed of important events and career opportunities hosted by the branch, in addition to being linked with their fellow grads. As part of a good practice, the university hosted a **virtual job fair** on the 10th of August 2021 to provide students, especially graduates (and graduating) students, with employment opportunities in leading local companies.

14.8 Student Support & Counselling

The University houses a psychological counselling office within the division of the Student Affairs Department to help students achieve social and psychological adaptation. This involves following up with the recommendations of the medical centres, as well as addressing academic, social and emotional concerns. A psychologist (PhD holder) specialized in counselling and scheme therapy has been appointed for this purpose. The office role is purely counselling, that is, providing students with one-to-one intensive support especially those with special needs. It is also involved in designing a counselling program to provide support and guidance services to students, academic and admin members, in order to help them make better decisions and improve retention rates. These services are generally as follows:

14.9. Personal Development Planning (PDP)*:*

In cooperation with OU, AOU has introduced a PDP package with the objective of empowering its students towards achieving their personal, educational, and professional objectives. The initiative was launched in the second semester 2008/2009 and started to be seriously implemented as of 2009/2010. Already several branches are offering the PDP opportunity for their students, and student involvement is on the increase. Students are encouraged to find out more about this valuable opportunity from their tutors, Programme Coordinators, or Student Affairs staff.

15. Facilities and Services

Due to the fact that AOU system of education is primarily blended learning that involves integration with technology, it is only imperative that the IT systems be in place to facilitate this system of learning. In general, physical resources at AOU are in branch-based rather than programme-based. Classrooms, computer labs, computer equipment, software and application systems, car parking facilities and special needs facilities, all are used by all students in all programmes.

The below points are a brief overview of the campus infrastructural arrangements:

1. Housing 37 smart classrooms, 10 computer labs (including CISCO lab), 4 language labs, one multipurpose lab and an Artificial Intelligence Lab (AI). A number of these classrooms and labs are equipped with Interactive LED screens. Others however, are installed with an Interactive white board (smart board) measuring 75-90" inches. Common equipment includes a projector (including touch panel), wall mounted speakers, a microphone and a lecture recording system (fixed and portable cameras). All classroom and labs facilities are networked using high speed internet connections.

2. Allocating two computer labs dedicated for providing technical support to students such as how to upload TMA, view schedule, etc.

3. Equipped with a physical library that offers a quiet and attractive area for studying, reading and researching practices, through its new modernized landscape as of the academic year 2017/2018. It accommodates over 8500 books and 100 journals from different disciplines: commerce, literature and general studies. The library also extends its services off campus through an efficient borrowing system. This process is controlled through the use of a bar coding technology that links the library resources to the koha integrated library system.

4. Embracing technology through its e-library subscription services that provides a gateway to hundreds of top rated journals and articles from famous databases. Students and tutors can easily access these materials through a special e-library portal via their LMS accounts. Also, the Kuwait branch, in cooperation with KFAS, has set up a lab dedicated solely for e-library navigation. Technical support is provided through lab assistants devoted to helping students/tutors access and search through the different databases.

5. Hosting events, conferences and other extracurricular activities in two auditoriums – one main and one small.

6. Accommodating two student lounges (for male and female provisions) to provide space for resting, reading, studying and so on.

7. Offering two sport courts – multipurpose and football. The multipurpose can be used for hosting basketball, volley ball and tennis tournaments.

8. Supporting students outside the class through extensive packages of learning resources on LMS. These include course learning resources and supplementary materials such as quizzes, presentations, videos and recorded lectures, that can be accessed anytime and anywhere. The portal functions as a hub, housing forums, discussion rooms, interactive study materials, and all student orientated bylaws and other related announcements. It also acts as a bridge to the distinctive e-library resources for both students and tutors. In addition to that, it houses McGraw Hill e-books for some modules to provide students with smarter options in the rapid technological pace of the 21st century.

9. Constantly updating and upgrading both physical and electronic resources to support students, such as the e-library, Learning Management System (LMS), Student Information System (SIS), and so on. In addition, a wide range of supplementary material and video recordings are offered through LMS.

10. Logistical arrangements for students with special needs whereby physically challenged students can access the university's premises through ramps and elevators.

The physical resources available for disability support include:

- Special parking areas.
- Special restrooms.
- Elevators to facilitate their movement.
- Wheelchair ramps distributed in all areas of the campus to enable them to move around smoothly.
- Wheels chairs (at each entrance).
- Automatic doors.

11. Engaged with two cafeterias (Starbucks and Subway) and one canteen (Dukkan) who provide food and drinks services based on a predetermined contract that lays out strict conditions on health and quality, in compliance with the safety and health standards adopted by the Ministry of Health in Kuwait.

For more details on facilities and services, please refer to the website.

16. ASSESSMENT AND PROGRESSION REGULATIONS

16.1 Elements of assessment

Each course shall have a final mark out of 100 marks to be equally distributed between the continuous assessment and the final exam.

Module assessment is based on three main types of written works, as follows:

(i) Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs)
(ii) Mid-Term Assessment (MTA)
(iii) Final Exam (FE)

Students' module result will depend upon their achievements across the different components of assessment, equally balanced between TWO MAJOR COMPONENTS: Continuous Assessment & Final Assessment as described below:

(i) Continuous Assessment:

This comprises:
- Course TMA, and
- Course MTA

The two components represent 50% of the Overall Assessment Score (OAS); 20% for TMAs and 30% for MTA

(ii) Final Assessment:

This consists of: ONE FINAL EXAM representing 50% of the Overall Assessment Score.

16.2 Timings of the assessment

The assessment dates are listed in the relevant academic calendar available on the website. Please visit the link below to view the academic calendar:

https://www.aou.edu.kw/students/Pages/academic-calendar.aspx

16.3 Minimum pass marks for modules

In order to pass the module, a student must obtain:
  (i)   An average of at least 50% across the different components of assessment (i.e. Continuous Assessment and Final Assessment),
  (ii) A minimum average of 20/50 on the Final Assessment, that is at least 40% of the total grade on the final exam, and
  (iii) A minimum average of 15/50 on Continuous Assessment (TMA + MTA), which accounts for at least 30% of the total continuous assessment grade.

In all these assessment components, students will be assessed according to criteria which are based on the learning outcomes.

16.4 Rules governing the Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs)

In accordance with the examination and assessment bylaws, students must comply with the approved course calendar's deadlines for submitting each TMA. Students who do not submit their TMA's on time are subject to penalties as stated in Article 4 of the examination and assessment bylaws, referenced below: https://www.arabou.edu.kw/university/Documents/Regulations/student/en/The%20Bachelor%20Award%20Examinations%20and%20Assessment%20Bylaws.pdf

16.5 Process for requesting deferral of modules

As per the branch bylaws, students cannot defer modules but may drop the course or postpone the final exam according to the following conditions:

a)   Add / Drop policies

With reference to Article 10 of the Bachelor Awards Requirements bylaws, the student may drop and add certain courses included in the study plan within the statutory drop and add period declared in the academic calendar.

In financial terms, drop and add procedures are dealt with according to the following table and in a manner that does not conflict with the financial plans approved by the branch Rector.

Withdrawal	% of Student Reimbursed Fees	Symbol Shown in the Student's Record
Before study commencement and during drop and add period	100%	It is not shown
After drop and add period	70%	Withdrawn — W
After week 3	No reimbursement	Withdrawn — W

The student is considered deferred if he/she had withdrawn from all courses in a certain semester after getting the approval of the respective authority. It is important to mention that the students cannot withdraw after the last week of study.

Please refer to the related bylaw on the website (also available in the student prospectus)

https://www.arabou.edu.kw/university/Documents/Regulations/student/en/The%20Bachelor%20Degree%20Award%20Requirements%20Bylaws.pdf

b) Absence from Exams & Assessment

I) MTAs:

1. A student who is absent from an MTA shall be credited with a 0 mark, unless he/she presents a compelling excuse within 1 week from the exam date via SIS.

2. If the excuse is accepted, he/she may sit for a make-up exam in the same semester at a time set by the University.

II) Final Exams:

1. The student who is absent from a final exam shall earn a 0 mark, unless he/she submits a force majeure excuse within 1 week from the exam date via SIS.

2. In case the excuse was accepted, the letter **"I²"** shall be entered in the student's academic record and he/she shall be permitted to re-sit for the exam on its first subsequent session.

3. In such a case, the course's credit hours shall be excluded from the student's semester and cumulative averages.

4. Should the student fail to submit the exam on its first subsequent session, the letter **"I"** shall be replaced with the letter F^3 in his/her academic record.

c) Extenuating circumstances

During TMA submission periods or MTA or Final exam dates, it is possible for a student to be faced with unpredictable circumstances (medical, personal or family matters/issues) that are beyond his/her control. At the Arab Open University (AOU), such circumstances are referred to as extenuating (mitigating). Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Serious accident.
- Severe illness.
- Sudden onset of a mental health problem.
- A physical attack (due to a natural disaster or political turmoil).
- Severe illness or death of an immediate kin (parent, spouse or child).

Some may confuse the following circumstances as extenuating, but they are NOT extenuating according to AOU:

- Minor illness (fever, cold, coughing, etc.)
- Work-based obligation.
- Job interview.
- Social or family obligation.
- Family rituals/celebrations (wedding, rite of passage, etc.)
- Religious festival.
- Ignorance of University rules and regulations.

With effect from the academic year 2019/2020, the procedures for applying for a postponement of the exam will be carried out as follows:

1. Admission to the hospital on the day of the exam as a result of an emergency medical condition, with a detailed medical report stamped from the hospital and certified from the Medical Licensing Department.
2. Maternity (15 days after childbirth).
3. Death of a first degree relative (three days' maximum before the exam).
4. Car accidents on the same day of the exam.
5. Travelling outside Kuwait for work or accompanying a first degree relative patient.

Note:

- If an extenuating circumstance occurs, it is the student's responsibility to bring it to the attention of the concerned department alongside valid evidence that an extenuating circumstance did in fact occur. This is done by requesting a postponement of exam through an online form on the University's official website within seven calendar days of the exam dates.

- A request for exam postponement does not mean that the request has been accepted, since a special committee will examine the excuses and either approve or reject it.

- Students who are accepted to take a make-up exam will be notified on the website and LMS two weeks after the examination period. This announcement is a formal notice to the students.

- The postponed exams may not be postponed for any reason.

- Unregistered students (whose IDs begin with 9) cannot postpone the final exams for any reason.

d) Students with contradicting exams in the Final

Students who have two finals on the same day and time during the current semester are advised to take note of the following:

1. The student can choose the course he or she wants to take first.
2. The student has to appear in the room where the exam will take place and inform the proctor of the situation in order to take the necessary measures.
3. Once a student has finished the first exam, he or she may not leave the exam hall without being supervised, or else the student may not take the second exam.
4. Students can take a break for a maximum of 15 minutes between exams under supervision of a proctor.
5. Students are entitled to the full duration of both exams.

16.6 Academic Misconduct, Cheating and Plagiarism

16.6.1 Violation Definition (Article 3)

Any violation of the University's laws, statutes and bylaws, and any breach of proper conduct, norms and University traditions shall be deemed punishable. Examples include, but not limited to:

1. Any act that is incompatible with honour and dignity, or that which breaches good conduct inside the University.

2. Actions that result in inflicting harm to the University's properties.

3. Direct disruption of tutorials or exams, or incitement to do so. Also, refraining from performing academic and other related University activities.

4. Any attempt to leak exam questions or cover up those attempting to do so.

5. Organizing gatherings or non-academic meetings within the University without prior approval of the University's administration.

6. Distribution of leaflets, issuance of bulletins, in any form, or collecting signatures for any purpose without the approval of the University's administration.

7. Any sit-in within the University campus or participation in demonstrations or gatherings that are deemed contrary to public order or public morals in the University.

8. Any publication that offends the University's reputation or its employees, or reporting false information to the administrators of the University.

9. Assault by word or action, or both on any of the faculty members, employees, students, or guests.

10. Any impersonation of others in any matter related to the University and its affairs.

11. Carrying or using licensed or unlicensed firearms and sharp instruments.

16.6.1.1 Penalties (Article 5)

If any of Article 3's listed conduct offenses take place, at least one of the following penalties shall be applied:

1. Written Notice.
2. Written Warning.
3. Final Written Warning.
4. Failure of the Course.
5. Dismissal from the University for the duration of one semester following the violation.
6. Dismissal from the University for more than one semester following the violation.
7. Final Dismissal from the University.

Any penalty imposed will be recorded in the student's file.

As per the bylaws, a student may submit an appeal against the decision taken by the Disciplinary Committee or the Primary Disciplinary Council within fifteen days from the date of being informed of the decision. The decision of the Higher Disciplinary Board (Supreme Disciplinary Council) is then final and binding.

Note: The penalties inflicted should be dependent on the case at hand without abiding by the sequence listed in this article.

16.6.2 Cheating and Plagiarism

A) Any student found to be committing any act of cheating or plagiarism shall be referred to ***The Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures Bylaws*** at the Arab Open University.

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

   i. Verbatim copying of printed or Internet material, and submitting them as part of TMAs without proper academic documentation.

   ii. Copying other students' notes or reports.

   iii. Using paid or unpaid material prepared for the student by individuals or firms.

   iv. The use of materials or tools that are prohibited in examinations, or attempting to do so.

16.6.2.1 Penalties on cheating and plagiarism

A) Plagiarism:

If plagiarism is established, the course tutor may apply the following penalties:

1) Deducting marks from the student's assignment according to the established respective policies.

2) In case of repeated plagiarism in the assignments, refer the student to the Primary Disciplinary Council to pass on the following penalties whether collectively or individually:

   - Apply the policy adopted for plagiarism in assignments.
   - Failure in the course and dismissal from the University for one semester following the semester in which the violation took place.

The Primary Disciplinary Council also has the right to recommend to the Supreme Disciplinary Council the following penalties:

1. Dismissal from the University for more than one semester following the semester in which the violation took place.

2. Final dismissal from the University.

B) Cheating on exams or violation of its regulations

If cheating is verified, the following penalties apply:

1. Grant a "0" mark for the subject matter exam whether it was a midterm or a final.

2. Failure in the respective course of study.

3. Failure in the respective course of study and dismissal from the University for one semester following the semester in which the violation took place.

In the event of repeated cheating or attempted cheating, the Primary Disciplinary Council should submit its recommendation to the Higher Disciplinary Board for the following penalties:

1. Dismissal from the University for one semester following the semester in which the violation took place.

2. Final dismissal from the University if cheating has occurred more than twice.

For more information, please see the related bylaw on the website under regulation (link below):
http://www.aou.edu.kw/about/Pages/regulations.aspx

16.7 Mechanisms for provision of feedback to students

Providing students with feedback on their performance is an important part of enhancing their learning. It involves two types of assessments, formative and summative, that occur through tutorials, office hours and formal assessments. In terms of the **formative** aspect, it is a continuous process of information sharing that includes a variety of methods such as MTAs, TMAs and classroom activities (as well as quizzes) to evaluate student learning needs and progress. Students typically receive feedback through word-of-mouth or through paper view, which includes a special comment box for tutor feedback.

A **summative** assessment, on the other hand, is a measure of student learning and understanding through a formal end of semester exam (a final exam), which is designed to evaluate their comprehension of the course learning objectives. However, in some cases, the summative assessment may also take the form of a formative assessment. According to the university's bylaws, students who fail a particular course are entitled to request a final exam view, which takes place in the presence of the course tutor (and course coordinator) and the examination department; to explain the marking scheme (guideline) and highlight the areas of weaknesses. In summary, both forms of assessments are components of student advising in the sense that identify gaps in students learning to help them develop skills in the most effective ways.

16.8 Citation and Referencing regulations

Due to citation being a mandatory requirement for TMAs, students are guided on the proper referencing style through a constructive video in the LMS. They are also tested on plagiarism through a special "yes or no" test that determine their level of knowledge of plagiarised content.

16.9 Repeating Courses

A. Repeating provisions

1. Students may not retake any course in which they had obtained grade (B) or above.
2. No student is allowed to repeat a 5th (2nd) or 6th (3rd) level course derived from the Open University-UK in which he / she had obtained a C or a higher grade.

B. Repeating an optional course

- Students who had failed to pass an optional course may repeat it or any other course in order to fulfil the requirements of their programme's study plan.
    1. If they pass the course, the grade obtained in the repeated exam shall be counted in their semester average and cumulative average.
    2. If they fail the course, this shall not affect their cumulative average.

C. Repeating a compulsory course

- A student who fails to pass a compulsory course must retake the same course in a subsequent semester. The student's grade resulting from the repeat course shall be entered into his/her record.
    1. If they pass the course, the new grade will be counted in their semester and cumulative average.
    2. If they fail the course, the number of course credit hours shall be excluded from his/her cumulative average.

D. Repeating courses in order to raise the cumulative average to the required graduation minimum of 2.00 points

1. Contrary to Clause A in this Article and for raising a student's cumulative average to the required graduation limit (2.00 points), the student may retake any course in his /her study plan other than 2nd and 3rd level OU-UK courses.
2. Consonant with part 2 of Clause A of this Article, a student may retake any 2nd or 3rd level OU-UK courses provided that his grade ceiling is (C).
3. In both the above cases, the new grade is entered into the cumulative average whether it is higher or lower than the previous one, and the number of points earned prior is cancelled alongside the course's credit hours.

16.10. Student Grievance Procedures

Branch authorities look into each grievance and usually respond to the student concerned within a week. There are different types of grievances (appeals, complaints) and there are specific procedures for their submission and processing.

16.10.1 Student Appeals

An academic appeal is an appeal against an academic decision (for e.g. grades and disciplinary decisions) or a request from a student for formal review of his/her course final examination grade or course continuous assessment marks (MTA or TMA).

16.10.2 Student complaints

An academic complaint is any issue that relates to academic or non-academic aspects. It is always accessible to students and involves a direct channel of communication between them and relevant departments. The process is monitored by the Quality Assurance Unit to ensure that each question/issue raised by students is answered.

16.10.3 Procedures for Appeals and Complaints

A) Appeal of assessment grades

1. A student may request a grade review in any course within 7 calendar days from the date of posting the approved course results (final assessment) through the online appeals system (SIS). The student can also attach any relevant documents.
2. An automatic copy of the appeal form will be sent to the Examination Department.
3. After receiving appeals, the BEC comprising the Examination Department, the programme coordinator and two faculty members (usually a BCC and/or GCC) meet up to discuss the appeal.
4. If the appeal is valid (upheld), a copy of the BEC recommendation will be sent to the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), for approval of grade amendment. Following that, the VPAA will inform the Central Examination Committee (CEC) of the decision. Copies will also be forwarded to the AOU registrar, the Branch Admission & Registration Department, Student Affairs Office, the Programme Coordinator and the branch Quality Assurance officer.
5. Any changes in grades of a course must be approved by CEC pursuant to the recommendation of the relevant examination committee.
6. Student shall be notified of the decision within one week of the appeal's date.

7. If the student is not satisfied with the appeal decision, the student may appeal again through the SIS system one week after the decision of the initial appeal. The re-appeal is then considered at a higher level – the Faculty Examination Committee. Alternatively, if the student is not satisfied with the result of the second appeal, he/she can appeal to the Open University in the UK.

B) Appeals of Disciplinary Decisions

As per the Article 9 of the Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures Bylaws:

1. A student has the right to appeal the decision of the Primary Disciplinary Council to the Supreme Disciplinary Council within 15 days from the date of the student notification.

2. In this case, the Supreme Disciplinary Council decision shall be deemed final and not subject to appeal.

C) Complaints

- The student may lodge a complaint any time during the academic year through the online complaint system on SIS. In order to file a complaint, the student must choose the targeted department, state the grounds for complaint and give detailed reasons to support his or her case.

- The concerned department will examine the complaint and it may consult other members of the University staff or departments if it is deemed appropriate in particular cases.

- According to the bylaws, the complaint should be addressed at two additional higher levels - ADAA and Director Levels (final destination), whereby a proper decision and clarification is made to the student/s.

- Students will be notified of the decision via email.

16.11 Provision for students with special needs

Special needs students such as dyslexia, poor eye sight and temporary conditions (including pregnancy) are also given priority in classes and examination. If they wish to have certain arrangements during examinations such as extension of time, comfortable chair/table, larger font, etc., they should inform the Student Affairs Department at least one week before commencement of the exam. The Student Affairs will then, in consultation with the counselling office, inform the Examination Department of the necessary arrangements to be made. The branch also makes available assistants to help disabled students during examinations. Examples include:

- In case some students with special needs cannot write because of a physical disability, a person is assigned by the university to assist such students in their exams and under the supervision of the Examination Department.

- A special hall is allocated for students with health problems under the supervision of the Examinations Department.

In addition to academic arrangements, logistical arrangements also exist to help students with mobility impairments access university facilities. These include among others:
- Special parking areas.
- Special restrooms.
- Elevators to facilitate their movement.
- Wheelchair ramps distributed in all areas of the campus to enable them to move around smoothly.
- Wheels chairs (at each entrance).
- Automatic doors.

17. Dissertations and projects

The FLS program does not require a dissertation. However, student research skills are encouraged through specially designed take-home assignments known as TMAs, which require desktop research combined with textbook references to enrich their learning outcomes. The university has also provided students with an electronic library where they can browse well-known references.

18. Determination of Results

18.1 Allocation of Marks

ELL individual courses are covered in a 16-week semester and students are required to do the following tasks:

(i) Prepare one TMA
(ii) Take one MTA, and
(iii) Sit for one final exam

The following table shows the distribution of marks for the various types of course assessment in one-semester courses.

Components		Mark	Total Mark
CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT	TMA	20	50
	MTA	30	
FINAL ASSESSMENT	FINAL EXAM	50	50
GRAND TOTAL		100	100

It is important to note that in cases of medicating circumstances, AOU follows contingency measures for example, during COVID-19 pandemic, AOU adapted the following methods:

- TMA: 20 %
- MTA has been changed to quizzes that are worth in total 30%
- Final Exam has been changed to be Take Home Exam that worth 50%.

Notes on TMAs, MTAs & Finals

(i) Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs)

These assignments are spread out over the duration of course delivery. In addition to gauging student progress of study, they serve to invoke and develop investigative and research skills. TMA carries 20% of the overall grade of the course.

ii) Mid-Term Assessment (MTA)

MTAs are viewed to be another contributor to monitoring the progression of students' achievement. They carry 30% of the overall grade of the course.

Questions in MTAs may differ based on the course nature. Questions in MTA can include essay questions, short notes, completion questions, definition, etc.

(iii) Final Exams (FEs)

Final exams are typically of the essay type and are divided into different parts each covering one or two themes of the course as in the table below:

Part	Questions	Notes
A	1	- ONE compulsory question, but there might be some options within this question (e.g. defining seven key terms out of 10) - The question typically deals with a very important/central topic
B	2&3	- This part consists of 2 questions - Students answer one question only. - Each question is meant to test a certain block/theme
C	4&5	- This part consists of 2 questions - Students answer one question only. - Each question is meant to test a certain block/theme

The above applies to all ELL courses except the four-credit-hour modules such as EL120 and EL121.

18.2 Marking Descriptor

(i) MTA & Final

GRADE	CONTENT	LANGUAGE & ORGANIZATION
A	Excellent answers showing confident and wide-ranging knowledge of core material, good understanding of any relevant theory, and a capacity to address the question in a structural, direct and effective way, thoughtfully and with insight. Originality of thought or ideas from outside the course are an added asset. Examples are to the point.	- Has an introduction defining plan of essay. - Body divided into several paragraphs - Conclusion which directly relates arguments to topic. - Evidence that essay has been edited. - Error-free grammar & register. - Wide range of specialized terminology.
B to B+	Very good answers showing secure knowledge of course materials. Adopting an analytical approach and providing relevant discussion covering most of the key issues. Distinguished from A answers by being less insightful or by showing less comprehensive knowledge of the course.	- First four criteria above maintained - Demonstrates extensive grammar control. - Terminology specialized but less varied.
C to C+	Competent answers reflecting adequate knowledge of the more directly relevant course material and concepts, with reasonable structure and adequate coherence related to the question set.	- Introduction and/or conclusion short but still satisfactory. - Evidence of editing. - Less grammar control than above. - Good range of specialized terminology.
D	Answers which omit some concepts /evidence and/or lack coherence /structure, and/or make minor errors while still demonstrating basic understanding. Or bare pass answers which show awareness of some relevant material and attempt to relate it to the question.	- Introduction and/or conclusion short but acceptable. - no evidence of editing. - Few grammatical errors that impede communication. - Above average range of specialized terminology. - Slightly confused introduction and/or conclusion, but body still fair. - Some error types that impede communication. - Fair range of specialized terminology.

GRADE	CONTENT	LANGUAGE & ORGANIZATION
F	Answers which attempt to draw upon relevant material but do not reflect sufficient knowledge of the course and/or neglect the focus required by the question, and/or are incomplete in some important aspects whilst being acceptable in others.	- No introduction and /or no conclusion. - Body badly organized or irrelevant. - Poor grammar control (extremely limited range of grammar & register). - Limited or not specialized range of terminology.

(ii)   TMA

GRADE	CONTENT	LANGUAGE & ORGANIZATION
A **(18-20)**	Excellent answers showing confident and wide-ranging knowledge of core material, good understanding of any relevant theory, and a capacity to address the question in a structural, direct and effective way, thoughtfully and with insight. Originality of thought or ideas from outside the course are an added asset. Examples are to the point.	- Has an introduction defining plan of essay. - Body divided into several paragraphs - Conclusion which directly relates arguments to topic. - Evidence that essay has been edited. - Error-free grammar & register. - Wide range of specialized terminology. - **Consistent in-text citation and form of referencing**
B to B+ **(16-17)**	Very good answers showing secure knowledge of course materials. Adopting an analytical approach and providing relevant discussion covering most of the key issues. Distinguished from A answers by being less insightful or by showing less comprehensive knowledge of the course.	- First four criteria above maintained - Demonstrates extensive grammar control. - Terminology specialized but less varied. - **Minor Inconsistency in in-text citation and referencing**
C to C+ **(14-15)**	Competent answers reflecting adequate knowledge of the more directly relevant course material and concepts, with reasonable structure and adequate coherence related to the question set.	- Introduction and/or conclusion short but still satisfactory. - Evidence of editing. - Less grammar control than above. - Good range of specialized terminology. - **Inconsistent in in-text citation and referencing**

D **(10-13)**	Answers which omit some concepts /evidence and/or lack coherence /structure, and/or make minor errors while still demonstrating basic understanding. Or bare pass answers which show awareness of some relevant material and attempt to relate it to the question.	- Introduction and/or conclusion short but acceptable. - Few grammatical errors that impede communication. - Above average range of specialized terminology. - Slightly confused introduction and/or conclusion, but body still fair. - No evidence of editing. - Some error types that impede communication. - Fair range of specialized terminology. - **Inaccurate in-text citation and referencing**
F **Below** **10**	Answers which attempt to draw upon relevant material but do not reflect sufficient knowledge of the course and/or neglect the focus required by the question, and/or are incomplete in some important aspects whilst being acceptable in others.	- No introduction and /or no conclusion. - Body badly organized or irrelevant. - Poor grammar control (extremely limited range of grammar & register). - Limited or not specialized range of terminology. - **No in-text citations and no referencing**

18.3 Communication & Language Accuracy

Students majoring in English Language and Literature are expected to possess a reasonably high level of proficiency in English. In writing, they are expected to produce well-written and well-developed essays that are error-free in terms of language accuracy. Students' grades will be lowered if they make grammatical and vocabulary errors as well as errors in writing mechanics (e.g. punctuation, capitalization, spelling) and errors in presentation and paragraphing, etc.

18.4 Endorsement of Final Results

The results are endorsed at the Branch level through the Branch Examination Committee, then at the AOU-HQ through the Course Assessment Committee (CAC), Faculty Examination Committee (FEC), and then the Central Examination Committee (CEC).

18.5 How are results communicated

Final module results are announced on the university website (https://aou.edu.kw/), where students can check at their results by logging into the Student Information System (SIS) with student's credentials. This link can be found under the student services menu. The following screens show the steps:

1. Login to the online Student Services with student number as a User ID and student's password and select the correct branch.
2. Once the student logs in, he/she can avail the benefits of the available services provided on the system.
3. The student will select the box titled Grades Online in the 3rd row in order to view his/her grades. By selecting Grades Online, the grades details will appear on student's screen.

Note: Grades are not confirmed until they have been approved by External Examiners and ratified at Exam Boards.

18.6 Final Grades & Semester / Cumulative Average

(i) Course final grades
Letter grades for course results carry 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

Note: The letter grade **D** is considered as the passing grade for the individual course.

(ii) Semester and cumulative average

- The minimum cumulative average required for graduation is 2.0 points.
- Semester and cumulative averages are given in numbers (on a five-point–scale) and performance merits are assigned as in the table below.

Score	Performance Standards
3.67-4.0	Excellent
3.0 – 3.66	Very Good
2.33 – 2.99	Good
2.0 – 2.32	Pass
Less than 2.0	Weak / Poor

18.7 Award/Grades Classification

Awards

The classification of the student's certificate as derived from the OU-UK shall be as follows:

Classification, OU (UK)	AOU Rating/ Cumulative Average
First class	Excellent
Second class (1st Division)	Very good
Second class (2nd Division)	Good
Third class	Pass

Grades

Final grades for each course as letter grades shall correspond to the following points:

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

Grade D is considered as the minimum passing grade for a student's successful completion of the course.

18.8 COORDINATING AND MONITORING EXAMS & TMAs

Assessment as Team Work

All forms of assessment are the result of team work, on the one hand, and are consistently and systematically monitored at various stages both at the branch level and the university level.

Exams are prepared by the Course Chair (GCC), in coordination with the tutors. After preparing the exam, the GCC sends it to an external examiner to approve it, and after that it is sent to the Dean for final approval.

At the branch level the BCC and the BPC are directly involved in the process of assessment as can be seen from the responsibility defined for each position. Similarly, External Examiners and members of Faculty Exams Committee are involved in all aspects of assessment as can be seen below:

(i) Branch Course Coordinator (BCC) Responsibilities

- Supervising tuition and presentation of relevant course material

- Supervising and monitoring TMAs and MTAs
- Participating in developing course content and presentation and providing the Faculty with feedback from all relevant parties
- Training tutors and making available to them all possible opportunities conducive to professional development
- Holding bi-weekly meetings with tutors
- Monitoring tutorials
- Monitoring tutor office hours
- Giving demonstration tutorials or mini-tutorials
- Holding training seminars for tutors
- Participating in relevant generic and specific training workshops
- Training tutors in monitoring and marking TMAs, MTAs, and final examinations
- Providing semi-annual and annual reports about tutor performance as well as tutor comments and suggestions concerning both content and presentation of the course material.
- Providing ongoing as well as semi-annual and annual feedback reports about TMAs and examinations prepared by course chairs

(ii). Branch Programme Coordinator (BPC) Responsibilities

The duties of the BPC include:

1. Coordinating with the Branch Director on the implementation and requirement of the study program,
2. Coordinating among the different course coordinators,
3. Planning and implementing Branch academic student advising and related matters,
4. Coordinating and follow up of course requirement needs:
   - Preparing the Course Calendar
   - Preparing TMAs
   - Preparing Final Examinations
5. Drawing up Samples of: (for External Examiners Evaluation): TMAs; Midterm Assessment; Final Exam Scripts;

(iii) External Examiners (EE) Responsibilities

1. Participating in the deliberations of the Course Assessment Committee and the Faculty Council Examination Committee

2. Approving questions and marking guidelines suggested by CACs for TMAs and final examinations

3. Reviewing and revising final examination scripts

4. Reviewing and revising TMAs

5. Submitting a report to the Chair of the Central Examination Committee in which he/she provides a summary of his/her ideas and comments on final examination papers, TMAs and assessment of both student and tutor performance. This includes sampling all marked assessments of AOU including MTAs and final examination papers.

19. Study regulations, policies and procedures

19.1 Attendance at Tutorials

With due regard to local accreditation conditions required from the university branch:

4. The minimum face-to-face classroom meeting hours allocated for tutorials in each course during a single semester shall be 4 classroom hours against each credit hour allotted to the course. In other words, 1 credit hour = 4 classroom hours.

5. Face-to-face tutorial classroom hours may increase in the case of certain courses having a special nature. This is determined by a competent Deanship or a branch with a view to fulfil local accreditation requirements, for instance.

6. Attending the face-to-face tutorial sessions of the registered course is mandatory by students. Absence from such tutorials may not exceed 25% of the prescribed tutorials as stated in the approved University calendar. A student whose absence exceeds this percentage fails the course.

19.2 Study Regulations

19.2.1 Duration of Study and Study Load

i. The academic year consists of two semesters, each of which lasts for sixteen (16) weeks.

ii. The summer session lasts for eight (8) weeks.

iii. The University Council approves the university calendar for each academic year. The calendar includes dates for the beginning of semesters, add/drop period, final examinations, etc.

iv. The minimum load of a regular student is eight (8) credit hours. The maximum is twenty-one (21) credit hours per semester.

v. Students with a cumulative average of less than 2 points shall not be allowed to register for more than 12 credit hours.

vi. The maximum period of study at the AOU is sixteen (16) semesters, equivalent to eight (8) academic years. (Summer semesters are not included.)

19.2.2 Deferral of Study

As per the bylaw, a continuing student (non-freshmen) may defer his/her study within a period not exceeding 2 weeks after semester commencement, provided that such deferral does not exceed 6 consecutive or interrupted semesters. Such deferral shall not be included within the maximum study duration limit allowed for graduation requirements completion. Deferral of studies is not permitted for new students on their first semester of study as indicated in the terms and conditions of the application form.

19.2.3 Discontinuation of Study

A. A student is considered discontinued in a semester if he/she fails to register for any courses in that specific semester.

B. This semester is accounted for within the allowed period of study.

C. Students may submit a petition to the branch Rector showing proof of the force majeure1 which prevented him/her from registering in the semester. If approved, he/she shall be deemed deferred for that semester.

D. No student is allowed to discontinue his/her study for more than three consecutive or interrupted semesters.

19.2.4 Withdrawal from the University

A student is considered officially withdrawn from the University when he/she personally fills an application of withdrawal from the University. Fees refund policy will apply to the specific withdrawal semester according to the approved polices. For more details, please refer to article 13 in *The Bachelor's Degree Award Requirements Bylaws at the Arab Open University* available at the website (under regulations).

19.2.5 Granting the Bachelor's Degree

The bachelor's degree is granted after completing the following graduation requirements:

  i. Passing all courses required for graduation pursuant to the study plan approved for the bachelor's degree in the concerned programme.
  ii. Achieving a cumulative average of not less than 2 points.
  iii. Not exceeding the maximum period of study.
  iv. Finishing any other requirements stated inside or outside the study plan.
  v. The OU-validated award is classified on the basis of the student's grade point average in the best 32 credit hours at Level 2 and the best 32 credit hours at Level 3.

19.3 Study Fees

The AOU is a non-profit university and aims to keep its fee levels as low as possible, consistent with the need to offer a high quality learning experience for its students. The study fees differ depending on the nature of courses and the living standards of the country in which the university operates.

19.4 Student Transfer

In accordance with the principles and procedures approved by the University Council, a student may apply for transfer between:

1) Tracks
2) Programmes
3) Branches

19.4.1 Transfer between Academic Programmes

A. The student submits a transfer application form to the University according to the instructions and procedures stipulated by the branch management, taking into consideration the following:

  1. The availability of space for an extra student in the programme, as there are limits to capacity.

2. The student's average in the secondary school certificates should not be less than the average required by the programme to which the student is applying to transfer.

3. Fulfilment for any other academic qualification required for admission to the new academic programme.

4. Passing any qualifying exams requested by the programme that the student is applying to join.

5. Ensuring that the transfer does not lead to a critical situation on the programme being transferred from.

B. Upon formal transfer approval by the respective authority, course transfers will be dealt with adhering to Article 7, Clause B of *The Student Transfer Bylaws at the Arab Open University.*

C. The Branch may set any other conditions/fees provided that it is in compliance with established University procedures.

D. The Branch may set other conditions for the fulfilment of local accreditation requirements.

19.4.2 Transfer between Branches

1. When applying for a branch transfer, the student should be fully registered in that branch, not a discontinued student, and does not have a warning/punishment of expulsion from the University

2. The student shall fill in the respective form stating the reasons for transfer before the end of the semester and according to the specified dates schedule.

3. In certain circumstances, a student may apply for transfer from one branch to another during the semester provided that he/she can provide a valid reason for the transfer.

4. The student shall pay the appropriate transfer fee when filing the application. If the application is accepted, the amount is settled equally between the original branch and the branch that the student is transferring to. However, if the application is rejected, the student has the right to receive a refund.

5. Transfer should normally occur within the same programme in which the student is registered. If not, admission to a different programme will be considered according to the fulfilment of programme admission requirements in the original branch, and then the application for transfer is reviewed.

6. Where necessary, it is the student's responsibility to get a residence permit in the country branch to which he/she wants to transfer. Including the necessary entry visas and other requirements.

7. When a transfer has been approved by the two branches, the student's file and academic record is sent to the new branch.

8. The student's grades will be transferred according to the procedures set in Article 7, Clause A of *The Student Transfer Bylaws at the Arab Open University*.

9. Before joining the new branch, the student should be informed about any admission conditions or requirements observed in the new branch so that he/she can fulfil these conditions either before or after joining the new branch.

10. The tuition fees of the new branch will apply for the transferred student.

19.4.3 Transfer between Academic Programme Tracks

The student submits a transfer application form to the University according to the instructions and procedures stipulated by the branch management, taking into consideration the following:

1. Upon approval, the student will be formally notified by the respective authority and course transfers will be dealt with according to Article 7, Clause C of *The Student Transfer Bylaws at the Arab Open University*.

2. The Branch may set any other conditions/fees provided that it is in compliance with established University procedures.

3. The Branch may set any other appropriate conditions to satisfy the requirements for local accreditation.

You can find the Student Transfer Bylaws at the Arab Open University in the regulations section of the website (referenced below):

http://www.aou.edu.kw/about/Pages/regulations.aspx

20. Other institutional policies and regulations

All relevant AOU policy applies to FLS students. You are therefore urged to familiarize yourselves with University wide policy, procedures, and regulations provided at the AOU website. These articles directly relate to all aspects regarding your programme of study, including assessment policy, appeal procedures, plagiarism, maximum allowable duration of study, transfer of credits between branches, etc. Some of the key student policies include:

20.1 Disability statement

This form is designed to elicit student disability/impairment information so that the University may make all possible provisions to help facilitate the teaching and learning requirement. All information provided here will be treated as Confidential as per the University Confidentiality policy and Equal Opportunity Policy.

Disability
Declaration form 20

20.2 Grounds and procedures for appeals

The University runs well-designed robust systems for processing appeals and complaints formally, to govern the quality of its provisions. Both systems are easily accessible to all students via the Student Information System (SIS). Please access the below link for details on the processes. More details are available on the website under regulations (link below):
http://www.aou.edu.kw/about/Pages/regulations.aspx

20.3 Equal opportunities statement

The Arab Open University was established to provide education on the basis of merit only. It observes the rights and respects the dignity of staff, students, visitors and all others with whom the University has contacts. It makes every effort to create an inclusive and diverse working, learning and social environment, free from unfair discrimination, prejudice and all forms of harassment and bullying. More details are available on the website under regulations (link below):
http://www.aou.edu.kw/about/Pages/regulations.aspx

20.4 Data protection

AOU is committed to protecting the privacy of individuals by ensuring fair, responsible and transparent use of all personal information that it holds, including compliance with the safeguards of the Data Protection principles of the partner institution which defines the processing of data on identifiable living people and compliance to the Branch country regulations. This Policy and its associated Code of Practice define the minimum standards with which all AOU branches and departments would seek to comply in order to satisfy this commitment. More details are available on the website under regulations (link below):
http://www.aou.edu.kw/about/Pages/regulations.aspx

20.5 Health and safety issues

The AOU strives to ensure that students have a safe, secure, healthy and confidential environment that is conductive to achieving their graduation requirements. The below policy details the framework for the implementation of the health and safety policy. More details are available on the website under regulations (link below):
http://www.aou.edu.kw/about/Pages/regulations.aspx

21. Student participation and evaluation

21.1 Student Feedback

Students play an important role in the evaluation, development and enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning environment. Through their feedback, the Faculty of Language Studies is able to evaluate the quality of its teaching services and learning tools. Collecting student feedback is therefore, a continuous process throughout the whole academic year. Several formal and informal methods are used to address student feedback, these include: direct contact with tutors and administrative staff, online complaints, e-mail, as well as student surveys/questionnaires placed on SIS at the end of each semester. As for the surveys, they seek feedback on tutors, modules, program delivery systems and support resources and services. They have a significant impact on the strategic planning in various areas of program delivery and designing of physical facilities for students. The survey data are processed through the branch Quality Assurance Unit in which the findings and recommendations are analysed and communicated to all key stakeholders which includes the Branch Director and the Quality Assurance Department at HQ for final submission to the OUVP. The most significant feedback is usually discussed at the branch QA committee meetings to take proper corrective actions. Examples of actions taken during the coronavirus outbreak included substituting the virtual learning platform based on students' demand. Students are informed of the branch decisions via LMS, website and social media.

The other channels of feedback offer additional opportunities for students to share their feedback on all aspects of the University. Online complaints, for example, can be accessed through the SIS and allow the user to file a complaint against the relevant department, while the email IDs of the relevant departments have been provided throughout this handbook.

As your feedback is pivotal to the planning process at FLS, we encourage you to share your candid and honest remarks, particularly on the student questionnaire. We maintain strict confidentiality and anonymity when receiving comments and responses.

21.2 Student Representation

AOU has ratified all bylaws for the students' councils. Students can form their councils on the basis of democratic elections, which aim to involve students in university life and enable them to contribute, as well as develop their leadership skills. In addition, FLS encourages branches to identify students' representatives (Student REPs) who get in touch with PCs and other branch officials in order to give student feedback. They, in fact, act as liaison between students and the academics at the branch. In addition, these students are called upon to attend some committees, such as the Quality Assurance Committee and the University Council, in order to address any issues related to student life at AOU.

21.3 Academic and professional organizations

The AOU in Kuwait is engaged in professional organizations to enhance student learning experience. Some include:

a) **Knowledge Development Seminars:** The Knowledge Development Seminars is a series of developmental seminars run by experts from different disciplines from within and outside the University (including students) to discuss a number of different topics.

b) **Job fair:** This event intends to connect students and alumni with potential employers for the purpose of promoting employment opportunities for full-time or part-time careers matching with ministry and company requirements.

c) **External engagements during new student orientation day:** To ensure maximum benefit is reaped from the orientation programme, local organizations from the private and public sectors are invited to take part in the orientation session to address students' queries. For example:

  i. **Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP):** The program offers career counselling for those who seek a job in Kuwait.

 ii. **The Private Universities Council (PUC):** To address enquiries related to the University's local accreditation and governmental grants.

iii. **International labour organization:** To guide students on choosing their career path starting from choosing the study major, as well as exposing them to the organization's valuable workshops that would benefit them during their study period.

 iv. **International organization for Migration:** To introduce students to the organization's services, including the workshops offered.

  v. **LOYAC organization:** A non-profit organization that offers internship opportunities through its voluntary developing programs for those who seek work experience at world-renowned institutions.

vi. The British Council in Kuwait: To introduce training courses in terms of skills and language improvement.

a) Toastmasters

The Toastmasters association provides students with valuable tools for improving their leadership and communication skills. The AOU in Kuwait has established a Toastmasters club in the academic year 2012/2012, bringing together students, academic and administrative staff in a creative setting for professional development. Generally, toastmasters club offer workshops and courses that aim to provide the art of public speaking and leadership in an effective way, through activities and speeches prepared by the members of the club.

b) Knowledge Development Seminars:

The Knowledge Development Seminars is a series of developmental seminars run by experts from different disciplines from within and outside the University (including students) to discuss a number of different topics.

c) Mini TESOL conference

TESOL conference is an important platform for helping English language educators of other languages to advance excellence in English Language teaching. It comes in two settings – a one-day mini and a (2-3) days conference. As part of a good practice, AOU-KW hosted the mini TESOL conference twice over the past two years. The second mini conference entitled "Adapting EFL materials and methodologies to the classroom realities" took place on November 30, 2019 on campus and included important workshops that were delivered by AOU faculty and experts from outside the university.