

**ADA UNIVERSITY**



**ACADEMIC QUALITY  
ASSURANCE STANDARDS  
AND GUIDELINES**

**FIRST EDITION (2022)**

### **Editorial Note**

The following documents represent the first edition of ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*. This first edition contains the areas (1) Academic Program, (2) Teaching, Learning and Assessment, (3) Research, and (6) Equity and Transparency. A second edition will be issued in 2023 and supplement the areas (4) Students, and (5) Faculty and Staff, as well as relevant forms (Appendix II).

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\* to be developed

## INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE, SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

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### 1. Purpose

ADA University is dedicated to the vision of becoming a world-class university in Azerbaijan. An essential part of this vision is the commitment to regular, systematic and comprehensive evaluations and improvements of academic quality. These quality assurance processes are based on ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*, which serve two major and interrelated purposes:

1. They provide a framework for the *internal* assessment and enhancement of academic quality at ADA University by setting essential quality standards and guidelines and by delineating structured approaches to the evaluation, improvement and implementation of academic quality.
2. By complying with internationally accepted standards for academic quality and excellence, they serve as a preparation for comprehensive *external* evaluations and thus form an integral part of ADA University's accreditation strategy.

The main objective of the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* is to ensure a consistently high level of academic quality at ADA University and thus to provide an environment of academic excellence to its students, faculty and staff.

### 2. Scope

The *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* first of all outline the context and framework of academic quality and quality assurance (Section I). This includes a general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy* that defines basic propositions and procedures of quality assurance as well as the quality review cycle through which these propositions and procedures are regularly, systematically and comprehensively implemented at ADA University. The *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* furthermore outline the scope of quality assurance by covering all the areas relevant to the assessment and enhancement of academic quality (Section II), namely:

1. Academic Program
2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment
3. Research
4. Students
5. Faculty and Staff
6. Equity and Transparency

Each of these areas comprises relevant standards and guidelines for academic quality and quality assurance, key documents pertaining to the area, and quality assurance policies that address the area's actual outcomes (such as student success, effectiveness of teaching and learning, research output, student recruitment or faculty performance) and / or key quality documents (policies and procedures, statements, regulations, handbooks).

The appendices to the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* provide instructions for the development and modification of documents (Appendix I) and standardized forms (Appendix II).

### 3. Definitions

The coordination of a university-wide system of quality assurance presupposes conceptual clarity. Quality assurance at ADA University is based on the following essential definitions:

1. *Quality* is defined as the achievement of excellence. It allows the University to fulfill its purposes as an institution of higher education and research.
2. *Quality Assurance* describes the regular assessment / evaluation and enhancement / improvement of standards and guidelines, principles and propositions, rules, processes, structures and outcomes. *Quality Assessment* refers to the review of documents *and* of related outcomes. The *Enhancement of Quality* covers the development or modification of documents *as well as* their implementation and the corresponding achievement of intended outcomes.
3. A *Quality Review Cycle* is a systematic and comprehensive process of quality assessment that is completed within a predefined timeframe and that is regularly repeated.
4. A *Quality Standard* is an established norm that outlines general criteria for excellence.
5. *Quality Guidelines* detail requirements for the implementation and assessment of quality.
6. A *Statement* represents a declaration of fundamental principles.
7. *Policies* are statements of intent. As such, they prescribe a course of action to be taken. A policy statement thus includes a structured approach to and detailed steps for its implementation (*Procedures*).
8. *Procedures* define structured approaches to and detailed steps for the implementation of policies.
9. *Regulations* are structured directives describing rules and/or proceedings.
10. *Handbooks* are reference manuals that provide essential and comprehensive information relevant to a specific area and group of members of ADA University.

## SECTION I: ACADEMIC QUALITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

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Section I of the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* serves two purposes. It first of all provides the *context* for academic quality and quality assurance at ADA University, which consists of the University's mission, its institutional purposes, and its guiding academic principles. Whilst providing a foundation for these purposes and principles, the mission at the same time sets the general standards from which academic quality and quality assurance at ADA University derive.

Secondly, Section I defines the *framework* for academic quality assurance at ADA University. It outlines a general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy* as well as the University's quality assurance governance structure, both at the institutional level and at the level of Schools.

### 1. ADA MISSION AND ACADEMIC QUALITY

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#### 1. Mission Statement

Our mission is to cultivate highly intellectual solution providers who are closely collaborating, efficiently communicating members of the global community, possessing ethics and a sense of citizenship.

#### 2. The Mission's Pillars

ADA University's mission (together with its charter and vision) provides the foundation for the institution and its purposes in general as well as for its academic programs, principles and processes in particular. This mission rests on two pillars:

1. It first of all aims to educate *professionals* who are highly competent and able to provide adequate solutions to the problems and challenges of an increasingly globalized world. This presupposes that graduates are not only well-trained in their respective fields of study, but that they also possess competencies that are indispensable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, namely the ability to communicate and collaborate successfully with others, and this across disciplines, cultures and all (real or imagined) borders.
2. Equally important, it aims to cultivate *citizens* who possess high ethical values, who feel responsible for the well-being of others and of the community as a whole, and who actively promote the public good.

#### 3. The Mission and Academic Quality

ADA University's mission and its two pillars presuppose an environment of academic excellence. Excellence is based on dedication, the willingness to strive for the highest standards of quality. Only such an environment will allow students to fully develop their intellectual potential and personal qualities. Only such an environment will enable the University to attract highly qualified and dedicated teachers, scholars and staff and to offer them the best opportunities for teaching, research and life-long learning.

And only such an environment will allow ADA University to live up to its vision *to be a world-class university in Azerbaijan*.

## 2. STATEMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL PURPOSES

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### 1. Purpose

ADA University is an institution with a clear and ambitious mission. This mission (together with its charter and vision) provides the foundation for its purposes as an institution. The objective of this document is to define these purposes.

### 2. Scope and Recommendations

The institutional purposes outlined in this document apply to all academic and administrative activities at ADA University. They provide guiding principles to all its Schools and administrative units and to all the members of the University.

All members of ADA University are expected to work towards the implementation of the institutional purposes delineated in this document.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the document *ADA Mission and Academic Quality*.

### 3. Definitions

*Institutional Purposes* are fundamental objectives and obligations that are to be promoted and fulfilled by the University. They derive from the University's charter, mission and vision. Institutional purposes further specify the University's mission and vision, and they serve to guide all activities at the University.

*Academic Excellence* is a fundamental guiding principle according to which education and research comply with (or even exceed) high quality standards.

### 4. Institutional Purposes

4.1 *Academic Excellence*: ADA University promotes excellence in education and research. It serves as a center and driving force of academic excellence and innovation in Azerbaijan, the larger region, and beyond. It provides an environment in which students, teachers, scholars and staff members can fully develop their intellectual and personal qualities and perform to their highest potential.

4.2 *Community and Society*: ADA University serves the needs of the community and society. It offers an educational program that adequately addresses these needs; it fosters scientific development and innovation; it trains highly qualified graduates that can be employed in various sectors of the labor market; it cultivates responsible citizens that actively contribute to the good and prosperity of

the community and society; and it offers consulting and support to the economy and the public sector.

- 4.3 *Students*: ADA University admits and educates students from the following groups: (1) Azerbaijani citizens with a prior record of outstanding academic performance and with the potential to perform highly during their studies; (2) foreign citizens with a prior record of outstanding academic performance and with the potential to perform highly during their studies; (3) Azerbaijani citizens who are socially and financially disadvantaged; (4) Azerbaijani citizens from internally displaced families and refugee families; (5) Azerbaijani citizens from families of martyrs and disabled war veterans, and Azerbaijani citizens who serve or served in the armed forces; (6) Azerbaijani citizens with a diagnosed disability.
- 4.4 *Educational Program*: ADA University offers degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate level that are current and relevant and that are designed and delivered according to high international standards.
- 4.5 *Research*: ADA University conducts research according to high academic and ethical standards and thus contributes to the advancement of scientific knowledge.
- 4.6 *Graduates*: ADA University equips its students with all the essential competencies they need to be competitive on the national and international labor markets and to become successful and highly efficient professionals.
- 4.7 *Citizens*: ADA University strengthens the sense of patriotism, citizenship and social responsibility in its students and employees.
- 4.8 *Life-long Learning*: ADA University provides opportunities for the continuous professional development of its employees. It also offers a program of continuing education for professionals.
- 4.9 *Values*: ADA University protects, promotes and enhances moral, cultural and academic values.

### 3. STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC PRINCIPLES

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#### 1- Purpose

Education and research at ADA University are based on a set of firm academic principles. The purpose of this document is to define these principles.

#### 2. Scope and Recommendations

The principles delineated in this document apply to all educational, research and administrative activities conducted at ADA University.

All members of ADA University are expected to adhere to the principles delineated in this document.

The principles stated in this document should be considered alongside the principles delineated in ADA University's *Statement on Teaching and Learning* and in its *Statement on Research* as well as alongside the directives outlined in the University's *Student Assessment Regulations* and its *Online Education and Assessment Regulations*.

### 3. Definitions

*Academic Principles* are fundamental concepts that serve to guide all activities related to education and research.

*Academic Excellence* is a fundamental guiding principle according to which education and research comply with (or even exceed) high quality standards.

*Academic Integrity* is a fundamental guiding principle according to which every educational and research activity is to be conducted in an honest, responsible and altogether ethical manner. Most importantly, this principle precludes any kind of cheating and plagiarism as well as the awarding of grades and degrees based on anything else but the performance of students and their attainment of course learning outcomes and program requirements.

*Academic Freedom* is the right of faculty and students to teach, study and engage in research without undue restrictions. It describes the right of free expression and inquiry that is the prerogative of students as well as of faculty within their respective disciplines.

*Equity* describes a fundamental guiding principle according to which individuals are to be treated in a manner that is fair and appropriate to their specific circumstances. This implies that no one is (intentionally or unintentionally) discriminated against by being excluded from certain opportunities due to these circumstances. *Equity*, as opposed to *equality*, thus acknowledges differences between individuals and aims at inclusiveness by facilitating access to these opportunities and providing additional support for those that are disadvantaged so that they can develop their full potential.

### 4. Academic Principles

- 4.1 *Academic Excellence*: Teaching and research at ADA University are conducted according to high international standards. They are innovative and contribute to the advancement of knowledge and to the individual development of all those involved in the processes of teaching, learning and research.
- 4.2 *Academic Integrity*: All educational and research activities at ADA University are conducted in an honest, responsible and altogether ethical manner. The University promotes and rigorously protects the principle of academic integrity. It fosters an attitude of integrity in all of its members, and it sanctions all violations of this fundamental academic principle.
- 4.3 *Academic Freedom*: All faculty members and students of ADA University are free in their research and pursuit of knowledge. Within the framework of the University's educational program and of the requirements pertaining to this program and to its delivery, faculty are free in their teaching and in the development of the University's curricula.
- 4.4 *Equity*: At ADA University, all individuals are treated in a fair and non-discriminatory manner, and this regardless of their gender, age, health, race, nationality, ethnicity or cultural affiliation, religion, sexual orientation, social origin, or economic circumstances. ADA University furthermore creates opportunities and offers support for individuals that are disadvantaged due to disabilities and/or due to their social background.
- 4.5 *Individual Development*: ADA University is committed to the personal, academic and professional development of all its members. It offers an environment in which students, faculty, and staff members can excel and perform to their highest potential.

4.6 *Openness*: As a center of excellence, ADA University is dedicated to the future prosperity of Azerbaijan. It is open to innovation and to new developments in education. The University adapts key elements of two of the most successful education systems (namely of the U.S. American system and of the European Higher Education Area) to ensure compliance with high international standards and to facilitate international collaborations.

## 4. ACADEMIC QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

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### 1. Purpose

ADA University is committed to ensuring an environment of academic excellence to its students, faculty and staff. This presupposes regular, systematic and standardized processes of quality assessment and enhancement that cover all matters related to teaching, learning, assessment and research. The purpose of this policy is to establish such processes. More specifically, it serves to define the general structures and procedures of academic quality assurance at ADA University. These are further specified in the quality assurance policies that are part of each area covered by the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.

### 2. Scope and Recommendations

This policy applies to the following areas: (1) Academic Program, (2) Teaching, Learning and Assessment, (3) Research, (4) Students, (5) Faculty and Staff, and (6) Equity and Transparency. It provides a general framework for the assessment and enhancement of standards and guidelines, key documents, actual outcomes as well as of quality assurance structures and procedures. It furthermore covers all documents of Section I of the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* as well as its Appendices.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the document *Quality Assurance Governance* and with the quality assurance policies that are part of each of the areas covered by the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.

### 3. Definitions

*Quality Assurance* describes the regular assessment / evaluation and enhancement / improvement of standards and guidelines, principles and propositions, rules, processes, structures and outcomes. *Quality Assessment* refers to the review of documents *and* of related outcomes. The *Enhancement of Quality* covers the development or modification of documents *as well as* their implementation and the corresponding achievement of intended outcomes.

A *Quality Review Cycle* is a systematic and comprehensive process of quality assessment that is completed within a predefined timeframe and that is regularly repeated.

#### 4. Quality Assurance Committee

- 4.1 Responsibility for the regular, systematic and comprehensive assessment and enhancement of academic quality at ADA University rests with the Quality Assurance Committee, with its Subcommittees, and with the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation (for details, see the document *Quality Assurance Governance*).
- 4.2 The process of quality assurance at ADA University must incorporate an external perspective. To this end, the Quality Assurance Committee will include two members from at least one of ADA University's international partners.
- 4.3 In all matters related to student success, program effectiveness and the implementation of learning outcomes, the Quality Assurance Committee will consult with its Subcommittees at School level (for details, see the document *Quality Assurance Governance*). The Quality Assurance Committee will thoroughly consider all feedback and recommendations received from the Subcommittees.
- 4.4 The Quality Assurance Committee's responsibilities are:
  - a. Regular supervision of the implementation of the entire *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.
  - b. Regular review of actual outcomes of individual components (documents).
  - c. Comprehensive review of the entire *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.
  - d. Regular review of individual components (documents) of the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.
  - e. Modification of existing documents and development of new documents (based on these review processes).
- 4.5 Further provisions related to the composition and responsibilities of the Quality Assurance Committee and its Subcommittees are delineated in the document *Quality Assurance Governance*.

#### 5. Quality Review Cycle

- 5.1 Quality assurance at ADA University is based on a 5-year review cycle. During this period, all academic quality and quality assurance documents and all related outcomes are subject to rigorous processes of quality assessment and (where appropriate) quality enhancement.
- 5.2 Outcomes are reviewed throughout the academic year according to the reporting timeline set forth in the University's *Data Management and Reporting Regulations*. In case outcomes do not meet the quality standards, requirements and indicators set forth in the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*, the Quality Assurance Committee will take appropriate steps towards the improvement of outcome quality (including the review of relevant documents).
- 5.3 The composition and implementation of the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* are reviewed annually. This is to ensure that potential deficits and gaps are identified and addressed in a timely manner. Improvements (such as the development of new documents) must take into consideration international best practices and the Quality Standards and Quality Guidelines set forth in the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.
- 5.4 Each document must be reviewed (and potentially improved) at least once during the quality review cycle, and this based on the following structure:
  - a. First Year: Context and Framework of Academic Quality and Quality Assurance (Section I, Introduction, Appendices, Quality Assurance Policies)
  - b. Second Year: Area 1 (Academic Program)
  - c. Third Year: Area 2 (Teaching, Learning and Assessment)
  - d. Fourth Year: Areas 4 and 5 (Students; Faculty and Staff)
  - e. Fifth Year: Areas 3 and 6 (Research; Equity and Transparency)

- 5.5 In addition, the Quality Assurance Committee is free to review any academic quality and quality assurance document at any time during the 5-year review cycle.

## 6. Quality Assurance Procedures

- 6.1 The Quality Assurance Committee will meet regularly throughout the academic year in order to discuss issues related to the assurance of academic quality at ADA University (for details, see the document *Quality Assurance Governance*).
- 6.2 Whenever appropriate, the Quality Assurance Committee may invite further members of ADA University to participate in its meetings and to offer feedback and suggestions on specific issues under discussion.
- 6.3 The Quality Assurance Committee will base its evaluation and required improvements of *outcome* quality:
- on the quality standards and requirements set forth in the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.
  - on the quality indicators defined in the quality assurance policies of each area covered by the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.
  - on quantitative information (such as statistical data) and on qualitative information (such as feedback from students, graduates and employers) (for details, see the University's *Data Management and Reporting Regulations*).
- 6.4 The annual assessment of the *implementation* of the entire *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* and of all of its individual components (documents) will be based on the indicators and information mentioned in 6.3. Where appropriate, the Quality Assurance Committee will request further data and reports from relevant stakeholders of ADA University and initiate improvements (if required).
- 6.5 The Quality Assurance Committee will base its assessment of the *composition* of the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* on an annual review of international best practices.
- 6.6 International best practices serve to guide the entire process of quality assurance at ADA University. Based on the review structure delineated in 5.4, and for each *document* (or group of related documents) under discussion, the Quality Assurance Committee will appoint two of its members to identify and report on these practices and to prepare suggestions for improvement. The process of document review will furthermore be based on the quality indicators defined in 6.7 and in the respective quality assurance policy of each area covered by the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.
- 6.7 When reviewing the quality assurance policies and the documents contained in *Section I*, the *Introduction* and the *Appendices*, the process of quality assurance must particularly ensure and demonstrate:
- that the purpose, scope and composition of the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* continue to serve the objectives of promoting the mission of ADA University and of providing an environment of academic excellence.
  - that ADA University's institutional purposes and its guiding academic principles continue to be aligned with its mission and to serve the interests and needs of students and other relevant stakeholders.
  - that all quality assurance policies and procedures continue to foster academic quality and excellence at ADA University.
  - that the quality assurance governance structure is appropriate to achieve these objectives and that the Quality Assurance Committee has a demonstrable record of effective quality improvements.

- e. that the policies and regulations governing the development and modification of academic quality and quality assurance documents adequately reflect proceedings at ADA University and that they are efficient and likely to produce results of high quality.
- 6.8 Quality indicators and (where required) further quality assurance procedures pertaining to the areas *Academic Program; Teaching, Learning and Assessment; Research; Students; Faculty and Staff; and Equity and Transparency* are specified in each area's respective quality assurance policy.
- 6.9 The Quality Assurance Committee can initiate proposals for academic quality and quality assurance document modification.
- a. To this end, the Committee will appoint two of its members, who will develop a draft of the proposed document modification.
  - b. The draft of the proposal will be shared with all stakeholders of ADA University that are concerned with the respective academic quality and quality assurance document, all of whom will supply feedback letters on the draft (feedback from Schools will consist of one comprehensive report from each School).
  - c. After thorough consideration of all feedback received, and after having finalized the proposal for document modification, the Committee will submit it to the Deans' Council (together with a description of the rationale behind the proposal and all feedback letters received). The Committee must ensure that their proposal fully corresponds to relevant Quality Standards and Quality Guidelines and to the *Document Format Regulations* set forth in the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*. If applicable, it must also be aligned with related policies, statements or regulations of the University.
  - d. At one of its next regular meetings, the Deans' Council will discuss and take a vote on the proposal. Approval by the Deans' Council is granted if the proposal is accepted by the majority of its members.
  - e. If approved by the Deans' Council, the proposal (together with the description of the rationale behind the proposal and all feedback letters received) will be placed on the University Senate's agenda, who will discuss and take a vote on the proposal at one of its next regular meetings. Approval by the Senate is granted if the proposal is accepted by a majority as defined in Article 3 of the Senate's By-Laws.
  - f. If accepted by the Senate and approved by the Rector, the modification becomes effective at the earliest date possible, and no later than in the academic year following the Senate's approval. It will be updated on the University's website and in the respective handbook(s). An electronic copy of the revised document will be provided to all members of ADA University by the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development.
  - g. The Quality Assurance Committee must ensure full and timely implementation of the modified document.
- 6.10 Procedures for the development and submission of proposals for new and for the suspension of existing academic quality and quality assurance documents initiated by the Quality Assurance Committee are regulated by the policies included in Appendix I of the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.
- 6.11 Procedures for proposed modifications of degree programs or individual courses initiated by the Quality Assurance Committee are regulated by the *Quality Assurance Policy: Academic Program and Learning Outcomes*. Procedures for the development and submission of proposals for a new and for the termination of an existing degree program initiated by the Quality Assurance Committee are regulated by the *Degree Program Development and Modification Policy*.
- 6.12 The Quality Assurance Committee will annually report to the University Senate. The Committee must particularly demonstrate its effectiveness in assessing and enhancing academic quality at ADA University.

6.13 At the end of each review cycle, the University Senate will initiate a process of external evaluation. This process will focus on the effectiveness of ADA University's system of quality assurance in general and of the Quality Assurance Committee in particular. The Senate will thoroughly consider the results of the external evaluation and initiate improvements wherever appropriate.

## **7. Student Participation**

- 7.1 The process of quality assurance at ADA University must incorporate the perspective of students.
- 7.2 The ADA Student Government will elect one of its undergraduate and one of its graduate members to serve on the Quality Assurance Committee. The student representatives will participate in meetings related to (and will have the right to vote on) matters concerning the learning experience of students at ADA University. These include (but are not limited to) the evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment; the assessment, development and modification of programs, curricula and courses; the review of credit and degree regulations and of issues related to student admission and retention.
- 7.3 The Quality Assurance Committee will thoroughly consider the results from student course evaluations conducted at the end of each semester.
- 7.4 The Quality Assurance Committee will furthermore ensure that all students of ADA University are regularly made aware of the opportunity to contribute to the process of quality assurance by submitting feedback and suggestions for improvement to the Committee via the ADA Student Government or the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation. Student suggestions and feedback may address any issue related to the learning experience of students at the University.
- 7.5 The Quality Assurance Committee will thoroughly consider feedback from graduates on their learning experiences at ADA University and on potential improvements of its educational offerings (for details, see the University's *Data Management and Reporting Regulations*).

## **5. QUALITY ASSURANCE GOVERNANCE**

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### **1. Purpose**

The process of quality assurance at ADA University is comprehensive, and it includes several stakeholders. The purpose of this document is to delineate the University's quality assurance structure and the responsibilities of the actors involved in the process of quality assurance.

### **2. Scope and Recommendations**

The regulations set forth in this document govern the entire process of quality assurance at the institutional and School level at ADA University.

This document should be read in conjunction with ADA University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*.

### 3. Definitions

*Quality Assurance Governance* describes the structure of quality assurance, key actors involved in the process of quality assurance, as well as their respective responsibilities.

*Quality Assurance* describes the regular assessment / evaluation and enhancement / improvement of standards and guidelines, principles and propositions, rules, processes, structures and outcomes. *Quality Assessment* refers to the review of documents *and* of related outcomes. The *Enhancement of Quality* covers the development or modification of documents *as well as* their implementation and the corresponding achievement of intended outcomes.

### 4. General Provisions

- 4.1 All members of the University are expected to strive for academic quality and the achievement of excellence.
- 4.2 Primary responsibility for the process of quality assurance at ADA University rests with the University's Quality Assurance Committee, with its Subcommittees, and with the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation.
- 4.3 Amendments to this document may be proposed by any member of the Quality Assurance Committee, by any (academic or administrative) unit, by any group of faculty and / or staff, or by members of the senior management of ADA University. Any proposer or group of proposers must seek feedback from the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation before submitting their final proposal to the Quality Assurance Committee. Amendments need the approval of (1) the Quality Assurance Committee, (2) the Committee of Faculty Affairs, (3) the Deans' Council, and (4) the University Senate in order to become effective. If accepted by the Senate and approved by the Rector, the amendment comes into effect in the academic year following the Senate's approval.

### 5. Quality Assurance Structure

#### 5.1 Quality Assurance Committee

- a. The Quality Assurance Committee shall consist of the following 14 members:
  - (1) Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development;
  - (2) Vice Rector of Academic Affairs;
  - (3) Vice Rector for Government, External and Student Affairs;
  - (4) Director of Quality Assurance and Accreditation;
  - (5) Director of Admissions and Student Records;
  - (6) 5 faculty members (one from each of ADA University's Schools);
  - (7) 2 external members from ADA University's international partners;
  - (8) 1 undergraduate student representative and 1 graduate student representative.
- b. The members mentioned above in (1) to (5) shall be permanent members of the Quality Assurance Committee as long as they hold their respective administrative position.
- c. The 5 members mentioned above in (6) shall be elected by the Committee of Faculty Affairs for the duration of two academic years. They may be reelected twice.
- d. The 2 members mentioned above in (7) shall be appointed by the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development after consultation with the Quality Assurance Committee and with the respective international partner(s). They may come from the same or from different

partner institutions and shall be appointed for the duration of two academic years. They may be reappointed twice.

- e. The 2 members mentioned above in (8) shall be elected by the ADA Student Government for the duration of 1 academic year. The ADA Student Government will elect 2 of its members prior or at the beginning of each academic year. Undergraduate students are only eligible if they are in their third or fourth year of study at ADA University. Graduate students are only eligible if they have studied for at least one academic year at ADA University (either at the undergraduate or the graduate level). Both the undergraduate and the graduate student representative may be elected for a maximum of 2 academic years.
- f. In case a member of the Quality Assurance Committee should withdraw from the Committee, or if a member should no longer be eligible for membership, he/she will be replaced in accordance with the regulations delineated in 5.1.b to 5.1.e.
- g. The Quality Assurance Committee is chaired by the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development. In the absence of the Vice Rector, meetings are chaired by one of the Committee members mentioned above in (2) to (5).
- h. Whenever appropriate, the Quality Assurance Committee may invite further members of ADA University to participate in its meetings and to offer feedback and suggestions on specific issues under discussion.

## **5.2 Quality Assurance Subcommittees**

- a. Each School of ADA University will have one Quality Assurance Subcommittee.
- b. Each Subcommittee will consist of 4 faculty members of the respective School. Subcommittee meetings will be chaired by the School's permanent member of the Quality Assurance Committee.
- c. Whenever appropriate, the Quality Assurance Subcommittees may invite further members of ADA University to participate in their meetings and to offer feedback and suggestions on specific issues under discussion.

## **5.3 Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation**

- a. The Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation is a permanent administrative unit of ADA University.
- b. The Office is led by the Director of Quality Assurance and Accreditation.
- c. The Office is independent of the Quality Assurance Committee and of its Subcommittees, but it will continuously and substantially support these committees in their activities.

# **6. Committee Proceedings**

## **6.1 Quality Assurance Committee**

- a. Meetings of the Quality Assurance Committee will be held at least once a month and as often as the fulfillment of its duties may require. The Committee's Chairperson may call extraordinary meetings whenever necessary. The Committee is in recess during August.
- b. Committee meetings shall be held in accordance with an agenda that is made available to each Committee member at least one week prior to a meeting. It is the Chairperson's responsibility to prepare the agenda, which will be discussed, potentially adjusted, and agreed on at the beginning of each meeting. Approval of an agenda requires the simple majority of the Committee members present.
- c. Decisions by the Quality Assurance Committee shall be taken by open voting and by a simple majority of those voting members present at a meeting.

- d. Decisions can be taken only if no less than two-thirds (2/3) of the Committee's voting members are present at a meeting (quorum).
- e. If the votes are evenly split, the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development has the casting vote. In case of the Vice Rector's absence, the final decision in such matters shall be deferred to the following meeting.
- f. The 2 external members of the Quality Assurance Committee have no vote, but they have the right to be heard at any time and/or to submit a written statement on any item on the Committee's agenda. The Committee must thoroughly consider any proposition made by any of the 2 external Committee members before taking a vote on the respective matter.
- g. The 2 student members of the Committee have the right to vote on matters concerning the learning experience of students at ADA University, including (but not limited to) the evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment; the assessment, development and modification of programs, curricula and courses; the review of credit and degree regulations and of issues related to student admission and retention. The undergraduate member of the Committee may only vote on matters related to the undergraduate student experience at ADA University; the graduate member of the Committee may only vote on matters related to the graduate student experience at the University.

## **6.2 Quality Assurance Subcommittees**

- a. All Quality Assurance Subcommittees will meet as often as the fulfillment of their duties may require. It is the Chairpersons' responsibility to call meetings whenever necessary. All Subcommittees are in recess during July and August.
- b. Subcommittee meetings shall be held in accordance with an agenda that is made available to each Subcommittee member at least one week prior to a meeting. It is the Chairperson's responsibility to prepare the agenda, which will be discussed, potentially adjusted, and agreed on at the beginning of each meeting. Approval of an agenda requires the simple majority of those Subcommittee members present.
- c. Decisions by the Subcommittees shall be taken by open voting and by a simple majority of those members present at a meeting.
- d. Decisions can be taken only if no less than two-thirds (2/3) of the Subcommittee's members are present at a meeting (quorum).
- e. If the votes are evenly split, the Chairperson has the casting vote. In case of the Chairperson's absence, the final decision in such matters shall be deferred to the following meeting.

## **7. Responsibilities**

### **7.1 Quality Assurance Committee**

- a. The main responsibilities of the Quality Assurance Committee are outlined in chapters 4 and 5 of the University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*.
- b. The Quality Assurance Committee will perform its obligations according to the procedures and based on the criteria delineated in chapter 6 of the University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*. This includes the quality indicators defined in the quality assurance policies that are part of each area covered by the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*. The latter policies may also outline further procedures pertaining to the respective area.
- c. It is the responsibility of the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development to coordinate the workings of the Quality Assurance Committee and to ensure that the Committee

successfully fulfills all the responsibilities outlined in this document and in chapters 4 and 5 of the University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*.

- d. The Director of Quality Assurance and Accreditation will supervise the continuous implementation of the University's entire *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*. He/she will coordinate this responsibility with the other members of the Committee and regularly report to the latter. The Director will also support the 2 student representatives to ensure that student interests and concerns are adequately represented on the Committee. He/she will furthermore take the Committee's minutes.
- e. The 5 faculty members will represent the perspective and interests of faculty and introduce concerns and propositions made by faculty and by the Committee of Faculty Affairs. They must ensure that faculty concerns and interests are continuously heard by the Quality Assurance Committee.
- f. The 2 members from ADA University's international partners will provide an external perspective and informed advice on the entire process of quality assurance at the University.
- g. The 2 student members will represent the perspective and interests of students and introduce concerns and propositions made by students and by the ADA Student Government. They must closely cooperate with the ADA Student Government to ensure that student concerns and interests are continuously heard by the Quality Assurance Committee.
- h. Any Committee member (or group of Committee members) may propose measures to improve the quality of the University's academic quality and quality assurance documents and/or their outcomes.
- i. The Quality Assurance Committee will annually report to the University Senate.

## **7.2 Quality Assurance Subcommittees**

- a. All Quality Assurance Subcommittees will support the main Committee in its responsibility to assess and enhance academic quality at the University.
- b. The Subcommittees' Chairpersons must ensure that the work of the Subcommittees is coordinated with the Quality Assurance Committee.
- c. The major responsibility of the Subcommittees is to monitor student success, program effectiveness and the implementation of learning outcomes in their respective Schools. They will prepare reports and recommendations to the Quality Assurance Committee.
- d. Chairpersons will report to the Quality Assurance Committee and ensure that it is provided with all the information required to assess and enhance student success, program effectiveness and the implementation of learning outcomes in all of the University's Schools.

## **7.3 Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation**

- a. The Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation provides continuous and substantial support to the Quality Assurance Committee and its Subcommittees. The Quality Assurance Committee may request the assistance of the Office whenever necessary in order to fulfill its obligations comprehensively and efficiently.
- b. The Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation, in conjunction with the Office of IT and Information Services, organizes and maintains the University's *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database* and supports the process of quality assurance by preparing relevant reports (for details, see the University's *Data Management and Reporting Regulations*).
- c. The Office works towards the development of new and the improvement of existing academic quality and quality assurance documents. It supports the Quality Assurance Committee in the identification of potential deficits and gaps in the University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.

- d. The Office offers support to all members of the University that are working on the development of new or the modification of existing academic quality and quality assurance documents.
- e. The Office is available to students who may submit feedback and suggestions for the improvement of educational structures and processes at the University.
- f. The Office ensures that the entire process of quality assurance is coordinated with the University's accreditation projects.
- g. The Office plans, coordinates and supervises all (national and international) accreditation projects at the institutional and School level.
- h. The Office works towards the completion of the University's national and international accreditation projects unless they are assigned to other academic or administrative units. In the latter case, the Office actively supports these units in the successful completion of the respective project.
- i. The Director of Quality Assurance and Accreditation regularly reports to the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development and to the Quality Assurance Committee.

## SECTION II: AREAS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

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Section II of the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* defines standards and guidelines for academic quality and quality assurance at ADA University. It covers all the areas relevant to the assessment and enhancement of academic quality, namely (1) Academic Program, (2) Teaching, Learning and Assessment, (3) Research, (4) Students, (5) Faculty and Staff, and (6) Equity and Transparency.

This section furthermore delineates policies and procedures for quality assurance in each of these areas. Each area finally includes documents that constitute the formalized basis for the implementation of academic quality and the achievement of excellence.

### 1. ACADEMIC PROGRAM

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#### 1.1 QUALITY STANDARD

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Degree programs are aligned with the University's mission and institutional purposes. They are designed to develop the core competencies and learning outcomes that are defined by the University and that serve to guide the entire educational process. Degree programs must clearly specify and state program objectives as well as competencies and learning outcomes resulting from a program. Degree programs and awards are subject to a regular cycle of quality assurance, and there are formal processes for the development and modification of degree programs.

#### 1.2 QUALITY GUIDELINES

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Academic programs are at the core of ADA University's educational mission. They provide students with the competencies required to become highly efficient professionals and responsible citizens. In order to ensure a consistently high quality of its educational offerings, all degree programs at ADA University must comply with certain quality requirements. More specifically, all degree programs must:

- ❖ be of continuing relevance by serving the needs of students, society and the market alike.
  - ❖ be designed based on explicitly stated program objectives that are consistent with ADA University's *Statement of Student Outcome Images* and with its *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes*.
  - ❖ explicitly specify and state (both on the program and course level) competencies students are expected to develop as well as intended learning outcomes, and this based on ADA University's *Statement on Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes*. Whilst individual courses must ensure that the educational process is fully aligned with these core competencies and learning outcomes by incorporating them
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substantially, it is on the level of degree programs (as a coherent structure of courses) that they must be covered comprehensively.

- ❖ be based on a coherent structure of courses and on a well-designed curriculum that is consistent with ADA University's *Curriculum Structure and Regulations* and that allows for an integrated learning experience and a smooth student progression.
- ❖ be consistent with ADA University's credit regulations and degree regulations.
- ❖ coherently and comprehensively incorporate ADA University's General Education requirements.
- ❖ ensure that all degree components (such as courses, requirements, program objectives, competencies and learning outcomes) are well aligned. On the level of courses, each course must be based on a well-aligned structure (which includes competencies and learning outcomes, the teaching and learning process, as well as assessment).
- ❖ ensure the currency and relevance of program and course content and of all teaching and learning materials used in courses.
- ❖ explicitly state the mode of teaching and learning (face-to-face, blended, or online).
- ❖ be designed to ensure a high level of program effectiveness and graduate attainment.
- ❖ comprehensively address ADA University's *Equity, Diversity and Non-Discrimination Policy*.
- ❖ guarantee academic freedom to all students and to all faculty involved in the program's educational processes.

A consistently high quality of ADA University's educational offerings requires that not only its degree programs, but also all the documents on which the academic program is based are current, relevant and designed according to high international standards (and in particular according to the standards set forth by regional U.S. accrediting agencies).

### **1.3 QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY: ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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#### **1. Purpose**

This document is based on ADA University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*. Its purpose is to define specific structures and procedures of academic quality assurance for the area *Academic Program*.

#### **2. Scope and Recommendations**

This policy applies to the area *Academic Program*. It provides guidance on the assessment and enhancement of the area's *Quality Standard* and *Quality Guidelines*, of its key documents and of actual outcomes.

This policy should be read in conjunction with ADA University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*.

### 3. Definitions

The *Academic Program* comprises all matters related to ADA University's educational offerings. These matters include degree programs, curricula and courses; outcome images, core competencies and learning outcomes; a General Education framework and credit and degree regulations; as well as regulations ensuring the integrity of the University's degrees.

*Quality Indicators* are clearly defined criteria that allow for the assessment of academic quality and quality assurance documents as well as of their outcomes. The results of these assessments serve to further enhance the quality of documents and outcomes.

### 4. Quality Indicators

- 4.1 Quality indicators must be based on international best practices and reflect the quality standards and requirements defined for the *Academic Program* in ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*. They must cover all key documents and related outcomes as well as the area's *Quality Standard* and *Quality Guidelines*.
- 4.2 When reviewing key documents, their actual outcomes and the *Quality Standard* and *Quality Guidelines* contained in the area *Academic Program*, the process of quality assurance must be based on the quality indicators defined in 4.3 to 4.11.
- 4.3 The *Quality Standard* and *Quality Guidelines* continue to reflect international best practices and serve to provide an environment of academic excellence.
- 4.4 *Student Outcome Images* as well as *Core Competencies* and *Learning Outcomes* are aligned with the University's mission and purposes. They address the needs and requirements of students, society and the market, and they are formulated according to the latest international standards. The *Core Competence and Learning Outcome Specification Policy* is designed based on international best practices in teaching and learning. Outcome images and core competencies are coherently reflected at the School and program level; core competencies and learning outcomes are comprehensively covered by programs and substantially reflected and measurably implemented on the level of individual courses. Course learning outcomes are aligned with program learning outcomes, and both are aligned with institutional learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are implemented to allow for a gradual development of student learning and experience throughout each degree program.
- 4.5 The *General Education Regulations* and the *English for Academic and Professional Purposes Regulations* provide well-structured and comprehensive directives for their respective areas. The *English for Academic and Professional Purposes Regulations* cover all 4 language skills. They are designed to ensure that all the University's undergraduate students have a level of English proficiency that allows them to successfully study their respective degree programs. The *General Education Regulations* provide a broad, coherent and comprehensive *General Education Program* that continues to be comparable to those offered by U.S. institutions of higher education and that serves to develop a well-rounded person. It adequately covers the following areas: (1) *Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Quantitative Reasoning*, (2) *Writing and Information Literacy*, and (3) *Leadership and Communication*. The General Education requirements defined by the *General Education Regulations* are coherently and comprehensively incorporated into all undergraduate degree programs. At least 60 credit hours are covered by these requirements in each undergraduate degree program (unless stated otherwise in the respective program's description).

- 4.6 The *Curriculum and Course Development Policy* provides a well-structured, comprehensive and comprehensible framework for faculty and for program, curriculum and course developers. It is consistent with ADA University's *Curriculum Structure and Regulations*. Both documents take into consideration the latest international standards for curriculum design and development. All programs, curricula and courses at ADA University are coherently structured and designed to allow for an integrated learning experience, for a high level of student achievement, and for a smooth student progression. They are consistent with ADA University's *Curriculum Structure and Regulations*.
- 4.7 The *Credit Regulations* are based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), and they continue to be translatable into the standards of the U.S. system of higher education. They are implemented in the *Undergraduate Degree Regulations* and the *Graduate Degree Regulations* and in each degree program offered at ADA University. They continually ensure a high level of ADA University's degrees, and they allow students to fully benefit from international co-operations and exchange opportunities.
- 4.8 Both the *Undergraduate Degree Regulations* and the *Graduate Degree Regulations* detail coherent and comprehensive requirements for the successful completion of a degree. They include a General Education requirement at the undergraduate level as well as major requirements at the undergraduate and graduate level (including Free Electives for undergraduate students). All degree regulations continue to reflect international best practices, and they are fully implemented in all degree programs.
- 4.9 The *Degree Program Development and Modification Policy* adequately reflects proceedings at ADA University. It ensures the participation of faculty and of other relevant stakeholders. All degree programs must in particular:
- a. be of continuing relevance by serving the needs of students, society and the market.
  - b. be designed based on explicitly stated program objectives that are consistent with ADA University's *Statement of Student Outcome Images* and with its *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes*.
  - c. explicitly specify and state (both on the program and course level) competencies students are expected to develop as well as intended learning outcomes, and this based on ADA University's *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes*.
  - d. ensure that all degree components (such as courses, requirements, program objectives, competencies and learning outcomes) are well aligned. On the level of courses, each course must be based on a well-aligned structure (which includes competencies and learning outcomes, the teaching and learning process, as well as assessment).
  - e. ensure the currency and relevance of program and course content and of all teaching and learning materials used in courses.
  - f. explicitly state the mode of teaching and learning (face-to-face, blended, or online).
  - g. be designed to ensure a high level of program effectiveness and graduate attainment.
  - h. comprehensively address ADA University's *Equity, Diversity and Non-Discrimination Policy*.
  - i. guarantee academic freedom to all students and to all faculty involved in the program's educational processes.
- 4.10 Programs and courses offered in the online or blended format must additionally ensure that program objectives and stated learning outcomes are attainable via an online or blended teaching, learning and assessment format; that all relevant program and course information (including syllabi, LMS guidance for students, assessment criteria, learning materials and links to external resources) is readily and easily available on the LMS platform (*Blackboard Learn*); and that *Blackboard Learn* is used creatively and comprehensively in the process of teaching and learning.

- 4.11 The *Degree Audit Regulations* are designed to ensure the integrity of the University's degrees by providing for regular, comprehensive and rigorous degree evaluation processes. All degrees awarded fully and at least satisfactorily meet the program requirements of ADA University.

## 5. Quality Assurance Procedures

- 5.1 The process of quality assurance in the area *Academic Program* is based on the quality indicators defined above and on the quality review cycle and the procedures delineated in ADA University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*.
- 5.2 The process of quality assurance must ensure the involvement of Schools and faculty and the participation of students as delineated in the general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy* and the document *Quality Assurance Governance*.
- 5.3 The review and potential improvement of key documents and of degree programs must pay particular attention to the definition of learning outcomes at the institutional level and to their implementation at the level of Schools, programs and courses. Schools will annually supply reports to the Quality Assurance Committee that serve to validate the implementation of learning outcomes at the School, program and course level and that may include suggestions for the further improvement of learning outcomes. The Quality Assurance Committee will thoroughly consider these reports during the process of quality assessment and enhancement. In case of incomplete or insufficient implementation of learning outcomes, the Committee will initiate and supervise improvements as appropriate and based on the quality indicators defined above.
- 5.4 The process of quality assurance for programs and courses offered in the online or blended format follows the procedures outlined in this policy. It additionally requires the involvement of ADA University's Information Technology Services.
- 5.5 The Quality Assurance Committee can initiate proposals for the modification of degree programs and of individual courses.
- To this end, the Committee will appoint two of its members, who will develop a draft of the proposed program or course modification. It must ensure that faculty are substantially involved in the entire process of program or course modification.
  - The draft of the proposal will be shared with relevant stakeholders of ADA University, all of whom will supply feedback letters on the draft (feedback from Schools will consist of one comprehensive feedback letter from each involved School).
  - After thorough consideration of all feedback received, and after having finalized the proposal for program or course modification, the Quality Assurance Committee will submit it to the Dean of the School that serves as the program's administrative home (together with a description of the rationale behind the proposal and all feedback letters received). The Quality Assurance Committee must ensure that their proposal fully corresponds to relevant quality standards and quality guidelines. It must also be aligned with relevant policies, statements or regulations of the University.
  - Procedures for the approval of proposals for program or course modification initiated by the Quality Assurance Committee are regulated by the *Degree Program Development and Modification Policy*.
  - The Quality Assurance Committee must ensure full and timely implementation of all program or course modifications.
- 5.6 Procedures for the development and submission of proposals for a new and for the termination of an existing degree program initiated by the Quality Assurance Committee are regulated by the *Degree Program Development and Modification Policy*.

## 1.4 KEY DOCUMENTS

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### 1.4.1 DEGREE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND MODIFICATION POLICY

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#### 1. Purpose

ADA University is dedicated to the continuous enhancement of its academic program. This comprises the development of new and the modification of existing degree programs (including the development or modification of individual courses). Both processes are part of ADA University's commitment to quality assurance in teaching and learning and to the academic freedom of its faculty. These processes also allow for an ongoing strategic development of the University, and they ensure its ability to adjust its educational offerings to new demands of students, the economy or the society as a whole.

The purpose of this policy is to outline detailed procedures for the development and modification of degree programs.

#### 2. Scope and Recommendations

This policy applies to the entire academic program at ADA University, covering all the degree programs and courses offered face-to-face or via a blended or online learning format. It outlines the processes of degree program development and modification at the undergraduate and graduate level.

A proposal for a new degree program or for the modification of an existing program can be initiated and submitted by any group of faculty members or by members of the senior management of ADA University. A proposal for a new course or for the modification of an existing course can be initiated and submitted by any faculty member(s) or by any member(s) of the senior management of ADA University.

Modifications of degree programs or individual courses resulting from the Quality Assurance Committee's regular review of ADA University's academic program are regulated by the *Quality Assurance Policy: Academic Program and Learning Outcomes*. Detailed procedures related to the design and development of curricula and courses are outlined in the *Curriculum and Course Development Policy*.

Creating or adapting a degree program is a multifarious process that involves a variety of factors and stakeholders. Members of ADA University intending to design or redesign a degree program are expected to consult widely and to address feedback and concerns throughout the entire process.

#### 3. Definitions

A *Degree Program* is a coherent and structured set of courses, requirements, objectives and learning outcomes, leading to an academic degree at the undergraduate or graduate level.

Entire degree programs or individual courses offered *Face-to-Face* are classroom-based. They make use of the online mode only for additional student support and to share teaching and learning materials.

Entire degree programs or individual courses offered in the *Blended (Hybrid)* format combine classroom-based and online teaching and learning activities.

Entire degree programs or individual courses offered in the *Online (Distance)* format are based exclusively on remote forms of teaching and learning.

A *Modification* of a degree program may include (but is not limited to) changes in course composition (including the content of individual courses); program objectives and learning outcomes; curriculum structure; the mode of delivery; or in the program's name.

## **4. Development of New Degree Programs**

### **4.1 Initiation of the Development of a New Degree Program**

- a. The development of a new degree program can be initiated by any group of faculty members or by senior management members of ADA University.
- b. Before beginning the process of program development, the initiators are required to consult with the Dean of the School that would serve as administrative home for the program. In case of a multidisciplinary program that spans several Schools, the Dean of the School that is most likely to become the administrative home of the program will serve as the initial consultant for the program initiators. The Dean will inform the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs about the development of a proposal for a new program.
- c. The role of initial consultant will be taken over by the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs if the Dean(s) is (are) part of the group of program initiators. The role of initial consultants will be taken over by the Deans of the other Schools if the involved Dean(s) and the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs are part of the group of program initiators.
- d. The initial consultation will help determine the potential of the proposed program, its strategic positioning within ADA University's educational offerings, but also potential risks program developers may face and how these risks can be addressed.
- e. The initial consultation must also ensure that the process of program development incorporates an external perspective, which will usually consist of at least one faculty member and at least one academic support staff member from at least one of ADA University's partner institutions. After having agreed with the program initiators on potential candidates from partner institutions, the initial consultant(s) must obtain the approval of a sufficient number of these candidates.

### **4.2 Preparation of a Proposal for a New Degree Program**

- a. Program initiators are responsible for the development of the new degree program.
- b. If the initiators are part of ADA University's senior management, the new program must be developed in close cooperation with faculty members of the involved School(s). Faculty will have sole responsibility for all academic matters of the program proposal.
- c. The group of proposers (which consists of all program initiators and developers) will develop a first draft of the program, which must detail courses, requirements, program objectives and learning outcomes. It must also outline its curriculum structure and address the issue of diversity.

- d. The proposers will share the first draft of the program with the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, the Dean(s)<sup>1</sup> and faculty of the involved School(s), with relevant Program Directors and the external consultants as defined in 4.1.e, with the ADA Student Government, and with academic support units (such as, but not limited to, ADA Library, Information Technology Services, Office of Admissions and Student Records, Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation), all of whom will give initial feedback on the draft (faculty feedback will consist of one comprehensive report from each involved School).
- e. The proposers will address the feedback received in an adequate manner and develop a revised version of the program proposal. The proposers are free to adopt or reject feedback received on academic issues. In case of rejection, they must demonstrate good academic reasons for their decision.
- f. The revised version will go through the same processes as mentioned in 4.2.d and 4.2.e, which will result in a final version of the proposal.
- g. The final version of the proposal will be submitted to the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation, which will ensure that it fully corresponds to the Quality Standard and Quality Guidelines set forth for ADA University's degree programs in its *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*. Potential adjustments will be implemented in close cooperation with the proposers.
- h. After confirmation by the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation, the proposers will share the final version of the proposal with all the stakeholders referred to in 4.2.d, all of whom will supply feedback letters on the proposal (faculty will supply one comprehensive feedback letter for each involved School).

### **4.3 Requirements for a New Degree Program**

- a. The proposers must demonstrate the new program's potential to enhance the quality of education at ADA University.
- b. The program proposal must correspond to the Quality Standard and the Quality Guidelines as defined for the Academic Program in ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.
- c. The program proposal must include a synoptic but comprehensive outline of the curriculum, its course structure and of further program components as defined in ADA University's *Curriculum and Course Development Policy*. All program components must be clearly aligned with the University's mission, with its *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes*, with its *Curriculum Structure and Regulations*, *General Education Regulations* and *Credit Regulations*, as well as with its *Undergraduate Degree Regulations* or its *Graduate Degree Regulations*. The proposal must also indicate how the new program addresses the University's *Equity, Diversity and Non-Discrimination Policy*.
- d. All program proposals must include a statement on required resources (such as, but not limited to, financial resources, faculty and staff, classroom space and technology, library resources, LMS support and teaching materials).
- e. All program proposals must be accompanied by a market survey or an equivalent document, indicating a demand for the new program and its potential contribution to the public good and the international visibility of the University.
- f. All the feedback letters received from members and stakeholders of ADA University must be added to the program proposal. In case of rejected feedback, the proposers must attach a statement which details reasons for each rejection made.

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<sup>1</sup> Sharing with the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs and the Dean(s) becomes redundant if they are part of the group of proposers. This also applies to the following parts of this policy.

#### **4.4 Proposal Submission and Approval of a New Degree Program**

- a. After having been submitted to the Dean of the relevant School, the program proposal needs to be approved by the faculty of that School. Approval is granted if the proposal is accepted by a majority of the School's faculty. In the case of multidisciplinary program proposals, the proposal needs to be independently approved by the faculty of each of the Schools involved.
- b. If approved by the School (or each of the Schools), the Dean of the School which would serve as the program's administrative home will submit the proposal (together with all the accompanying documents mentioned in 4.3) to the Deans' Council.
- c. At one of its next regular meetings, the Deans' Council will discuss and take a vote on the program proposal. Program proposers will be invited in order to present the proposal and address potential questions. Approval by the Deans' Council is granted if the proposal is accepted by the majority of its members.
- d. If approved by the Deans' Council, the program proposal (together with all the accompanying documents mentioned in 4.3) will be submitted to the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, who will make a recommendation to the University Senate (this recommendation must come from one of the Deans not involved in program initiation and development if the Vice Rector is part of the group of proposers). The proposal will be placed on the Senate's agenda, who will discuss and take a vote on the program proposal at one of its next regular meetings. Program proposers will be invited in order to present the proposal and address potential questions. Approval by the University Senate is granted if the proposal is accepted by a majority as defined in Article 3 of the Senate's By-Laws. If accepted by the Senate and approved by the Rector, the new program becomes part of the curriculum of ADA University.

#### **4.5 Implementation of a New Degree Program**

- a. Responsibility for the development of the program's detailed curriculum (including course design and content) rests with the faculty of the School or Schools involved (for details, see the University's *Curriculum and Course Development Policy* and its *Core Competence and Learning Outcome Specification Policy*). The program's curriculum must be aligned with the *Curriculum Structure and Regulations* of ADA University.
- b. Those engaged in the process of curriculum and course development must obtain regular feedback from the external faculty consultant mentioned in 4.1.e and consider all feedback received thoroughly.
- c. The program's curriculum needs to be approved by the faculty of the School that serves as administrative home of the program. Approval is granted if the proposed curriculum is accepted by a majority of the School's faculty. In the case of a multidisciplinary program, the curriculum needs to be independently approved by the faculty of each of the Schools involved.
- d. If approved by the School (or each of the Schools), the Dean of the School which serves as the program's administrative home will submit the proposed curriculum to the Committee of Faculty Affairs. At one of its next regular meetings, the Committee of Faculty Affairs will discuss and take a vote on the proposal. Approval by the Committee of Faculty Affairs is granted if the proposal is accepted by the majority of its members.
- e. If approved by the Committee of Faculty Affairs, the proposed curriculum will be placed on the agenda of the Deans' Council, who will discuss and take a vote on the curriculum proposal at one of its next regular meetings. Approval by the Deans' Council is granted if the proposal is accepted by the majority of its members. If accepted by the Deans' Council, the new program and its curriculum will be made public on the University's website and as part of the Academic Catalogue. The new degree program will be launched in the academic year following the Deans' Council's approval.

- f. If the proposed curriculum or any of its courses should be rejected at any stage of the approval process, the proposal will be returned to the faculty of the involved School or Schools, to be updated and resubmitted according to the procedures detailed in 4.5.a to 4.5.e. Faculty must thoroughly consider the reasons stated for the rejection of their proposal during this process.

## 5. Modification of Degree Programs

### 5.1 Initiation, Preparation and Submission of a Proposal for Program Modification

- a. Major modifications of a degree program can be initiated by any group of faculty members or by senior management members of ADA University. Major changes include (but are not limited to) changes in the program's curriculum and course composition; the program's requirements, objectives and learning outcomes; the mode of delivery; or in the name of the program.
- b. Minor modifications of a degree program can be initiated by any faculty member(s) or by any member(s) of the senior management of ADA University. Minor changes include (but are not limited to) the content or requirements of Core Courses and Technical Electives, or the sequence of courses.
- c. Before beginning the process of program modification, the initiators are required to consult with the Dean of the School that serves as the program's administrative home. In case of major changes, the Dean will inform the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs about the proposal for program modification. The former procedure becomes redundant if the Dean is part of the group of initiators, the latter if this is the case with the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs.
- d. If applicable, the initial consultation will help determine the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed changes to the degree program, but also potential risks that may be faced in the process of program modification and how these risks can be addressed.
- e. Initiators of a program modification are responsible for its preparation and submission. If the initiators are part of ADA University's senior management, they are required to closely cooperate with faculty members of the involved School(s) throughout the process of program modification. Faculty will have sole responsibility for all academic matters.
- f. The proposer or group of proposers, which consists of the initiator(s) and developer(s) of the program modification, will develop a detailed description of all proposed modifications. All modifications must be aligned with the University's relevant policies, statements and regulations. Depending on the changes envisaged, proposers are strongly recommended to pay particular attention to the procedures outlined in ADA University's *Curriculum and Course Development Policy* and in its *Core Competence and Learning Outcome Specification Policy*. All changes proposed must furthermore correspond to the Quality Standard and Quality Guidelines as defined for the Academic Program in ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.
- g. The proposer(s) must consult with the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in order to ensure that their proposal fully corresponds to the Quality Standard and Quality Guidelines mentioned in 5.1.f.
- h. In case of major changes, the proposers will share the draft of their proposal with the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, the Dean(s) and faculty of the involved School(s), with relevant Program Directors, with the ADA Student Government, and with relevant academic support units, all of whom will supply feedback letters on the draft (faculty will supply one comprehensive feedback letter for each involved School).
- i. After thorough consideration of all feedback received, and after having finalized the proposal, the proposers will submit it to the Dean of the School that serves as the program's administrative

home (together with a description of the rationale behind the proposal and all feedback letters received). The latter step becomes redundant if the Dean is part of the group of proposers.

## **5.2 Approval and Implementation of Program Modification**

- a. The proposal for program modification needs to be approved by the faculty of the respective School. Approval is granted if the proposal is accepted by a majority of the School's faculty. In the case of a multidisciplinary program, the proposal needs to be independently approved by the faculty of each of the Schools involved.
- b. In case of minor modifications, the School's (or Schools') approval or rejection is the final decision.
- c. In case of the approval of major modifications, the Dean of the School which serves as the program's administrative home will submit the proposal to the Committee of Faculty Affairs (together with a description of the rationale behind the proposal and all feedback letters received). At one of its next regular meetings, the Committee will discuss and take a vote on the proposal. Approval by the Committee of Faculty Affairs is granted if the proposal is accepted by the majority of its members.
- d. If approved by the Committee of Faculty Affairs, the proposal for program modification (together with a description of the rationale behind the proposal and all feedback letters received) will be placed on the agenda of the Deans' Council, who will discuss and take a vote on the proposal at one of its next regular meetings. Approval by the Deans' Council is granted if the proposal is accepted by the majority of its members.
- e. If approved by the Deans' Council, the proposal for program modification (together with a description of the rationale behind the proposal and all feedback letters received) will be placed on the University Senate's agenda, who will discuss and take a vote on the proposal at one of its next regular meetings. Approval by the University Senate is granted if the proposal is accepted by a majority as defined in Article 3 of the Senate's By-Laws.
- f. If accepted by the School(s) (minor modifications), or if accepted by the Senate and approved by the Rector (major modifications), the modification will come into effect in the academic year following the School's (or Schools') or the Senate's approval, and it will be made public (as part of the degree program) on the University's homepage and in the Academic Catalogue.
- g. Responsibility for the implementation of program modifications rests with the faculty of the School or Schools involved.

## **6. Termination of Degree Programs**

### **6.1 Proposal of and Decision on the Termination of a Degree Program**

- a. The termination of an existing degree program can be proposed by senior management members of ADA University or by the majority of the faculty of the School that serves as the program's administrative home (in the case of a multidisciplinary program, termination can be proposed by the majority of faculty of any of the involved Schools). Proposers are expected to consult widely before submitting a proposal for degree termination.
- b. The proposers must provide a detailed statement on the rationale behind the proposal and attach the most recent enrollment reports as well as a market survey (or an equivalent document) that clearly indicates a lack of demand for the degree program and/or its growing insignificance in the public and/or economic sphere. Their proposal must also include feedback letters from the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, the Dean(s) and faculty of the involved School(s), from relevant Program Directors, from the ADA Student Government, and from academic support units (faculty will supply one comprehensive feedback letter for each involved

School). Feedback letters are only required from those stakeholders that are not part of the group of proposers.

- c. After appropriate consideration of the feedback letters received, the group of proposers will decide whether they will uphold, modify or withdraw the proposal.
- d. Modification of the proposal will result in an updated statement on the rationale of the proposal and/or in the compilation of additional supporting documents, all of which must be submitted to the stakeholders mentioned in 6.1.b, who will either uphold or adapt their previous feedback letters. After appropriate consideration of the feedback letters received, the group of proposers will make a final decision on whether they will uphold or withdraw the proposal.
- e. In the case of a multidisciplinary program, and if the group of proposers uphold their proposal as detailed in 6.1.c or 6.1.d, the proposal needs the approval of the majority of each of the involved Schools in order to proceed.
- f. If the proposal of program termination is approved by the faculty of the involved School(s), the Dean of the School which serves as the program's administrative home will submit the proposal to the Deans' Council (together with the latest description of the rationale behind the proposal, the most recent enrollment reports, the market survey or an equivalent document, any additional supporting documents, and the latest versions of the feedback letters received). At one of its next regular meetings, the Deans' Council will discuss and take a vote on the proposal of program termination. Proposers will be invited in order to present the proposal and address potential questions. Approval by the Deans' Council is granted if the proposal is accepted by the majority of its members.
- g. If approved by the Deans' Council, the proposal of program termination (together with the documents mentioned in 6.1.f) will be submitted to the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, who will make a recommendation to the University Senate (this recommendation must come from one of the Deans not involved in the proposal for program termination if the Vice Rector is part of the group of proposers). The proposal will be placed on the Senate's agenda, who will discuss and take a vote on the proposal at one of its next regular meetings. Proposers will be invited in order to present the proposal and address potential questions. Approval by the University Senate is granted if the proposal is accepted by a majority as defined in Article 3 of the Senate's By-Laws. If accepted by the Senate and approved by the Rector, the termination of the program will come into effect and be implemented as described in 6.2.

## **6.2 Implementation of the Termination of a Degree Program**

- a. Student admission to a suspended degree program will terminate with immediate effect.
- b. The program will continue to appear on the University's website and in its Academic Catalogue, followed by the notation "program will terminate, admission has been suspended".
- c. As soon as the number of students remaining on the program is decreasing, program offerings can be reduced.
- d. Full consideration is to be given to the needs of those students that are still enrolled in the program, who must be allowed enough time and course offerings to complete the program. Students who wish to transfer to another (and comparable) program will be allowed to do so.
- e. As soon as there are no students left, the program will be permanently removed from the University's website and Academic Catalogue.

## 7. Online and Blended Degree Programs

- 7.1 Procedures for the development of new online or blended degree programs or for the modification or termination of existing online or blended degree programs follow the same procedures as described above.
- 7.2 In addition to the procedures described above, the group of proposers shall include one of ADA University's *Blackboard* Course Facilitators.
- 7.3 During the development or modification of an online or blended degree program or course, particular attention must be paid to the attainability of program objectives and/or stated learning outcomes via an online or blended teaching, learning and assessment format. Proposers are strongly recommended to consult ADA University's *Online Education and Assessment Regulations* during the process of program or course development or modification.

## 8. Joint Degree Programs

- 8.1 Procedures for the development of new joint degree programs or for the modification or termination of existing joint degree programs follow the same procedures as described above.
- 8.2 In addition to the procedures described above, the development of new joint programs or the modification or termination of existing joint programs require the consultation with and the approval from the respective partner institution.
- 8.3 During the development or modification of a joint degree program or course, proposers must ensure that their proposal is fully aligned with ADA University's *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes, Curriculum Structure and Regulations, General Education Regulations, Credit Regulations*, as well as with its *Undergraduate Degree Regulations* or its *Graduate Degree Regulations*.

## 1.4.2 CURRICULUM AND COURSE DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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### 1. Purpose

Degree programs, curricula and courses at ADA University are based on a set of core competencies and learning outcomes, which are aligned with the University's mission and strategy and with the outcome images of its students. They are designed to provide students with integrated, stimulating and challenging learning experiences and to prepare them to become high-impact graduates. The purpose of this policy is to outline procedures for the design and development of curricula and courses at ADA University.

### 2. Scope and Recommendations

This policy covers the design and development of curricula and courses at the undergraduate and graduate level. It applies to all degree programs and courses delivered face-to-face or in a blended or

online format. It furthermore outlines specific procedures for the delivery of courses and for the initial evaluation of curricula and courses.

Procedures for the modification of curricula or individual courses are outlined in ADA University's *Degree Program Development and Modification Policy*. Modifications of curricula or individual courses resulting from the Quality Assurance Committee's regular review of ADA University's academic program are regulated by the *Quality Assurance Policy: Academic Program and Learning Outcomes*.

Procedures and quality indicators for the regular evaluation and improvement of curricula and courses are delineated in ADA University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy* and in the *Quality Assurance Policy: Academic Program and Learning Outcomes*.

All members of ADA University involved in the design and development of curricula and courses are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the procedures outlined in this policy.

### **3. Definitions**

The *Curriculum* provides the framework for teaching and learning within a specific degree program. It describes the structured sequence of courses that comprise a degree program and that allows for a gradual progression of learning and for the achievement of program objectives and learning outcomes. It thus encompasses the entire subject matter that is being taught in a program (including the program's content, program objectives and intended learning outcomes), but also instructional and assessment methods as well as learning activities and materials employed to achieve these objectives and outcomes.

A *Course* is a unit of teaching and learning (1) that is dedicated to a clearly defined subject, (2) that consists of a coherent and well-structured series of individual sessions, and (3) that usually covers one semester. Courses (as individual teaching and learning units) are part of coherently structured degree programs. They can be taught face-to-face or in a blended or online format.

### **4. Curriculum and Course Development**

#### **4.1 Responsibility for Curriculum and Course Development**

- a. Responsibility for the design and development of the curriculum and of courses rests with the faculty of the Schools involved in the delivery of the respective degree program.
- b. Schools will select faculty that will serve as members of the curriculum development team. The process of selecting team members must ensure that their expertise covers all areas of the curriculum. In the case of online or blended programs and courses, the curriculum development team shall include one of ADA University's *Blackboard* Course Facilitators.
- c. It is the Program Director's responsibility to supervise the process of curriculum and course design and development and to ensure the timely delivery of appropriate results.
- d. It is strongly recommended that those engaged in the process of curriculum and course development obtain regular feedback from the external faculty consultant mentioned in part 4.1.e of ADA University's *Degree Program Development and Modification Policy*, and that they consider all feedback received thoroughly.

## 4.2 Curriculum Design and Development

- a. The curriculum developers will design a draft of the curriculum that provides an overview of program objectives (which are based on ADA University's *Statement of Student Outcome Images* and on its *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes*), intended learning outcomes, key content, the structure of courses, learning activities and materials, instructional and assessment methods as well as the use of learning technology employed in the delivery of the degree program (including the delivery mode and, if applicable, specific program requirements).
- b. This draft must draw on the synoptic outline of the curriculum submitted during the process of program development (for details, see 4.3.c of the *Degree Program Development and Modification Policy*). It must also take into consideration the market survey (or equivalent document) mentioned in 4.3.e of that policy. This is meant to ensure that the curriculum serves the needs and target groups identified in this survey (or equivalent document).
- c. The draft of the curriculum will be submitted to the faculty of each of the Schools involved in the delivery of the degree program. Each School's faculty will discuss the draft and provide feedback to the group of curriculum developers.
- d. The curriculum developers will address and implement the feedback received while developing the detailed curriculum. The different components of the curriculum are interrelated, and the developers must ensure that they are fully aligned. With this in mind, curriculum developers are encouraged to develop the components of the curriculum in the following order:
  - (1) Coherent program objectives and detailed and precise learning outcomes must be defined and specified for the program (for details, see ADA University's *Core Competence and Learning Outcome Specification Policy*).
  - (2) The program's content must be selected and defined in detail. It must be ascertained that the selected content is current and relevant and that it allows students to achieve the previously stated program objectives and learning outcomes.
  - (3) Instructional methods and learning activities that support students in achieving the previously stated learning outcomes must be selected.
  - (4) Assessment methods must be selected that are aligned with the previously defined learning outcomes, program content and learning activities.
  - (5) A systematic and comprehensive structure of courses as well as an initial outline of individual courses must be developed. This includes the allocation of credits to courses (for details, see ADA University's *Credit Regulations*). The composition of courses must cover the entire content of the program; it must be designed to allow for a smooth student progression and for an integrated learning experience of students; and it must fully reflect ADA University's *Undergraduate Degree Regulations* or *Graduate Degree Regulations*.
  - (6) Relevant and current teaching and learning materials must be selected.
- e. The draft of the detailed curriculum will be submitted to the faculty of each of the Schools involved in the delivery of the degree program. The curriculum developers must implement all feedback received from and suggested modifications proposed by faculty.
- f. Once the curriculum is independently approved by the faculty of each of the Schools involved, small groups of faculty members from the respective Schools will be selected for the detailed design and development of all courses that are part of the degree program.

## 4.3 Course Design and Development

- a. The design and development of courses serves to further specify the components of the curriculum and to implement them on the level of courses.
- b. The teams of course developers will design a first draft of each course that provides the course title, an overview of intended competencies and learning outcomes, key content, learning

activities and materials, instructional and assessment methods as well as potential technology employed in the delivery of each course. These drafts will be based on the initial overview and structure of courses developed in 4.2.

- c. Each draft will be submitted to the faculty of the School that will be responsible for the delivery of the course. The School's faculty will discuss the drafts and provide feedback to the teams of course developers.
- d. The teams will address and implement the feedback received while developing the detailed courses. The different components of courses are interrelated, and the developers must ensure that they are fully aligned. With this in mind, course developers are encouraged to develop the components of courses in the following order:
  - (1) Specific and measurable learning outcomes for each course must be defined. The specification of learning outcomes throughout the curriculum and its structure of courses must ensure a gradual development of student learning and experience. Particular attention must be paid to the appropriateness of learning outcomes to the level of the course. For details, see ADA University's *Core Competence and Learning Outcome Specification Policy*.
  - (2) Each course's content must be specified in detail. It must be ascertained that the content of courses allows students to achieve the previously stated learning outcomes and that course content is aligned throughout the entire curriculum and its structure of courses. Course content will furthermore must be structured logically and allow for a gradual learning progress.
  - (3) Instructional methods and learning activities that support students in achieving the previously stated learning outcomes must be selected. The selection of instructional methods and learning activities must ensure a high level of student participation. In this context, the use of learning technology must be specified (including the delivery mode and, if applicable, specific course requirements).
  - (4) A variety of assessment methods must be selected that are aligned with the previously defined learning outcomes, course content and learning activities.
  - (5) Relevant and current teaching and learning materials must be selected.
  - (6) Syllabi for all courses must be designed, using ADA University's *Syllabus Form*.
- e. The detailed drafts of all courses will be submitted to the faculty of each of the Schools involved in the delivery of the degree program. The course developers must implement all feedback received from and suggested modifications proposed by faculty.
- f. Once all courses are independently approved by the faculty of each of the Schools involved, program and course descriptions will be developed.

#### **4.4 Curriculum and Course Finalization**

- a. Detailed descriptions of the degree program, its curriculum and its individual courses will be set up by those faculty members involved in the process of curriculum and course development. These descriptions must use the *Program Description Form* and the *Course Description Form*, both of which are included in Appendix II of ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.
- b. Program and course descriptions must include all the components specified and developed in 4.2 and 4.3. They must furthermore provide information such as assessment criteria, weighing and regulations, grade descriptions, requirements for the submission of assessments, rules applying to cheating and plagiarism, general guidance for the use of learning technology (*Blackboard Learn*), as well as contact information for student service units (such as ADA Library and the University's IT Service Desk).

- c. Program and course descriptions need to be approved by the faculty of the School that serves as the administrative home of the degree program and/or the respective course. Modifications suggested by faculty need to be implemented before the curriculum (including courses) may be submitted for further approval.

#### **4.5 Online and Blended Curricula and Courses**

- a. Procedures for the design and development of online and blended curricula and courses follow the same procedures as described above.
- b. During the design and development of online and blended curricula and courses, particular attention must be paid to the attainability of stated program objectives and learning outcomes via an online or blended teaching, learning and assessment format. Curriculum and course developers are strongly recommended to consult ADA University's *Online Education and Assessment Regulations* during the process of curriculum and course design and development.
- c. Specific requirements for the delivery of courses taught in the blended or online format can be found in part 5.1 below.

#### **4.6 LMS Platform**

- a. All courses at ADA University use *Blackboard Learn* as LMS platform. While courses offered face-to-face make use of the online mode and *Blackboard Learn* only for additional student support and to share all relevant course information and materials, courses offered in the blended or online mode additionally conduct the teaching and learning process partially (blended) or entirely (online) via *Blackboard Learn*.
- b. ADA University's *Blackboard Administrator* will create the *Blackboard Learn* course infrastructure for all courses. The course infrastructure will allow teachers to upload all the course information and materials specified in 5.1.d and provide for a smooth teaching and learning process as well as for efficient communication between teacher and course participants. A general *Blackboard Learn Course Template* can be found in Appendix II of ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.

#### **4.7 Approval of Curriculum and Courses**

- a. After the finalization of the program's curriculum and of all its courses, the curriculum and courses will be made available to all the faculty members of the School that serves as the administrative home of the degree program. In the case of a multidisciplinary program, it will be made available to all the faculty members of each of the Schools involved.
- b. Procedures for the approval of curricula (including courses) are described in chapter 4.5 of ADA University's *Degree Program Development and Modification Policy*.

### **5. Course Delivery and Initial Curriculum and Course Evaluation**

#### **5.1 Course Delivery**

- a. The following procedures apply to all courses delivered face-to-face or in a blended or online format.
- b. After student admission to a course, ADA University's *Blackboard Administrator* will create (activate) the course on *Blackboard Learn*, register (enroll) the teacher and students and ensure that all those involved in the teaching and learning process have proper online access to the course and to all required *Blackboard Learn* tools.

- c. The *Blackboard* Administrator will provide technical support throughout the entire process of course delivery (including assessment periods). He/she will also provide survey tools for student feedback on the course.
- d. Teachers must ensure that all information relevant to a course is made available to students prior to the beginning of the course. This includes course descriptions as defined in 4.4.b, guidance on communication procedures and tools (including communication opportunities with the teacher), as well as all relevant teaching and learning materials (such as textbooks and further digital files, online links to external resources, or references to material available at ADA Library). All information must be readily available and easily accessible on *Blackboard Learn*. Teachers must ensure that all teaching materials (such as presentations, videos or worksheets) used during the delivery of the course are made available to students. Teachers are also encouraged to provide further learning materials for advanced self-study. If requested by the teacher, the *Blackboard* Administrator may pre-upload course material and information when initially creating (activating) the course.
- e. Teachers are expected to employ a variety of media and teaching methods during the delivery of the course.
- f. Teachers of courses delivered in the blended or online mode must ensure that *Blackboard Learn* is used comprehensively and creatively during the process of teaching and learning. They must also provide opportunities for both synchronous and asynchronous learning and for extensive student interaction and collaboration similar to face-to-face courses.

## 5.2 Initial Evaluation of Courses and Programs

- a. After the first delivery, each course as well as the entire program (curriculum) will be evaluated. The evaluation of courses and the program will be based on the quality indicators and procedures set forth in ADA University's *Quality Assurance Policy: Academic Program and Learning Outcomes*. Particular attention must be paid to program effectiveness and student success and to the feedback of students on their learning experiences.
- b. The initial evaluation aims to identify areas for improvement. Responsibility for the implementation of improvements rests with the faculty of the Schools involved in the delivery of the respective degree program. All proposed improvements must fulfil the requirements for curricula and courses delineated above.
- c. It is the Program Director's responsibility to supervise this process, to potentially involve further stakeholders of ADA University (such as its Information Technology Services), and to ensure the timely delivery of appropriate results.
- d. All improvements suggested need to be approved by the faculty of the School that serves as the administrative home of the degree program and/or the respective course. Modifications suggested by faculty need to be implemented before an improved course or curriculum may be submitted for further approval.
- e. The finalized new version of a course or curriculum will be made available to all the faculty members of the School that serves as the administrative home of the degree program. In the case of a multidisciplinary program, it will be made available to all the faculty members of each of the Schools involved.
- f. Procedures for the approval of course or curriculum modification are described in chapter 5.2 of ADA University's *Degree Program Development and Modification Policy*.
- g. After the initial delivery and evaluation of a new course and program (curriculum), they become part of the regular quality review cycle at ADA University.

### 1.4.3 CORE COMPETENCE AND LEARNING OUTCOME SPECIFICATION POLICY

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#### 1. Purpose

ADA University has defined essential learning outcomes that serve to guide all teaching and learning activities at the University. Since they are intended to apply to all degree programs, they are by necessity generic in nature. These institutional learning outcomes thus need to be specified on the level of programs and courses, and their gradual achievement will allow students to acquire crucial competencies. The level of student achievement of these program and course learning outcomes must be evaluated according to clearly defined criteria. The purpose of this document is to outline procedures for the specification of learning outcomes, assessment criteria and grade descriptions on the program and course level.

#### 2. Scope and Recommendations

This policy applies to all degree programs and to all courses offered at ADA University.

This document should be read in conjunction with ADA University's *Curriculum and Course Development Policy* and with its *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes*.

#### 3. Definitions

*Competence* is defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitude. *Core Competencies* are general statements of qualities that a student is expected to demonstrate upon graduation and in future workplaces, and this regardless of a specific degree program.

Each core competence is specified by a number of learning outcomes. *Learning Outcomes* are more detailed statements of what a student is expected to know, understand and be able to demonstrate upon the completion of a course or degree program. They form the basis of teaching, learning and assessment.

*Program Objectives* are general statements of the competencies students are expected to have acquired upon graduation. They are based on essential outcome images and core competencies (for details, see ADA University's *Statement of Student Outcome Images* and its *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes*).

*Curriculum Mapping* is a process in which program learning outcomes are specified and sequentially and coherently distributed across the courses of a specific degree program. This process also defines assessment criteria for the evaluation of a student's performance as well as grade descriptions which indicate his/her achievement of specific learning outcomes.

A *Curriculum Map* indicates in which of its courses the program's learning outcomes are taught and assessed.

*Assessment Criteria* delineate precise requirements for the achievement of learning outcomes. These requirements are clearly defined statements of what a student is expected to demonstrate during or at the end of a process of learning in order to have partly or fully achieved a specific learning outcome. They thus provide detailed guidelines for the evaluation of assessment tasks.

*Grade Descriptors* are terms that serve to express a student's level of performance in a specific assessment task, course or unit of study (for details, see ADA University's *Student Assessment Regulations*).

*Grade Descriptions* provide definitions of grade descriptors. Grade descriptions are based on the level on which learning outcomes are achieved. This level of achievement is indicated by the extent to which assessment criteria are fulfilled. The latter presupposes that learning outcomes and assessment methods are aligned (for details, see ADA University's *Student Assessment Regulations*).

A *Grading Rubric* is a scoring guide that allows for the precise evaluation of student performance in a specific assignment. It further specifies (subdivides) grade descriptors and thus explicates the achievement of grade scale percentages and the allocation of grade points.

#### **4. General Procedures**

- 4.1 The procedures delineated in this policy tie in with chapters 4.2.d and 4.3.d of the University's *Curriculum and Course Development Policy*.
- 4.2 Responsibility for the specification of core competencies and learning outcomes on the level of programs and courses rests with the faculty of the Schools involved in the delivery of the respective degree program (for further details, see chapter 4.1.b of the University's *Curriculum and Course Development Policy*).
- 4.3 It is the responsibility of Program Directors to ensure that the procedures delineated in this policy are fully implemented and that program objectives, learning outcomes, assessment criteria and grade descriptions are phrased adequately and based on the requirements set forth in this document. This also includes the appropriate distribution of learning outcomes throughout programs.
- 4.4 As established in ADA University's *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes*, not all core competencies and learning outcomes need to be represented in each individual course. Yet, each course must reflect them substantially and ensure that the entire process of teaching, learning and assessment is fully aligned with these competencies and outcomes. Courses form part of degree programs, and it is through each program and its coherent structure of courses that the Schools must ensure that competencies and outcomes are comprehensively covered.

#### **5. Curriculum Mapping: The Program Level**

- 5.1 When developing a program, the program's objectives must be defined. Program objectives must be geared to and adequately reflect the respective degree program. They must be phrased coherently and be based on the essential outcome images and core competencies set forth in the University's *Statement of Student Outcome Images* and its *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes*.
- 5.2 What follows is an example of program objectives for the *Bachelor of Arts in International Studies* that may illustrate the requirements outlined in 5.1.

Program Objectives

The *Bachelor of Arts in International Studies* is a four-year multidisciplinary program that aims to provide students with a broad base of knowledge and skills required to meet the needs of societies, governments and businesses in an ever-changing international context. Students will become thoroughly familiar with diverse world cultures, with major issues of global significance, and with various disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to the study of international affairs. Graduates of this program will have developed a critical as well as an ethical perspective on international issues and challenges; they will be able to cooperate closely with others in diverse and transcultural contexts; and they will be able to generate innovative solutions to international problems. Graduates will thus be prepared for a successful career in diplomacy, the government, in multinational corporations, as well as in the banking and the educational sectors.

- 5.3 Learning outcomes must be specified for the program. Program learning outcomes must be aligned with and informed by the program’s objectives. They must be based on and cover the institutional learning outcomes set forth in the University’s *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes*.
- 5.4 Program learning outcomes must be phrased so that they are adapted to the program and its subject matter. Each learning outcome must consist of a complete sentence with an active and measureable verb, which is followed by one or several objects (nouns).
- 5.5 When phrasing program learning outcomes, the basic structure of each institutional learning outcome must be preserved. Most particularly, program learning outcomes may not deviate from the verb (or verbs) chosen for institutional learning outcomes. They should, however, adapt the noun (or nouns) to suit the context of the program and to reflect its subject matter.
- 5.6 Learning outcomes are to be distributed sequentially and coherently across the courses of a degree program. The resulting learning outcome distribution should thus allow for a gradual student learning progress and experience. This requires that learning outcomes are phrased on 3 different levels, namely *Introductory (I)*, *Developed (D)*, and *Proficient (P)*. For each institutional learning outcome, this results in one general program learning outcome and its specification on 3 levels.
- 5.7 What follows is an example that may illustrate the procedures and requirements outlined in 5.3 to 5.6. The example applies the institutional learning outcome 3.b that is defined in the University’s *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes* to the program *Bachelor of Arts in International Studies*.

Institutional Learning Outcome (ILO)	Identify and assess problems and challenges within a multidisciplinary and/or transcultural context.
Program Learning Outcome (PLO)	Identify and assess current political, social and economic problems and challenges within a global context.
Introductory (I)	Identify basic political, social and economic problems and challenges of today’s globalized world. Assess these problems while being guided by the teacher.

Developed (D)	Identify essential political, social and economic problems and challenges of today's globalized world more comprehensively. Assess these problems more independently.
Proficient (P)	Comprehensively identify essential political, social and economic problems and challenges of today's globalized world. Assess these problems independently.

- 5.8 The proficient level should reflect the achievement of a learning outcome during or at the end of a program. Schools will thus ensure that the gradual fulfillment of learning outcomes throughout a degree program allows students to achieve all of the program's learning outcomes and acquire all of the University's core competencies upon graduation.
- 5.9 Assessment criteria must be defined for each program learning outcome and its 3 different levels. They must precisely reflect the respective learning outcome and be tailored towards its different levels.
- 5.10 Grade descriptions must be defined for each assessment criterion and for different grade descriptors. They must clearly address the respective assessment criterion and specify the level of student achievement.
- 5.11 What follows is an example that may illustrate the procedures and requirements outlined in 5.9 and 5.10. It proposes (shortened) assessment criteria and grade descriptions for the introductory level of the first part of the program learning outcome used in 5.7.

Assessment Criteria	Grade Description ( <i>Excellent</i> )	Grade Description ( <i>Good</i> )	Grade Description ( <i>Satisfactory</i> )	Grade Description ( <i>Poor</i> )	Grade Description ( <i>Acad. Fail</i> )
The student names basic problems that were introduced during the course.	All or nearly all of the relevant problems are named.	Most of the relevant problems are named.	Some (more than 50%) of the relevant problems are named.	Some (less than 50%) of the relevant problems are named.	Hardly any or none of the relevant problems are named.
The student describes basic problems that were introduced during the course.	All or nearly all of the relevant problems are described.	Most of the relevant problems are described.	Some (more than 50%) of the relevant problems are described.	Some (less than 50%) of the relevant problems are described.	Hardly any or none of the relevant problems are described.

- 5.12 The program objectives and all the program learning outcomes, assessment criteria and grade descriptions resulting from the procedures delineated in 5.1 to 5.11 must be included in the *Program Description Form* which can be found in Appendix II of ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* (also see chapter 4.4. of the University's *Curriculum and Course Development Policy*).

5.13 The procedures and requirements delineated in 5.1 to 5.12 apply both to the development and the modification of degree programs.

## 6. Development of a Curriculum Map

- 6.1 Once all the components mentioned in 5.12 have been finalized, the program’s curriculum map must be set up. This map will indicate in which of the program’s courses specific learning outcomes are taught and assessed, and on which level: *Introductory (I)*, *Developed (D)*, or *Proficient (P)*. The curriculum map will also indicate the emphasis that each course places on a specific learning outcome: *No Emphasis (-)*, *Some Emphasis (1)*, or *Strong Emphasis (2)*.
- 6.2 The curriculum map must cover all the program’s courses and learning outcomes. It must ensure that the program’s learning outcomes are distributed sequentially and coherently across the courses of the program. Students should thus be able to experience a gradual learning progress across all courses and learning outcomes.
- 6.3 The shortened version of a curriculum map resulting from the procedures and requirements outlined in 6.1 and 6.2 may be illustrated as follows:

Course / PLO	PLO 1	PLO 2	PLO 3	PLO 4	PLO 5
Course 1	I (2)	-	I (1)	I (2)	-
Course 2	-	I (2)	-	D (1)	-
Course 3	I (1)	-	I (2)	-	I (2)
Course 4	D (1)	-	D (1)	D (2)	-
Course 5	-	D (2)	-	P (1)	D (1)

6.4 The curriculum map must be included in the *Program Description Form* referred to above in 5.12.

## 7. Specification of Learning Outcomes: The Course Level

- 7.1 Program learning outcomes are more specific than institutional learning outcomes, but they are by necessity more general than course learning outcomes since they must cover the entire degree program. Once the curriculum map has been finalized, learning outcomes must thus be further specified for each of the program’s courses.
- 7.2 Course learning outcomes must be based on those defined for the program.
- 7.3 Each course learning outcome must precisely address the context and subject matter of the respective course.
- 7.4 Each course learning outcome must preserve the basic structure of the corresponding program learning outcome. Most particularly, course learning outcomes may not deviate from the verb (or verbs) given in the program learning outcomes. The adjustment of the latter on the level of courses thus requires that the noun (or nouns) is (are) adapted to suit the context of the course and to reflect its subject matter.
- 7.5 Course learning outcomes must precisely reflect the level envisaged in the program’s curriculum map.

- 7.6 The assessment criteria defined on the level of the program must be specified for all course learning outcomes. They must precisely reflect the respective learning outcome and its level.
- 7.7 The grade descriptions defined on the level of the program must be specified for each relevant assessment criterion and for different grade descriptors. They must clearly address the respective assessment criterion and specify the level of student achievement.
- 7.8 The specification of course learning outcomes, assessment criteria and grade descriptions generally follows the pattern described above in chapter 5.
- 7.9 All the course learning outcomes, assessment criteria and grade descriptions resulting from the procedures delineated in 7.1 to 7.8 must be included in the *Course Description Form* which can be found in Appendix II of ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* (also see chapter 4.4. of the University's *Curriculum and Course Development Policy*).
- 7.10 Each time a course is being taught, grading rubrics must be developed for each graded assignment by the teacher of the course. The teacher may include grading rubrics in the Course Description prior to the beginning of a course. He/she may alternatively decide to make grading rubrics available to students shortly before assignments. The latter would allow for an adjustment of the assessment process to the learning progress of students.
- 7.11 The procedures and requirements delineated in 7.1 to 7.9 apply both to the development and the modification of courses.

## 8. Addendum: The School Level

- 8.1 Each School of ADA University must have a clear mission. This mission is a broad and general statement of the School's objectives and thus of the most significant professional and civic competencies that its graduates are expected to have acquired during their studies at that School.
- 8.2 Since School missions are to cover all of the degree programs taught at a School, they are by necessity still more general in nature than program objectives.
- 8.3 School missions are to be aligned with the University's mission, and they are to be based on the essential outcome images and core competencies set forth in the University's *Statement of Student Outcome Images* and its *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes*.
- 8.4 What follows is an example of a School mission for the School of Public and International Affairs that may illustrate the requirements outlined in 8.1 to 8.3.

### School Mission

Graduates of the School of Public and International Affairs will be highly competent solution providers who possess a global perspective and who will excel on various levels of governance. They will have a thorough understanding of the significance of close cooperation and effective communication in a complex global landscape in which regional, national and international affairs are increasingly interrelated. Graduates of the School will be able to apply their acquired knowledge and skills in an ethical and socially responsible manner to develop innovative solutions to complex national and international problems that serve the public interest.

- 8.5 Responsibility for the development of a School's mission rests with all of that School's (academic and administrative) members. Proposals for the modification of a School's mission may be submitted to the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs by any group of that School's members or by any

member of the senior management of ADA University. Proposals need the approval of (1) the Committee of Faculty Affairs, (2) the Deans' Council, and (3) the University Senate in order to become effective. If accepted by the Senate and approved by the Rector, the proposed modification comes into effect in the academic year following the Senate's approval.

## **1.4.4 STATEMENT OF STUDENT OUTCOME IMAGES**

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### **1. Purpose**

Students of ADA University are educated through a rigorous curriculum that is based on the thorough study of their major, elective courses and Functional Enablers, as well as on a comprehensive program of General Education. They are provided with experiential and practical learning opportunities, which form an integral part of their education. The overriding objective of this academic program is to train high-impact graduates who will embody essential outcome images. The purpose of this statement is to specify these images.

### **2. Scope and Recommendations**

This statement defines fundamental concepts that serve to guide the entire educational process at ADA University. More specifically, it provides a framework for the development and implementation of essential competencies and learning outcomes.

This statement should be read alongside ADA University's *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes*, which defines the competencies that serve to further specify the outcome images.

### **3. Definitions**

*Outcome Images* are role concepts that serve to guide the entire educational process. They are defined by essential professional and civic competencies that a student should possess upon graduation.

*High-Impact Graduates* are graduates who possess all the essential competencies required to become highly efficient professionals and responsible citizens.

### **4. Student Outcome Images**

After having developed key professional and civic competencies, the graduates of ADA University will embody the following 4 outcome images:

1. Highly Intellectual Solution Providers
2. Close Collaborators
3. Effective Communicators

#### 4. Ethical Citizens

By facilitating the achievement of these outcome images in its students, ADA University aspires to educate high-impact graduates, rather than passive citizens and employees. High-impact graduates are citizens who feel responsible for their country and who contribute to its well-being and prosperity. What is more, they are professionals who are able and willing to apply their knowledge and skills creatively and in a responsible manner in order to solve problems and develop new and creative ideas. The academic programs at ADA University are designed to allow for a student-centered and project-based teaching and learning process that fosters the professional and civic competencies required for a student to become a high-impact graduate.

#### 5. Obligations

The objective of training high-impact graduates obliges ADA University:

1. to admit the most qualified and promising students who have the potential to excel in rigorous academic curricula.
2. to develop these students into the country's key workforce that possesses essential qualities such as analytical thinking, creative problem solving or responsible decision making.
3. to present these students to all sectors of the job market (industry, government and administration, educational and research institutions) where they can apply their competencies effectively.

### 1.4.5 STATEMENT OF CORE COMPETENCIES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

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#### 1. Purpose

The curriculum at ADA University is based on a set of core competencies, which derive from and align with the University's mission, strategy, and student outcome images. These competencies, together with their corresponding learning outcomes, serve as fundamental principles that guide teaching and learning at ADA University. The purpose of this statement is to specify and define these core competencies and learning outcomes and to provide a systematic, coherent and transparent framework for both teachers and students.

#### 2. Scope and Recommendations

This statement applies to the entire curriculum at ADA University. More specifically, the concepts outlined in this document are to guide each School's mission as well as teaching, learning and assessment at both the program and individual course level.

Responsibility for the implementation of core competencies and learning outcomes rests with the Schools and faculty of ADA University.

Not all core competencies and learning outcomes need to be represented in each individual course. Yet, each course must reflect them substantially and ensure that the entire process of teaching, learning and assessment is fully aligned with these competencies and outcomes. Courses form part of degree programs, and it is through each program and its coherent structure of courses that the Schools must ensure that competencies and outcomes are comprehensively covered.

### 3. Definitions

*Competence* is defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitude. *Core Competencies* are general statements of qualities that a student is expected to demonstrate upon graduation and in future workplaces, and this regardless of a specific degree program.

Each core competence is specified by a number of learning outcomes. *Learning Outcomes* are more detailed statements of what a student is expected to know, understand and be able to demonstrate upon the completion of a course or degree program. They form the basis of teaching, learning and assessment.

### 4. Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes

#### 4.1 Outcome Image: Highly Intellectual Solution Providers

##### ***Competence 1: Content Knowledge and Critical Thinking***

Graduates are thoroughly and systematically acquainted with their respective field of study. They are able to acquire and process relevant information independently and to apply it adequately. They habitually inquire into the validity of newly acquired information and develop a perspective of their own.

*Learning Outcomes:*

- a. Identify, describe and structure key concepts and areas of knowledge within a field of study.
- b. Identify, procure, construct and structure new and relevant information within an area of inquiry by making use of adequate literature, online resources and databases.
- c. Apply concepts and knowledge to new contexts (within a field of study and across disciplines).
- d. Analyze relevant concepts and information within a field of study.
- e. Evaluate the reliability, plausibility and significance of new information independently and based on clear arguments and/or evidence.
- f. Analyze and assess contemporary issues in both national and global contexts.

##### ***Competence 2: Quantitative Reasoning***

Graduates are able to draw conclusions from quantitative information and to apply them adequately to a given context or problem.

*Learning Outcomes:*

- a. Analyze and interpret quantitative information by making use of mathematical concepts.
- b. Assess problems and develop appropriate solutions by making use of relevant quantitative information.

### **Competence 3: Complex Problem Solving**

Graduates are able to describe and assess multifaceted and/or ill-defined situations and problems adequately, and this across disciplines and different cultural contexts. They are capable of developing appropriate solutions and of weighing alternative approaches and perspectives.

#### *Learning Outcomes:*

- a. Identify various facets and formulate a clear assessment of a multifaceted problem.
- b. Identify and assess problems and challenges within a multidisciplinary and/or transcultural context.
- c. Combine various sources and/or pieces of information and formulate adequate and tenable solutions to a previously identified and multifaceted problem.
- d. Identify and assess the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions and approaches to a problem.

### **Competence 4: Creativity**

Graduates are able to develop and apply new and/or innovative ideas that are appropriate to a specific and unfamiliar situation or problem.

#### *Learning Outcomes:*

- a. Create and illustrate new and plausible connections between various and/or distinct facets of an unfamiliar situation or problem.
- b. Generate, formulate and evaluate new and/or innovative ideas that are appropriate to an unfamiliar situation or problem.
- c. Apply new and/or innovative ideas to an unfamiliar situation or problem.

## **4.2 Outcome Image: Close Collaborators**

### **Competence 5: Act/Work in Contexts of Diversity and in Teams**

Graduates are able to act effectively in diverse, multidisciplinary and transcultural contexts. They habitually respect and appreciate different cultures and viewpoints, are capable of constructively collaborating with others and of sharing leadership, and they are able to reconcile differences productively.

#### *Learning Outcomes:*

- a. Identify and appraise key assumptions and/or elements of different opinions, viewpoints and/or cultures.
- b. Articulate, assess and/or modify one's own perspective when interacting with others and in contexts of diversity.
- c. Recognize and assess differences, challenge differing perspectives when appropriate, and develop clearly identifiable steps for the productive resolution of conflicts.
- d. Consult others actively and create meaningful results in a diverse and/or transcultural and/or multidisciplinary working environment.
- e. Consult others actively and create meaningful results when acting in a team and/or in a context of shared leadership.

### 4.3 Outcome Image: Effective Communicators

#### **Competence 6: Enhanced Communication**

Graduates communicate effectively in different professional, formal and informal contexts. They are able to adapt their communication style to suit a given situation, context and target audience.

##### *Learning Outcomes:*

- a. Express thoughts and meaning clearly and concisely both in writing and in speech.
- b. Employ various forms of communication (verbal, non-verbal, visual; formal, informal, distant) in order to express thoughts and meaning effectively.
- c. Evaluate the impact of one's own behavior and communication style on others.
- d. Identify and adapt to a given communicative situation and/or target audience based on a clear assessment.

#### **Competence 7: Strong Command of English**

Graduates show a profound knowledge of English in all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). They are able to use the English language competently, confidently and in various contexts.

##### *Learning Outcomes:*

- a. Decode and analyze complex texts written in English.
- b. Decode complex verbal statements made in the English language.
- c. Articulate complex ideas clearly and comprehensively by using the English language adequately both in writing and in speech.
- d. Demonstrate versatility whilst communicating in the English language (both in writing and in speech) in various linguistic, cultural, social and professional contexts.

#### **Competence 8: Active Listening and Participation**

Graduates are able to contribute actively to different communicative situations. They make it a habit to listen attentively and with empathy, they are capable of interpreting both verbal communication and nonverbal behavior, and they are able to phrase questions and statements adequate to a given situation and topic.

##### *Learning Outcomes:*

- a. Recall and paraphrase verbal statements made by others.
- b. Identify and interpret nonverbal statements made by others.
- c. Interpret complex verbal and nonverbal communication.
- d. Develop questions and/or arguments actively and appropriate to a given statement and/or topic.
- e. Alternate adequately between different communicative functions (listening, reflecting, questioning, responding).

### 4.4 Outcome Image: Ethical Citizens

#### **Competence 9: Ethics and Self-Reflection**

Graduates are able to identify ethical standards and issues and to reflect upon such standards and issues and their own system of values. They act with integrity and address ethical issues in a socially responsible manner.

*Learning Outcomes:*

- a. Identify, describe and assess ethical and/or moral values and standards.
- b. Identify, analyze and assess ethical issues based on clear arguments.
- c. Articulate one's own core beliefs and assess them in a larger social context.
- d. Apply ethical values to individual, social and/or global problems.

**Competence 10: Civic Engagement**

Graduates show a profound knowledge of society as well as respect for society and for others. They are able and willing to actively promote the well-being of others and the community. They act responsibly and in the interest of social justice.

*Learning Outcomes:*

- a. Identify, describe and assess issues of public interest and social justice.
- b. Develop solutions to social issues on an individual and/or communal level.
- c. Compare and evaluate alternative solutions to social issues on an individual and/or communal level.
- d. Apply solutions to issues of individual or public concern individually or in active cooperation with others.

## **1.4.6 CURRICULUM STRUCTURE AND REGULATIONS**

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### **1. Purpose**

ADA University strives to ensure the coherence, breadth and high quality of its degree programs. This requires that all programs adhere to a set of curriculum regulations and to a corresponding curriculum structure. The curriculum structure may differ across different Schools and programs, but the design and delivery of all degree programs and curricula must follow certain minimum requirements. This ensures that all students enrolled in degree programs at ADA University are educated through similarly structured, comprehensive curricula and are able to achieve pre-defined learning outcomes. The purpose of this document is to outline ADA University's curriculum structure and regulations.

### **2. Scope and Recommendations**

This regulation applies to all undergraduate and graduate degree programs at ADA University.

Schools are expected to follow the curriculum structure and regulations outlined in this document as well as ADA University's *Undergraduate Degree Regulations*, *Graduate Degree Regulations* and *Degree Program Development and Modification Policy* when launching new degree programs and/or modifying current degree programs.

### 3. Definitions

*General Education:* This encompasses courses offered to all students enrolled in undergraduate degree programs at ADA University. The purpose of the General Education component is to cultivate a well-rounded person in foundational areas such as the Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Quantitative Reasoning; Writing and Information Literacy; and Leadership and Communication.

*Major Core:* Courses labeled as Major Core offer a fundamental understanding of subjects covered by a student's main field of specialization. Major Core courses are a mandatory part of a degree program.

*Technical Electives:* These are courses in advanced topics covered by a student's main field of specialization. Students are offered a range of Technical Electives to choose from.

*Free Electives:* Any credit-bearing course can be considered a Free Elective if the respective course is not an integral part of a student's degree program. Free Electives can be chosen from any other degree program offered at ADA University.

*Functional Enablers:* These are courses that aim to develop core study- and work-related skills. Functional Enablers cover IT skills, but also internships and career strategies.

### 4. Curriculum Regulations

#### 4.1 Undergraduate Curriculum Regulations

- a. All undergraduate degree programs at ADA University have a General Education component which usually consists of 60 credits or 10 courses. The General Education requirements are similar across all programs, but they may differ depending on the nature of the degree. For details on the General Education component, see ADA University's *General Education Regulations*.
- b. All undergraduate degree programs at ADA University have a Major Core component consisting of a minimum 120 credits or 20 courses. Some programs may include more than the minimum requirement for the Major Core component.
- c. All undergraduate degree programs at ADA University have a Technical Elective component consisting of 24 credits or 4 courses.
- d. Most undergraduate degree programs at ADA University have a Free Elective component consisting of 24 credits or 4 courses. Some programs may require fewer credits allocated to the Free Elective component. The *Bachelor of Laws* program at ADA University does not include a Free Elective component.
- e. Most undergraduate degree programs at ADA University have a Functional Enabler component consisting of 12 credits or 2 courses. The *Bachelor of Laws* program and the *Bachelor of Science in Mathematics* program at ADA University include only 6 credits for the Functional Enabler component.
- f. Further degree requirements are outlined in ADA University's *Undergraduate Degree Regulations*.

#### 4.2 Graduate Curriculum Regulations

- a. All graduate degree programs at ADA University have a Major Core component and a Technical Elective component.

- b. The Major Core component usually covers 72 credits (for 90 credit programs) or 52 credits (for 70 credit programs).
- c. A graduate degree program usually requires no more than 18 credits or 3 courses for the Technical Elective component.
- d. All graduate degree programs at ADA University include an Independent Study requirement. Students must complete either a Capstone Project or a Master Thesis. The program *Master of Business Administration* requires either a Business Consultancy Project, a Business Plan or a Master Thesis to complete the Independent Study requirement. In all graduate degree programs, the Independent Study requirement is considered to be part of the Major Core component and usually covers 18 credits.
- e. The specific allocation of courses and credits for each component depends on the nature of the degree program.
- f. Further degree requirements are outlined in ADA University's *Graduate Degree Regulations*.

## 5. Curriculum Structure

### 5.1 General Provisions

- a. The specific curriculum structure at both the undergraduate and the graduate level may differ across Schools and programs.
- b. Curricula must adhere to the regulations delineated in 4.1 or 4.2 respectively. They must be structured coherently and provide for a logical sequence of courses.
- c. The following charts exemplify the typical curriculum structure of most of ADA University's undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

### 5.2 Undergraduate Curriculum Structure

Year	Semester	Course 1	Course 2	Course 3	Course 4	Course 5
1	1	MC	MC	GE	GE	GE
	2	MC	MC	GE	GE	GE
	Summer					
2	3	MC	MC	MC	GE	GE
	4	MC	MC	MC	GE	GE
	Summer					
3	5	MC	MC	MC	FE	EN
	6	MC	MC	MC	FE	EN
	Summer		Internship			
4	7	MC	MC	TE	TE	FE
	8	MC	MC	TE	TE	FE

Component	Code	Credit Hours
General Education	GE	60
Major Core	MC	120
Technical Elective	TE	24
Free Elective	FE	24
Functional Enabler	EN	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>240</b>

### 5.3 Graduate Curriculum Structure

Year	Semester	Course 1	Course 2	Course 3	Course 4
1	1	MC	MC	MC	
	2	MC	MC	MC	
	Summer	TE			
2	3	MC	MC	MC	IS
	4	TE	TE	IS	

  

Component	Code	Credit Hours
Major Core	MC	54
Technical Elective	TE	18
Independent Study	IS	18
Total		90

## 1.4.7 GENERAL EDUCATION REGULATIONS

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### 1. Purpose

ADA University aims to ensure that its students develop a well-rounded personality by acquiring competencies that go beyond the confines of their main fields of specialization. It thus strives to improve the performance of students during their studies, to cultivate ethical citizens, and to train highly flexible and versatile graduates that will be competitive on the national and international labor markets. In order to achieve these objectives, the University requires that undergraduate students complete a *General Education Program* that is an integral part of all undergraduate degree programs. The purpose of this document is to outline ADA University's General Education regulations.

### 2. Scope and Recommendations

This regulation applies to all undergraduate degree programs at ADA University. It should be read alongside ADA University's *Undergraduate Degree Regulations*.

Teachers, undergraduate students, and all those involved in the development of undergraduate degree programs are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the regulations set forth in this document.

### 3. Definitions

*General Education*: This encompasses courses offered to all students enrolled in undergraduate degree programs at ADA University. The purpose of the General Education component is to cultivate a well-rounded person in foundational areas such as the Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Quantitative Reasoning; Writing and Information Literacy; and Leadership and Communication.

## 4. General Education Regulations

### 4.1 General Provisions

- a. The *General Education Program* must be comprehensive and coherently structured. It is to be comparable to the programs offered by U.S. institutions of higher education.
- b. The *General Education Program* outlined in this document must be incorporated into all undergraduate degree programs. The General Education requirements are similar across all programs, but they may differ depending on the nature of the degree. The *Bachelor of Laws* program and the *Bachelor of Science in Mathematics* program have different General Education requirements. These requirements are defined in the respective program description.
- c. The *General Education Program* must provide students with the opportunity to develop a well-rounded personality. In order to meet this purpose, the General Education component includes courses from the following areas: (1) *Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Quantitative Reasoning*, (2) *Writing and Information Literacy*, and (3) *Leadership and Communication*.
- d. Program developers, the Director of the *General Education Program*, and Program Directors must ensure that all the areas mentioned in 4.1.c. are (and continue to be) comprehensively covered by the University's undergraduate degree programs, and this based on the credit requirements delineated in this document.
- e. It is the responsibility of the Director of the *General Education Program* to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the *General Education Program*.
- f. The General Education component usually consists of 60 credits or 10 courses. Each course of the *General Education Program* awards 6 credits.
- g. Students are expected to complete the General Education component during the first 120 credits earned.
- h. The minimum passing grade for all General Education courses is D, except for the courses *Writing and Information Literacy I* and *Writing and Information Literacy II*, in which students need to achieve a C- grade or better to pass.
- i. In some cases, General Education courses may also meet Major Core, Technical Elective or Free Elective requirements. In no case may students substitute General Education courses for Major Core, Technical Elective or Free Elective courses (or vice versa).
- j. The following chapters provide an overview (1) of the credit requirements and (where applicable) of the course selection criteria for each of the areas mentioned in 4.1.c and (2) of all the courses that are part of the *General Education Program* (including condensed course descriptions). More detailed information on items such as course content and syllabus, learning outcomes, assessment methods and criteria, teaching and learning materials, and instructional methods and learning activities must be included in the description of each course that is to be made available to students prior to the beginning of a course. Further requirements for course descriptions are outlined in ADA University's *Curriculum and Course Development Policy*.

### 4.2 Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Quantitative Reasoning

- a. Students must successfully complete 6 courses and acquire 36 credits in the areas of *Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Quantitative Reasoning*.
- b. The following courses are part of the *Humanities* area: *Fundamentals of Philosophy, Perspectives on Ethics and Values, History of Azerbaijan* and *Literature of Azerbaijan*. Undergraduate programs must include either of the first two and either of the last two courses. They may alternatively allow students to choose any of the first two and any of the last two courses.

- (1) The course *Fundamentals of Philosophy* is designed to introduce students to philosophical ideas that have shaped the world's intellectual history for thousands of years and that are still relevant today. It covers the following topics: philosophy in antiquity, epistemology, metaphysics, religion and philosophy, political philosophy, nihilism, modernism, and postmodernism. Throughout the course, students are not presented with ready-made answers, but are instead encouraged to think critically about and form independent opinions on fundamental questions raised by subjects such as religion, morality, politics, or ideology.
  - (2) The course *Perspectives on Ethics and Values* examines the concepts of morality, ethics and values that play a central role in human society and culture. It focuses on key areas and topics that are relevant to the discussion of these concepts, including Applied Ethics, the sources of morality, diversity and pluralism, or traditional values and the changing nature of values. The course will also provide a brief overview of diverse cultures and traditions in different geographical regions of the world. While developing an understanding of the role of morality and of various moral traditions, students will also be challenged to critically reflect on these issues and to enrich and reconsider their own moral systems and values.
  - (3) The course *History of Azerbaijan* traces major political, socio-economic and cultural developments that shaped Azerbaijan from ancient times to the present day. It aims to provide students with an understanding of their own historical and cultural inheritance and to develop their interest in history, their historical consciousness, their personal and national identity, and their sense of active citizenship. It thus also offers them opportunities for personal growth and development. The course furthermore explores various forms of statecraft, from ancient times to the Age of Empire to today's independence, and it examines the influence of cross-national and international relations on various social, economic, political, cultural and linguistic developments in the historical territory of Azerbaijan.
  - (4) The course *Literature of Azerbaijan* covers various periods and genres of Azerbaijani literature. By analyzing texts from different historical and cultural perspectives, students are encouraged to read and interpret Azerbaijani literature in the context of world literature, to reflect on the cultural significance of literature, and to develop a critical perspective on literature. They are made familiar with different literary techniques and styles and with methods from various disciplines that are used to analyze literary texts (such as comparative analysis, the biographical approach, the historical approach, phenomenology, hermeneutics, or discourse analysis).
- c. The following courses are part of the *Social Sciences* area: *Introduction to Sociology*, *Introduction to Social Psychology*, *Civilizations and Cultures* and *Azerbaijani Studies*. Undergraduate programs must include either of the first two and either of the last two courses. They may alternatively allow students to choose any of the first two and any of the last two courses.
- (1) The course *Introduction to Sociology* aims to provide an overview of major sociological theories, concepts and topics. It focuses both on the history of sociology and on the analysis of sociological approaches to contemporary issues. Students will become familiar with the philosophical foundations of social thought, and they will begin to understand how sociology contributes to our understanding of the world. They will furthermore be encouraged to critically engage with the core concepts and theories discussed in the course.
  - (2) The course *Introduction to Social Psychology* aims to familiarize students with major theories, concepts and issues of social psychology and to offer them insights that they can apply to their personal and professional lives. Its main focus is on the interplay between

individuals and their social environments and on how an individual's thoughts, feelings and behaviors are influenced by others and by social situations and contexts. Throughout the course, students will examine key figures, diverse theoretical perspectives, relevant research methods and seminal publications that have shaped some of the major areas of contemporary social psychology. They will furthermore analyze the role that concepts such as race, gender, sexual orientation, culture, or religion (to name but a few) play in social psychology.

- (3) The course *Civilizations and Cultures* offers a historical and cultural overview of major stages, structures and events that shaped the civilizations of the East and the West. By focusing on either of them, students will begin to understand that both civilizations and cultures are inextricably linked. The course will trace important developments from the prehistoric period to the present day, which will allow students to recognize that the present can only be understood and the future only be shaped against the background of an understanding of the past. The course will conclude with an analysis of the manifold and intricate relationships between different civilizations and cultural traditions in our modern, rapidly changing and increasingly unstable world.
  - (4) The course *Azerbaijani Studies* covers key periods and works of Azerbaijani culture, from the *Book of Dede Korkut*, an ancient Azerbaijani epos, through major cultural developments in the Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment, to the cultural and political history and the current state of Azerbaijan in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Students will thus be introduced to the historical and cultural roots of the Azerbaijani nation and to its manifold contributions to the world's civilization. Topics that are covered in this course include Azerbaijani literature, theatre and music, Azerbaijani cinema, religion in Azerbaijan, the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1918-1920, Azerbaijani Firsts, and Azerbaijani multiculturalism.
- d. The following courses are part of the *Natural Sciences and Quantitative Reasoning* area: *Fundamentals of Physics*, *Introduction to Environmental Sciences*, *Introduction to Statistics*, *Calculus I* and *Data and Computing Skills*. Undergraduate programs must include either of the first two and either of the last three courses. They may alternatively allow students to choose any of the first two and any of the last three courses. Students of the degree programs *Bachelor of Science in Economics* and *Bachelor of Science in Finance* are required to complete the course *Calculus I* as part of their General Education component.
- (1) The course *Fundamentals of Physics* introduces students to the history of physics and to its basic concepts, laws and principles, but also to its significance in modern science, technology and everyday life. It covers major topics from classical and modern physics, including fluids, thermodynamics, electricity and magnetism. It is designed to allow students who are not familiar with natural sciences to become acquainted with the world of physics, with its role in our modern world, and with modern technologies. They will gain insights into scientific principles and methods and into the most recent technological developments, which is all the more important since science and technology are the driving forces behind the innovation economy of the future.
  - (2) The course *Introduction to Environmental Sciences* introduces students to the scientific knowledge of the environment that is needed to solve environmental problems in a local, national, intercultural and global context. It aims to raise their awareness of environmental problems and of the close relationship between these problems and our modern ways of living. It thus intends to equip them with the knowledge and skills that policy makers, entrepreneurs and responsible citizens require if they want to address ecological problems adequately. The course covers topics such as energy and water use, global warming, overpopulation, sustainable waste management, the conservation of natural resources, or the preservation of biodiversity.

- (3) The course *Introduction to Statistics* aims to introduce students to statistical methods required for effective research. Students will become familiar with the foundations of statistics and with the process of decision making based on data mining, data description, and statistical analysis. They will learn how to interpret statistics encountered in daily life and how to apply statistical reasoning to real-world contexts. In doing so, students will begin to think critically about data and the statistical analysis of data. The course will cover basic principles and concepts of statistics, including sampling methods, descriptive measures, probability and conditional probability, random variables and probability distributions, characteristic functions, statistical inference, and basic forecasting.
- (4) The course *Calculus I* covers the two fields *differential calculus* and *integral calculus*. It is designed to familiarize students with major concepts and methods of (differential and integral) calculus (such as limiting behaviors, difference quotients and the derivative, definite and indefinite integrals, or the fundamental theorem of calculus). It also aims to introduce students to the mathematical analysis of economics, which relies on the concepts, methods and symbols of mathematics to formulate assumptions, arguments and conclusions. – The subsequent course *Calculus II* is not part of the *General Education Program* but of the Major Core component of the degree programs *Bachelor of Science in Economics* and *Bachelor of Science in Finance*.
- (5) The course *Data and Computing Skills* consists of two parts. In the first part, students will acquire advanced skills that enable them to perform complex mathematical and statistical calculations, to use spreadsheet applications for data organization and analysis, to produce sophisticated reports, or to write complex academic texts. The second part equips students with computational thinking skills. They will be introduced to the programming language *Python* and to some of the most common coding concepts, and they will learn how to use coding to solve mathematical and logical problems. Upon the completion of the course, students will have developed essential mathematical and computer skills that will allow them to improve not only their performance at university, but also their future employability.

#### **4.3 Writing and Information Literacy**

- a. Students must successfully complete 2 courses and acquire 12 credits in the area of *Writing and Information Literacy*.
- b. The following courses are part of the *Writing and Information Literacy* area: *Writing and Information Literacy I* and *Writing and Information Literacy II*. The course *Writing and Information Literacy I* is a prerequisite for the course *Writing and Information Literacy II*. Students must successfully complete these 2 courses (and thus the area *Writing and Information Literacy*) within the first 120 credits earned in residence. Students who do not fulfill this requirement will not be able to enroll for subsequent semesters and further courses until the requirement is met.
- c. *Writing and Information Literacy I* is designed as a reading-based writing course. It aims to support students to improve their academic language and their critical and analytical thinking skills. Students will learn how to evaluate sources and how to summarize, paraphrase and critically analyze academic texts that were written for a broader audience.
- d. *Writing and Information Literacy II* is designed as a research-based writing course. It aims to support students to further improve their academic language, their critical and analytical thinking skills, and their research skills. Students will learn how to write academic texts and how to critically approach and analyze specialized academic texts.

#### **4.4 Leadership and Communication**

- a. Students must successfully complete 2 courses and acquire 12 credits in the area of *Leadership and Communication*.

- b. The following courses are part of the *Leadership and Communication* area: *Public Speaking and Persuasion* and *Leadership, Ethics and Communication: Challenges of Society*. The course *Public Speaking and Persuasion* is a prerequisite for the course *Leadership, Ethics and Communication: Challenges of Society*.
- c. The course *Public Speaking and Persuasion* is designed to introduce students to the theory of public speaking and to improve and practice their rhetorical and persuasive skills. It considers various facets and challenges of public and persuasive speaking, including topic selection, organization and phrasing of arguments, confidence building, speech delivery, dramatic interpretation, support of positions as well as critical listening and debate. By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to speak more confidently, effectively and persuasively and in a manner that is consistent with their personality.
- d. The course *Leadership, Ethics and Communication: Challenges of Society* offers a foundational understanding of how leadership, ethics and communication are closely connected. It aims to support students in their personal development and prepare them to become effective leaders, clear and compelling communicators, adept team members and responsible citizens. Students will reflect on their own skills and attitudes and gain practical experience by collaborating with others in projects and activities that benefit the community and society. The focus of this course is thus on self-awareness, collaboration and experiential learning.

#### **1.4.8 ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES REGULATIONS**

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##### **1. Purpose**

The language of instruction at ADA University is English. The University aims to ensure that all its students are able to study their respective degree programs, to fully participate in courses, and to successfully complete all the required learning activities and coursework. It thus offers an English language program to its undergraduate students. The purpose of this document is to delineate the minimum language requirements for undergraduate students and the regulations of the University's English language program.

##### **2. Scope and Recommendations**

This document applies to all undergraduate degree programs offered at ADA University.

Undergraduate students are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the requirements and regulations set forth in this document.

##### **3. Definitions**

The *English for Academic and Professional Purposes (EAPP) Program* is a non-credit program that serves to prepare undergraduate students for the study of their degree program at ADA University.

## 4. English Language Requirements and Regulations

### 4.1 General Provisions

- a. All students of ADA University must have a level of English proficiency that is sufficient to study their respective degree programs and to successfully complete all the required learning activities and coursework.
- b. ADA University conducts an *English Proficiency Exam (EPE)* three times per year (in August, in December or early January, and in May). These exams serve as placement tests and also allow students to evaluate their overall progress in the *EAPP Program*.
- c. Newly admitted undergraduate students (incoming students) must either confirm their level of English in the *EPE* prior to the beginning of their studies, or they must present a valid *TOEFL iBT* or *IELTS* score upon admission.
- d. Incoming students who score at least 60% in the *EPE* or who previously achieved a *TOEFL iBT* score of 80 (or above) or an *IELTS* score of 6 (or above) will directly enroll in their respective degree programs.

### 4.2 English for Academic and Professional Purposes Program

- a. Incoming students who score less than 60% in the *EPE* or who previously achieved a *TOEFL iBT* score below 80 or an *IELTS* score below 6 must enroll in and successfully complete the *English for Academic and Professional Purposes (EAPP) Program*.
- b. *EAPP* is a non-credit program and thus does not count towards the total of credits earned in a degree program. Grades from *EAPP* courses do not count towards a student's TGPA and CGPA.
- c. Based on their *EPE*, *TOEFL iBT* or *IELTS* results, and unless they may directly enroll in their respective degree programs, incoming students are placed in one of the four levels and groups of the *EAPP Program* specified in the following table. Unless they fail and need to repeat a level, students remain in their respective groups until the completion of the *EAPP Program*.

CEFR Level	EAPP Level	Group
Elementary (A1)	1	A
Pre-Intermediate (A2)	2	B
Intermediate (B1)	3	C
Upper-Intermediate (B2)	4	D

- d. The number of sessions and classes students need to attend in order to complete the *EAPP Program* depends on their level and group (with classes consisting of 2 contact hours each):

Group	Sessions	Classes per Session	Classes per Week
A	4 x 7.5 Weeks	120	16
B	2 x 7.5 Weeks	112	15
	1 x 15 Weeks	199	13 – 14

C	2 x 15 Weeks	199	13 – 14
D	1 x 15 Weeks	199	13 – 14

- e. Each session consists of 3 different courses (*Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing, Language Use*) and thus covers all 4 language skills. The number of classes per course depends on the *EAPP* level and the corresponding length of a session. It varies from 30 to 52 in a 7.5-week session and from 45 to 94 in a 15-week session (further details are outlined in the *EAPP* program description).
- f. A level is considered to be successfully completed if a student achieves an overall grade of C or better. If an *EAPP* student receives an overall grade below C, he/she must repeat the entire level and is placed on academic probation for one session or semester. Failure to achieve an overall grade of C or better for that level at the end of the probation period will result in academic dismissal from the University.
- g. To complete the *EAPP Program* and enroll in a degree program, students must successfully complete the upper-intermediate level. All students are expected to complete the *EAPP Program* and reach the upper-intermediate level within one academic year. Those students that were on the upper-intermediate level when being admitted to ADA University are expected to complete the *EAPP Program* within one semester.
- h. The total period required for the completion of the *EAPP Program* may not exceed two academic years. If a student fails to achieve the required level of English proficiency within two academic years, he/she will be dismissed from the University.
- i. Only *EAPP* students who have successfully completed the *EAPP* level 4 may enroll in degree program courses. Students may alternatively take the *English Proficiency Exam* conducted in December or early January. If they score at least 60% in the exam, they are eligible to enroll in degree program courses.
- j. Further details on items such as course content and syllabus, learning outcomes, assessment methods and criteria, teaching and learning materials, and instructional methods and learning activities must be included in each course description that is to be made available to students prior to the beginning of a course. Further requirements for course descriptions are outlined in ADA University's *Curriculum and Course Development Policy*.

## 1.4.9 CREDIT REGULATIONS

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### 1. Purpose

ADA University strives to ensure the high quality and integrity of its degrees. This requires that credits and degrees be awarded only to students who have fully and at least satisfactorily fulfilled all requirements of their respective courses and programs. It also presupposes that credits that were previously awarded by other institutions of higher education and that are to be transferred to ADA University fully meet the standards set forth by ADA University for its degree programs. The purpose of this regulation is to define such standards and requirements and to provide a framework for the awarding of in-residence credits as well as for the assessment of non-residence credits requested for transfer.

Azerbaijan is part of the European Union's Eastern Partnership, and this partnership also extends to the field of education. As a result, and in order to enable its students to fully benefit from the opportunities opened up by this partnership, ADA University bases its credit system on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). In addition, and as a part of its strategy of internationalization, ADA University aims to ensure that its credit regulations are translatable into the standards of the U.S. system of higher education.

## 2. Scope and Recommendations

This regulation applies to all undergraduate and graduate degree programs and to all credit-based certificates at ADA University.

Teachers are expected to clearly define learning outcomes and workload expectations for any learning activity leading to the award of academic credit. Workload expectations must comply with the rules defined in this regulation. Learning outcomes must correspond to the standards set forth in ADA University's *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes*.

Students who intend to transfer credit to ADA University earned either prior to or during their enrollment for a degree program at ADA University are expected to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the rules and proceedings set forth in this regulation.

## 3. Definitions

The following definitions are based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS):

1. *Credit* or *Credit Hour* is defined as a quantified means of expressing a specific volume of learning. This volume is composed of clearly defined learning outcomes and of the workload associated with the achievement of these outcomes. Credit hours are not identical to contact hours or with 60-minute hours.
2. *Learning Outcomes* are statements of what a student is expected to know, understand and be able to demonstrate upon the completion of a specific process of learning.
3. *Workload* is defined as an estimation of the time a student typically needs to complete all learning activities required to achieve expected learning outcomes. Learning activities include lectures and seminars, projects, practical work and internships, as well as independent study activities and examinations. Workload is therefore not calculated based on contact hours or class time alone.
4. *Contact Hour* or *Class Time* is defined as a specific period of time students spend on activities guided by teaching staff.

## 4. Credit Hours

### 4.1 Calculation of Credits

- a. At ADA University, 1 contact hour consists of 37.5 minutes.
- b. Fall semester and Spring semester include 15 weeks of instruction, while Summer term consists of 6 weeks of instruction.
- c. At ADA University, 1 credit hour represents 25 minutes of class time and 95 minutes of further learning activities per week. This is equivalent to 6.25 hours of class time and 23.75 hours of further learning activities per semester (based on a 60-minute hour).

- d. 1 credit hour accordingly corresponds to a semester workload of 30 hours (based on a 60-minute hour). Compared to the U.S. credit system with a semester credit hour consisting of a semester workload of 45 to 48 hours (based on a 50-minute hour) or 37.5 to 40.0 hours (based on a 60-minute hour), 2 credit hours at ADA University approximately correspond to 1.5 credit hours within the U.S. credit system.<sup>2</sup>
- e. Most courses at ADA University award 6 credit hours. This is equivalent to 150 minutes of class time (= 4 contact hours) and 570 minutes of further learning activities per week and to 37.5 hours of class time (= 60 contact hours) and 142.5 hours of further learning activities per semester.

#### **4.2 Awarding of Credits**

- a. Credits are awarded for all learning activities that are required by any of the degree programs and credit-based certificates offered at ADA University.
- b. Credits are only awarded if a student has completed the expected workload and achieved the previously stated learning outcomes associated with a specific unit of study or volume of learning. The evaluation of student achievement and workload completion (including minimum grade requirements for the awarding of credit) is based on ADA University's *Student Assessment Regulations*.

#### **4.3 Credit Hour Requirements**

- a. A typical Bachelor's degree program requires at least 240 credit hours to be earned by the student. This entails the successful completion of approximately 40 courses, depending on the respective degree program. Translated into the U.S. semester credit hour system, a typical Bachelor's degree program at ADA University consists of approximately 180 semester credit hours. Further requirements are detailed in ADA University's *Undergraduate Degree Regulations*.
- b. A typical Master's degree program requires at least 90 credit hours to be earned by the student (including an Independent Study Project). Depending on the respective degree program, this entails the successful completion of approximately 12 courses plus the Independent Study Project, which usually covers 18 credit hours. Exceptions are the *MBA* program, which requires 70 credit hours (including the Independent Study Project), and the *MBA in Finance* program, which requires 76 credit hours (including the Independent Study Project). Translated into the U.S. semester credit hour system, a typical Master's degree program at ADA University consists of approximately 67.5 semester credit hours. Further requirements are detailed in ADA University's *Graduate Degree Regulations*.
- c. Credit hours are used to determine student enrollment status. Students are considered full-time if they register for a minimum number of credit hours per semester. Student enrollment status is regulated by ADA University's *Student Enrollment Status Regulations*.

### **5. Transfer Credit**

#### **5.1 In-Residence and Non-Residence Credits**

- a. Credits are considered in-residence if they are awarded to full-time, part-time, non-degree and incoming exchange students in courses taken at ADA University, or in courses coordinated by an academic unit of ADA University in any instructional modality.

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<sup>2</sup> Against the high-quality background of U.S. university degrees, ADA University usually accepts credits earned at U.S. institutions of higher education based on a conversion rate of 1 U.S. semester credit hour being equivalent to 2 ECTS.

- b. Credits are considered non-residence if they are transferred to ADA University, and/or if they have been awarded by another institution of higher education during a student's enrollment for a degree program at ADA University. The latter requires that the student receives a prior permit from ADA University to study at another institution.
- c. Some ADA University courses and learning activities are conducted at physical sites other than the ADA University campus. They are typically considered as in-residence courses and learning activities. In most cases, students receive in-residence credits for such courses and learning activities.

## **5.2 General Rules for the Transfer of Credit from Other Institutions**

- a. ADA University accepts transfer credits mainly for courses taught in English. Credits for courses taught in another language can only be transferred in exceptional cases and after prior approval by the Dean (or designee) of the School that serves as the administrative home of the student's degree program.
- b. Students may not receive graduate credit for any learning activity designated as solely undergraduate at the institution where the learning activity was completed.
- c. The acceptance of credit requested for transfer is subject to minimum grade requirements, which are applicable to each individual course for which the transfer of credit is requested (see chapters 5.3 and 5.5 below). Grades are evaluated according to ADA University's grading scale. The conversion of grades is based on the *Credit Transfer Handbook* that is in effect during the academic year in which a student enrolls or re-enrolls at ADA University.
- d. Approved transfer credit will be posted to the student's transcript. All transferred credits, courses and grades will be clearly marked as coming from another institution of higher education. Grades from approved transfer courses taken at another institution will not count towards a student's cumulative GPA at ADA University. Yet, approved transfer credit will count towards the total number of credits needed for graduation.

## **5.3 Transfer of Credit Earned Prior to Enrollment at ADA University**

- a. Undergraduate students may request to transfer credit for courses taken at another accredited institution prior to their admission to ADA University. The total number of credits transferred for a single degree program is subject to in-residence degree requirements (for details, see *Undergraduate Degree Regulations*) and may not exceed 30 credits (if they are to be transferred from an international institution) or 12 credits (if they are to be transferred from an Azerbaijani institution). Courses proposed for transfer must have been completed with a grade of C or better (after conversion to ADA University's grading scale) and must have been completed no more than 3 years prior to the beginning of the semester for which the student is seeking admission to ADA University.
- b. Graduate students may request to transfer credit for courses taken at another accredited institution prior to their admission to ADA University. The total number of credits transferred for a single degree program is subject to in-residence degree requirements (for details, see *Graduate Degree Regulations*) and may not exceed 18 credits (if they are to be transferred from an international institution) or 12 credits (if they are to be transferred from an Azerbaijani institution). Courses proposed for transfer must have been completed with a grade of B- or better (after conversion to ADA University's grading scale) and must have been completed no more than 2 years prior to the beginning of the semester for which the student is seeking admission to ADA University.
- c. The transfer of credit must be approved prior to a student's admission to ADA University. Responsibility for the approval or denial of transfer credit rests with the Dean (or designee) of the School that serves as the administrative home of the student's degree program.

- d. Students must provide the Office of Admissions and Student Records with an official transcript from the institution at which the proposed course(s) was (were) completed. They must also include a syllabus for each course for which the transfer of credits is requested. The Office of Admissions and Student Records will submit all documents received to the respective Dean (or designee).
- e. The Dean (or designee) will inform the Office of Admissions and Student Records of credits and courses approved for transfer. The Office of Admissions and Student Records will update the student's transcript accordingly.
- f. After prior approval, credits for in-residence courses that are part of a graduate degree program at ADA University and that have been earned before the admission to a subsequent graduate degree program at ADA University may be shared. There is no maximum number of credits that can be shared. Responsibility for the approval or denial of shared credit rests with the Dean (or designee) of the School that serves as the administrative home of the subsequent graduate program. Sharing of credit is only permissible if the respective course(s) has (have) been completed with a grade of B- or better (based on ADA University's grading scale).
- g. After prior approval, credits for in-residence courses that are part of a certificate program at ADA University and that have been earned before the admission to a graduate degree program at ADA University may be shared. Students can share up to 60 credits for a single degree program. Responsibility for the approval or denial of shared credit rests with the Dean (or designee) of the School that serves as the administrative home of the graduate program. Sharing of credit is only permissible if the respective course(s) has (have) been completed with a grade of B- or better (based on ADA University's grading scale) no more than 2 years prior to the beginning of the semester for which the student is seeking admission to ADA University.

#### **5.4 Studying at Another Institution**

- a. Undergraduate and graduate students of ADA University may participate in an exchange program and thus take courses at another institution of higher education, provided that the institution of higher education is an international partner institution of ADA University. Students who wish to participate in one of ADA University's exchange programs must meet the requirements and conditions and successfully complete the application process outlined in 5.4.b to 5.4.p.
- b. Students may study for one semester at another institution if they wish to transfer credits earned at that institution to ADA University. They may reapply for a second semester at an international partner institution, but they will not be able to transfer credits earned during that period (for details on the transfer of credit, see chapter 5.5 below). This may result in a delayed graduation date. Priority will be given to those students who have not yet taken part in an exchange program.
- c. Undergraduate students must have completed the first 60 credits of their respective degree program in residence and have a minimum of 2.50 cumulative GPA at the time of their application for an exchange program. In addition, students must be in residence during their final semester. Students are not permitted to study at another institution at that time.
- d. Graduate students must have completed the first 18 credits of their respective degree program in residence and have a minimum of 3.00 cumulative GPA at the time of their application for an exchange program. In addition, students must be in residence during their final semester. Students are not permitted to study at another institution at that time.
- e. Exchange programs offering scholarships or any other kind of financial aid are available to all students with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 at the time of their application for the program. Students must also meet any other requirement set forth by the prospective host institution.

- f. Students convicted of any violation of ADA University's *Honor Code* and / or the *Student Code of Conduct* may not participate in an exchange program.
- g. There are two application cycles per academic year, starting at the beginning of Fall semester and Spring semester.
- h. Before the beginning of each semester, and after having consulted with Deans, Program Directors and Academic Advisors, the University's Office of Global Outreach and Partners will provide students with a current overview of all exchange programs and courses available. It will furthermore support students in all academic matters related to their application both for an exchange program and at the prospective host institution.
- i. During the application period, and based on their priorities, students can apply for two exchange programs by using the University's application form at [online.ada.edu.az/exchange](https://online.ada.edu.az/exchange).
- j. Once the application period has ended, eligible candidates will be interviewed by selection committees, each of which consists of members of the School that represents the area of the respective exchange program. The Dean of the School must be part of the respective committee. Students will be selected and nominated for an exchange program based on their prior academic performance (cumulative GPA and number of completed credits; this accounts for 80% of their result) and on the outcomes of the selection interviews (20%).
- k. The Office of Global Outreach and Partners will announce the results of the selection process and inform those students that were nominated for an exchange program. They will be requested to confirm their participation in or their withdrawal from a program within two days after the announcement has been made.
- l. Remaining places in exchange programs and places of students that withdrew will be offered to students on a waiting list. There might also be a second application period, the rules for which are identical to the ones delineated above in 5.4.h to 5.4.j. After the announcement of the selection results, nominated students will have one day to confirm their participation in or their withdrawal from a program.
- m. Upon the completion of the nomination process, the Office of Global Outreach and Partners will send official nomination letters to all the relevant partner institutions. Students must provide all the application documents required by their prospective host institution and by ADA University well before the end of the semester preceding the beginning of their anticipated studies abroad. This includes a learning agreement that must be completed (using ADA University's *Learning Agreement Form*) in consultation with the student's Academic Advisor and that must be confirmed by the Office of Admissions and Student Records. Confirmation is required for each course and for the number of credits proposed for transfer to ADA University. Students may additionally be requested to complete a second learning agreement from the partner institution (this is obligatory for ERASMUS+ exchange programs).
- n. After having received an acceptance letter from their prospective host institution, it is the students' responsibility to ensure that they complete all the formal requirements (including visa and accommodation arrangements) in a comprehensive and timely manner.
- o. Students temporarily enrolled at another institution are strongly recommended to take only courses taught in English. In exceptional cases, when proposed courses are not taught in English at the host institution, students may be permitted to take courses in another language. This is subject to the prior approval by the Dean (or designee) of the School that serves as the administrative home of their respective degree program. Approval may only be granted if students meet the language requirement of the receiving institution.
- p. Retaking a course at another institution is only possible if the first attempt at ADA University was assigned a Withdrawal (W).

- q. Students who participate in an exchange program and are thus permitted to study at another institution will be placed on a temporary leave for the respective semester. Upon the termination of their leave, they will be re-enrolled at ADA University.

### **5.5 Transfer of Credit from Another Institution During Enrollment at ADA University**

- a. After their return to ADA University, and in order to transfer credits earned during their stay at another institution, students are required to meet with their Academic Advisor in order to complete the *Credit Transfer Form*. They must provide the Academic Advisor with an official transcript from the institution at which the course(s) and credits proposed for transfer were completed and with a syllabus for each course for which the transfer of credit is requested.
- b. Students must submit the completed *Credit Transfer Form* and the official transcript from the host institution to the Office of Admissions and Student Records.
- c. Undergraduate students may transfer up to 30 credits from an international institution of higher education.
- d. Graduate students may transfer up to 18 credits from an international institution of higher education.
- e. If (after conversion to ADA University's grading scale) the grade of the course for which the transfer of credit is requested is below C for undergraduate students, or below B- for graduate students, credits for these courses will not be transferred. Neither will such credits count towards the total number of credits required for graduation.
- f. The Office of Admissions and Student Records will update the student's transcript at ADA University based on the information submitted by the student and according to the regulations delineated in 5.5.c to 5.5.e.

## **1.4.10 UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE REGULATIONS**

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### **1. Purpose**

ADA University strives to ensure the coherence, breadth and high quality of its undergraduate degree programs. This requires that all programs adhere to certain degree requirements, even if these requirements may differ across different Schools and programs. The purpose of this document is to outline ADA University's undergraduate degree regulations.

### **2. Scope and Recommendations**

This regulation applies to all undergraduate degree programs at ADA University.

The requirements outlined in this document comply with ADA University's quality standards and guidelines for degree programs and with national regulations for higher education. They should be read alongside ADA University's *Credit Regulations* and *Curriculum Structure and Regulations*.

Undergraduate students are expected to be thoroughly familiar with all the degree requirements set forth in this document.

### 3. Definitions

*Undergraduate Degree Programs* encompass all Bachelor programs offered at ADA University.

The *Term Grade Point Average (TGPA)* indicates a student's academic performance during a specific semester or term. It is calculated in the following manner: (1) For each unit of study considered, grade points earned are multiplied by credit hours attempted. (2) The resulting values for all the units of study considered are added up. (3) The resulting sum is then divided by the credit hours attempted that semester or term. The term GPA does not cover units of study evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis, and it only includes the highest grade earned in a repeated course.

The *Cumulative GPA (CGPA)* indicates a student's overall academic performance in a degree program. It is calculated in the same manner as the *Term Grade Point Average*, but includes all units of study attempted by the time of calculation. Grades from approved transfer courses taken at another institution do not count towards a student's cumulative GPA at ADA University. Neither do units of study evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis. The cumulative GPA only includes the highest grade earned in a repeated course.

A *Second Career Track* is an additional course load that students can choose to open up further professional opportunities.

### 4. Undergraduate Degree Regulations

#### 4.1 General Provisions

- a. Students must complete the minimum requirements outlined in this document in order to be eligible for an undergraduate degree.
- b. Students must graduate under the Academic Catalogue in effect at the time of their first enrollment for a specific graduate degree program at ADA University. Students may not tailor-make their own degree requirements by selecting and combining requirements from different catalogues.
- c. Depending on a student's English language level upon admission, he/she may need to successfully complete the *English for Academic and Professional Purposes Program* before being able to enroll in his/her degree program (for details, see the University's *English for Academic and Professional Purposes Regulations*).

#### 4.2 Program and Graduation Requirements

- a. Students must complete at least 240 credit hours with a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or better. The last 30 credit hours must be completed in residence at ADA University. Undergraduate students may transfer up to 30 credits from an international institution of higher education.
- b. All undergraduate degree programs at ADA University have a General Education component (for details, see the *General Education Regulations*). The successful completion of 60 credit hours (or 10 courses) is usually required in order to meet the University's General Education requirements. These requirements are similar across all programs, but they may differ depending on the nature of the degree. The *Bachelor of Laws* program and the *Bachelor of Science in Mathematics* program have different General Education requirements.
- c. Students are expected to complete the General Education component during the first 120 credits earned. In some cases, General Education courses may also meet Major Core, Technical Elective or Free Elective requirements. In no case may students substitute General Education courses for Major Core, Technical Elective or Free Elective courses (or vice versa).

- d. In addition to the General Education component, most undergraduate degree programs at ADA University include the following four components: Major Core, Technical Elective, Free Elective and Functional Enabler. The minimum requirement for these four components is 180 credit hours.
- e. Major Core courses are designed to offer a fundamental understanding of subjects covered by a student's main field of specialization. The Major Core component usually consists of a minimum of 120 credits or 20 courses. Some programs may include more than the minimum requirement for the Major Core component.
- f. Technical Electives are designed to cover advanced topics in a student's main field of specialization. All undergraduate degree programs at ADA University have a Technical Elective component consisting of 24 credits or 4 courses. Students attend these courses during their last year of study.
- g. Free Electives are courses that are not an integral part of a student's degree program. They can be chosen from any other degree program offered at ADA University. Most undergraduate degree programs at ADA University have a Free Elective component consisting of 24 credits or 4 courses. Students usually attend these courses during their third and fourth year of study. Some programs may require fewer credits allocated to the Free Elective component. The *Bachelor of Laws* program at ADA University does not include a Free Elective component.
- h. Functional Enablers are courses that aim to develop core study- and work-related skills. Most undergraduate degree programs at ADA University have a Functional Enabler component consisting of 12 credits or 2 courses. The *Bachelor of Laws* program and the *Bachelor of Science in Mathematics* program include only 6 credits for the Functional Enabler component.
- i. The minimum graduation requirement of 240 credit hours must satisfy all the degree requirements mentioned in 4.2. Some programs may require more than 240 credit hours for the completion of all program requirements.

#### **4.3 Second Career Track**

- a. Undergraduate students may pursue a second career track.
- b. Several second career tracks are available across different degree programs at ADA University, all of which consist of a predefined set of six courses.
- c. Students who wish to pursue a second career track must consult with their Academic Advisor in order to plan their second career track (i.e., their Free Electives and course overloads).

#### **4.4 Changes in Degree Program or School Affiliation**

- a. Students may request to change their degree program within a School or transfer to a degree program offered by another School of ADA University. Students wishing to do so are strongly recommended to consult with their Academic Advisor to determine their options.
- b. A change of degree program or School affiliation requires the permission of the Dean of the School that serves as the target degree program's administrative home.
- c. Schools may establish additional requirements for the change of degree program or School affiliation.

#### **4.5 Time Limit for Degree Completion**

- a. After the completion of the *English for Academic and Professional Purposes Program* (if applicable), undergraduate students are expected to complete all degree requirements in no more than four academic years after the date of their first enrollment in their respective program.
- b. Students may receive an extension to complete their degree program. Students must complete all degree requirements in no more than six years after the date of their first enrollment in the program. This may require that they also attend classes during Summer terms.

- c. Periods of separation from the University and temporary leaves do not count towards the time limit for degree completion.

## 1.4.11 GRADUATE DEGREE REGULATIONS

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### 1. Purpose

ADA University strives to ensure the coherence, breadth and high quality of its graduate degree programs. This requires that all programs adhere to certain degree requirements, even if these requirements may differ across different Schools and programs. The purpose of this document is to outline ADA University's graduate degree regulations.

### 2. Scope and Recommendations

This regulation applies to all graduate degree programs at ADA University.

The requirements outlined in this document comply with ADA University's quality standards and guidelines for degree programs and with national regulations for higher education. They should be read alongside ADA University's *Credit Regulations* and *Curriculum Structure and Regulations*.

Graduate students are expected to be thoroughly familiar with all the degree requirements set forth in this document.

### 3. Definitions

*Graduate Degree Programs* encompass all Master programs offered at ADA University.

The *Term Grade Point Average (TGPA)* indicates a student's academic performance during a specific semester or term. It is calculated in the following manner: (1) For each unit of study considered, grade points earned are multiplied by credit hours attempted. (2) The resulting values for all the units of study considered are added up. (3) The resulting sum is then divided by the credit hours attempted that semester or term. The term GPA does not cover units of study evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis, and it only includes the highest grade earned in a repeated course.

The *Cumulative GPA (CGPA)* indicates a student's overall academic performance in a degree program. It is calculated in the same manner as the *Term Grade Point Average*, but includes all units of study attempted by the time of calculation. Grades from approved transfer courses taken at another institution do not count towards a student's cumulative GPA at ADA University. Neither do units of study evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis. The cumulative GPA only includes the highest grade earned in a repeated course.

A *Capstone Project* is an independent group study assignment that is to be completed in the second year of a Master degree program.

## 4. Graduate Degree Regulations

### 4.1 General Provisions

- a. Students must complete the minimum requirements outlined in this document in order to be eligible for a graduate degree.
- b. Students must graduate under the Academic Catalogue in effect at the time of their first enrollment for a specific graduate degree program at ADA University. Students may not tailor-make their own degree requirements by selecting and combining requirements from different catalogues.

### 4.2 Program and Graduation Requirements

- a. Students must complete at least 90 credit hours (in regular graduate degree programs) or 70 credit hours (in practice-based degree programs such as the *Master of Business Administration*) with a cumulative GPA of 2.75 or better. At least 72 credit hours (for 90 credit programs) or 52 credit hours (for 70 credit programs) must be completed in residence at ADA University.
- b. All graduate degree programs at ADA University have a Major Core component and a Technical Elective component.
- c. Major Core courses are designed to offer a fundamental understanding of subjects covered by a student's main field of specialization. The Major Core component usually covers 72 credit hours (for 90 credit programs) or 52 credit hours (for 70 credit programs).
- d. Technical Electives are designed to cover advanced topics in a student's main field of specialization. Students can choose from a range of Technical Electives. Usually, a graduate degree program requires no more than 18 credits or 3 courses for the Technical Elective component.
- e. All graduate degree programs at ADA University include an Independent Study requirement. Students must complete either a Capstone Project or a Master Thesis. The program *Master of Business Administration* requires either a Business Consultancy Project, a Business Plan or a Master Thesis to complete the Independent Study requirement. In all graduate degree programs, the Independent Study requirement is considered to be part of the Major Core component and usually covers 18 credit hours.
- f. The minimum graduation requirement of 90 (or 70) credit hours must satisfy the requirements of the Major Core component and the Technical Elective component.

### 4.3 Time Limit for Degree Completion

- a. Graduate students enrolled in full-time degree programs are expected to complete all degree requirements in no more than two academic years after the date of their first enrollment in the program.
- b. In case students fail to complete all courses during two academic years, they may receive an extension to complete their degree program. If they fail to complete their Master Thesis during that period, they may appeal to the Dean of their respective School for the purpose of receiving an extension to complete their thesis (using the *Request for Extension Form*). The Dean may grant the extension, and he/she will notify the Office of Admissions and Student Records accordingly. Students must complete all degree requirements in no more than three years after the date of their first enrollment in the program. This may require that they also attend classes during Summer terms.
- c. Periods of separation from the University and temporary leaves do not count towards the time limit for degree completion.

## 1.4.12 DEGREE AUDIT REGULATIONS

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### 1. Purpose

ADA University strives to ensure the high quality and integrity of its degrees. This requires that the performance and progress of students are reviewed and degrees are audited regularly and in a uniform manner against the requirements stipulated in the University's *Undergraduate Degree Regulations* and *Graduate Degree Regulations* as well as in specific degree program descriptions. The purpose of this document is to outline ADA University's degree audit processes.

### 2. Scope and Recommendations

This regulation applies to all students enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate degree program at ADA University. It outlines rules and proceedings for the regular audit of student progress and of degree completion conducted by the Office of Admissions and Student Records and by Academic Advisors.

Those members of ADA University responsible for monitoring and evaluating student progress and degree completion are expected to be thoroughly familiar with this document and with ADA University's *Undergraduate Degree Regulations* and *Graduate Degree Regulations*.

Students are strongly advised to monitor their progress towards degree completion on a regular basis.

### 3. Definitions

A *Degree Audit* is a formal analysis of a student's progress towards degree completion. It furthermore serves to evaluate whether a student has fulfilled all program requirements before being awarded a degree.

The *Term Grade Point Average (TGPA)* indicates a student's academic performance during a specific semester or term. It is calculated in the following manner: (1) For each unit of study considered, grade points earned are multiplied by credit hours attempted. (2) The resulting values for all the units of study considered are added up. (3) The resulting sum is then divided by the credit hours attempted that semester or term. The term GPA does not cover units of study evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis, and it only includes the highest grade earned in a repeated course.

The *Cumulative GPA (CGPA)* indicates a student's overall academic performance in a degree program. It is calculated in the same manner as the *Term Grade Point Average*, but includes all units of study attempted by the time of calculation. Grades from approved transfer courses taken at another institution do not count towards a student's cumulative GPA at ADA University. Neither do units of study evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis. The cumulative GPA only includes the highest grade earned in a repeated course.

The *Banner Student Information System (Banner SIS)* is an electronic database of student records and further relevant student information. It is used for data collection, reporting, and for managing day-to-day academic operations at ADA University.

*Curriculum Advising and Program Planning (CAPP)* is a tool available in *Banner SIS* that allows for the digital representation of degree program requirements. It enables students as well as academic and administrative staff members to monitor and evaluate a student's progress towards the completion of these requirements.

*MyADA* is a centralized portal available to students, faculty and staff that provides access to major electronic services offered at ADA University.

#### 4. Degree Audit Processes

- 4.1 The progress of students towards degree completion must be monitored regularly and as specified below. The University furthermore conducts degree evaluation processes prior to the graduation of students and the processing of degrees.
- 4.2 Degree audits consist of formal and systematic assessments of a student's progress and level of attainment, and of informal processes of a student's self-evaluation.
- 4.3 Degree audits fulfill the following purposes:
  - a. They support the retention of students by monitoring their progress towards degree completion.
  - b. They serve to ensure that students are able to graduate on time.
  - c. They ensure that degrees are awarded only to students who have fulfilled all requirements of their respective degrees on at least a satisfactory level.
- 4.4 ADA University uses the *Curriculum Advising and Program Planning (CAPP)* tool available in *Banner SIS* to create digital representations of program requirements. Each degree program's *CAPP* includes courses, credits and minimum passing grades. Students, Academic Advisors and designated members of a student's respective School (such as Deans and Program Directors) have access to relevant student information via *MyADA*. They are thus able to monitor and assess a student's performance against degree requirements and his/her progress towards degree completion.
- 4.5 Academic Advisors regularly assess their designated students' results and academic performance in order to provide assistance during the semester as well as before and during course registration for the following term. This is to ensure that students continue to fulfill all requirements of their respective degree programs and are able to graduate on time.
- 4.6 In order to progress towards degree completion ("good academic standing"), undergraduate students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.00, graduate students a cumulative GPA of 2.75.
- 4.7 Undergraduate students must repeat courses with a grade below D (the courses *Writing and Information Literary I* and *Writing and Information Literary II* must be repeated if students receive a grade below C-). Students of the *English for Academic and Professional Purposes (EAPP) Program* must repeat a level with an overall grade below C (for details on the *EAPP Program*, see ADA University's *English for Academic and Professional Purposes Regulations*). Graduate students must repeat courses with a grade below C.
- 4.8 A student is placed on academic probation if the student's cumulative GPA falls below 2.00 (undergraduates) or below 2.75 (graduates) at the end of a semester. Students on academic probation are required to meet regularly with their Academic Advisor and to participate in a student success program. Students cannot be placed on academic probation for more than two consecutive semesters (undergraduate students) or for more than one semester (graduate students). Following two semesters (undergraduate programs) or one semester (graduate programs) of academic probation, a student will be dismissed if the cumulative GPA remains below 2.00 (undergraduate students) or below 2.75 (graduate students). Students who achieve a cumulative GPA of at least 2.00 (undergraduate programs) or 2.75 (graduate programs) during the periods mentioned above

are removed from academic probation and placed in good academic standing. Students that were dismissed after having been placed on academic probation may be readmitted to their respective degree programs after one term or semester. Readmission is possible only once. Readmission is not possible for undergraduate students with a cumulative GPA of 1.00 or below in two consecutive semesters or for graduate students with a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or below at the time of dismissal. These students will be permanently dismissed from the University.

- 4.9 As part of the objective to ensure the high quality and integrity of ADA University's degrees, and before a degree may be awarded, the Office of Admissions and Student Records evaluates a student's overall academic performance against the requirements set forth in the *Undergraduate Degree Regulations* or *Graduate Degree Regulations* and in the program description of the student's degree program.
- 4.10 For graduation, students must have completed all the requirements of their respective degree programs.
- 4.11 For graduation, undergraduate students must have completed at least 240 credit hours with a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or better (some programs may require more than 240 credits for the completion of all requirements). Graduate students must complete at least 90 credit hours with a cumulative GPA of 2.75 or better (some degree programs may require only 70 credit hours for the completion of all requirements).
- 4.12 In order to fulfill ADA University's degree regulations, the University requires that students acquire 210 credits (undergraduate programs) or 72 credits (graduate programs) in residence (some graduate programs require only 52 credits to be completed in residence). Students may accordingly transfer a maximum of 30 credits (undergraduate programs) or of 18 credits (graduate programs) to ADA University (for details, see the *Undergraduate Degree Regulations* and *Graduate Degree Regulations*).
- 4.13 The integrity of ADA University's degrees also requires that plagiarism and academic cheating are prevented or sanctioned (should they occur). As stated in its *Honor Code*, the University aims to foster an attitude of honesty and integrity in all of its students. To this end, students are trained in proper academic conduct. Violations of the principles of academic honesty and integrity may result in failed courses and written warnings, in a temporary suspension from classes, or in permanent expulsion from the University.

## 2. TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

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### 2.1 QUALITY STANDARD

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Teaching, learning and assessment are designed to fulfill the University's mission, its institutional purposes and its core value of *academic excellence*. They are based on clearly stated and measurable learning outcomes and ensure that students develop and achieve these learning outcomes, program objectives and the University's core competencies. Teaching, learning and assessment are aligned with each other. They incorporate evidence-based practices and provide students with innovative learning experiences. Teaching, learning and assessment are subject to regular and systematic processes of quality assurance.

### 2.2 QUALITY GUIDELINES

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Teaching, learning and assessment are at the core of the educational process. They serve to realize the mission of ADA University, to implement its degree programs and to train highly competent professionals and responsible citizens. In order to ensure a consistently high quality of the educational process in face-to-face, blended and online modes, teaching, learning and assessment at ADA University must comply with the following quality requirements:

- ❖ Teaching, learning and assessment must comply with and serve the mission, purposes, academic principles and core values of ADA University.
- ❖ Teaching, learning and assessment must reflect the quality standard and requirements for *Teaching, Learning and Assessment* set forth in ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.
- ❖ Teaching, learning and assessment must be based on international best practices and be informed by the latest developments in the fields of face-to-face, blended and online education.
- ❖ The teaching and learning process must reflect the principles defined in ADA University's *Statement on Teaching and Learning*.
- ❖ Teaching and learning must be based on explicitly stated and measurable learning outcomes that are consistent with ADA University's *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes*.
- ❖ Course learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessment methods as key factors of the educational process must be aligned.
- ❖ The educational process must ensure a high level of student performance on the level of courses and programs. It must allow students to achieve program objectives as well as learning outcomes on the program and course level.
- ❖ The educational process must be based on student-centered and inquiry-based approaches to face-to-face, blended and online teaching and learning. It must allow for experiential learning experiences and provide students with the opportunity for active engagement.
- ❖ The educational process must employ a variety of teaching, learning and assessment methods.

- ❖ The educational process must employ innovative technology to improve student learning in online, blended and face-to-face modes of teaching.
- ❖ Teaching and learning must be based on current and meaningful course content.
- ❖ The educational process must address the diverse needs of students.
- ❖ The assessment of student performance must be consistent with the rules and proceedings outlined in ADA University's *Student Assessment Regulations*.
- ❖ The assessment process must be conducted in accordance with the principle of academic integrity.
- ❖ The assessment of student performance must effectively evaluate the level of attainment of learning outcomes. It must be based on clearly defined assessment criteria.
- ❖ ADA University's grading system must be consistent with those commonly used in the U.S. education system.
- ❖ Online and blended teaching and learning as well as remote examinations must comply with the rules and proceedings outlined in ADA University's *Online Education and Assessment Regulations*.
- ❖ Teaching and learning conducted in online or blended formats must be based on learning outcomes that are appropriate to the respective format and are thus attainable by students.
- ❖ Similar courses offered in different formats (online, blended, or face-to-face) must be equivalent in terms of course level and quality and in terms of the level of student performance.
- ❖ The University must offer regular trainings that equip teachers and students with the knowledge and skills required for online and blended teaching and learning.
- ❖ Students must be provided with comprehensive information on courses, on teaching and learning activities, and on assessment methods and criteria. Students must receive regular and timely feedback on their learning progress and on other issues relevant to their learning experience.
- ❖ The teaching process must be evaluated and continuously improved using feedback from students and other stakeholders as well as student assessment data.

## **2.3 QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT**

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### **1. Purpose**

This document is based on ADA University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*. Its purpose is to define specific structures and procedures of academic quality assurance for the area *Teaching, Learning and Assessment*.

### **2. Scope and Recommendations**

This policy applies to the area *Teaching, Learning and Assessment*. It provides guidance on the assessment and enhancement of the area's *Quality Standard* and *Quality Guidelines*, of its key documents and of actual outcomes.

This policy should be read in conjunction with ADA University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*.

### 3. Definitions

The area *Teaching, Learning and Assessment* covers major components of the educational process. These include principles that serve to guide the process of teaching and learning at ADA University; rules and proceedings that regulate the assessment of learning; as well as a framework for online and blended teaching, learning and assessment.

*Quality Indicators* are clearly defined criteria that allow for the assessment of academic quality and quality assurance documents as well as of their outcomes. The results of these assessments serve to further enhance the quality of documents and outcomes.

### 4. Quality Indicators

- 4.1 Quality indicators must be based on international best practices and reflect the quality standards and requirements defined for *Teaching, Learning and Assessment* in ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*. They must cover all key documents and related outcomes as well as the area's *Quality Standard* and *Quality Guidelines*.
- 4.2 When reviewing key documents, their actual outcomes and the *Quality Standard* and *Quality Guidelines* contained in the area *Teaching, Learning and Assessment*, the process of quality assurance must be based on the quality indicators defined in 4.3 to 4.7.
- 4.3 The *Quality Standard* and *Quality Guidelines* continue to reflect international best practices and serve to provide an environment of excellence in teaching, learning and assessment. The educational process throughout all programs and courses is innovative and informed by the latest developments in the fields of face-to-face, blended and online education.
- 4.4 Teaching, learning and assessment throughout all programs and courses are aligned with the mission, purposes, academic principles and core values of ADA University.
- 4.5 The principles defined in ADA University's *Statement on Teaching and Learning* reflect international best practices in teaching and learning. They are comprehensively implemented throughout all programs and courses. When assessing the implementation of the principles set forth in the *Statement on Teaching and Learning*, the process of quality assurance will be guided by the following quality indicators:
  - a. Teaching and learning are based on explicitly stated and measurable learning outcomes that derive from ADA University's *Statement of Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes*. Learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessment methods are aligned in all courses delivered at the University. Students are generally able to achieve learning outcomes and program objectives, and they perform highly in all programs and courses.
  - b. Teaching and learning in face-to-face, blended and online modes are student-centered and inquiry-based, and they allow for experiential learning experiences. Throughout all courses, students are provided with opportunities to participate actively and to their full potential.
  - c. All courses delivered at the University employ innovative technology as well as a variety of teaching, learning and assessment methods. They are based on current and meaningful course content.
  - d. All programs and courses offered at the University are inclusive and accommodate the diverse needs of students.
  - e. In all courses, students are provided with comprehensive information on teaching and learning activities and on assessment methods and criteria. They receive regular and timely feedback on their learning progress and on potential opportunities for improvement.

- f. Teachers continuously solicit and/or receive feedback from students and other stakeholders, and they employ this feedback as well as student assessment data to improve their teaching.
- 4.6 The University's *Student Assessment Regulations* provide a well-structured, comprehensive and transparent framework for the evaluation of student performance. They are based on international best practices. Assessment in all courses delivered at the University is consistent with the rules and proceedings outlined in the *Student Assessment Regulations*. It is based on clearly defined assessment criteria, and it effectively evaluates the level of attainment of learning outcomes. The University's examination regulations are designed to ensure the integrity of the examination process. These regulations are implemented in all of the courses delivered at the University, and breaches of academic integrity by students are sanctioned according to ADA University's *Honor Code*. Examinations are conducted in an inclusive and equitable manner. The University's grading system continues to be consistent with those commonly used in the U.S. education system.
- 4.7 ADA University's *Online Education and Assessment Regulations* are well integrated with the University's *Statement on Teaching and Learning* and its *Student Assessment Regulations*, to which they continue to provide a clearly structured and comprehensive supplement. They reflect international best practices in online education and assessment, and they are comprehensively implemented in all remote examinations and in all courses delivered in online or blended formats. Teaching and learning in these courses are based on learning outcomes that are appropriate to the respective format, and they are generally achieved by students. Online and blended courses are equivalent (in terms of level, quality, and student performance) to courses delivered face-to-face. The trainings offered by the University equip teachers and students with all the knowledge and skills required to fully participate in online and/or blended teaching and learning. The University's *Blackboard Administrator* successfully supports teachers and students in resolving technical issues related to remote examinations and to the process of online and/or blended teaching and learning.

## 5. Quality Assurance Procedures

- 5.1 The process of quality assurance in the area *Teaching, Learning and Assessment* is based on the quality indicators defined above and on the quality review cycle and the procedures delineated in ADA University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*.
- 5.2 The process of quality assurance must ensure the involvement of Schools and faculty and the participation of students as delineated in the general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy* and the document *Quality Assurance Governance*.
- 5.3 The process of quality assurance must pay particular attention (1) to the alignment of learning outcomes with teaching and learning activities and with assessment methods in all courses delivered at the University; (2) to the integrity of the examination process throughout all programs and courses; and (3) to the innovativeness of the instructional process in all courses offered in face-to-face, blended and online formats. In case of shortcomings, the Quality Assurance Committee will initiate and supervise improvements as appropriate and based on the area's key documents and on the quality indicators defined above.
- 5.4 The process of quality assurance for courses offered in the online or blended format requires the involvement of ADA University's Information Technology Services.

## 2.4 KEY DOCUMENTS

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### 2.4.1 STATEMENT ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

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#### 1. Purpose

ADA University aims to offer an innovative and challenging learning environment that is based on excellence in teaching and research and that allows for purposeful and transformative learning experiences. The purpose of this statement is to define the fundamental principles of teaching and learning at ADA University.

#### 2. Scope and Recommendations

This statement provides the framework for teaching and learning at both the undergraduate and graduate level. It applies to all the degree programs and courses offered face-to-face or via a blended or online learning format.

All faculty of ADA University are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the principles set forth in this document.

#### 3. Definitions

*Principles of Teaching and Learning* are fundamental concepts that serve to guide the educational process.

#### 4. Principles of Teaching and Learning

4.1 *Centrality*: Teaching and learning are at the core of ADA University's mission, vision and purposes.

4.2 *Academic Freedom*: Within the context of the University's educational program and of the requirements pertaining to this program and its delivery, faculty are free in their teaching and in their choice of course content and of teaching and learning methods.

4.3 *Academic Excellence*: Teaching is conducted according to high international standards.

4.4 *Innovation*: Teaching is based on innovative methods that maximize student learning. It uses technology innovatively in order to enrich and improve learning in online, blended and face-to-face education.

4.5 *Nexus*: Education and research are closely connected. Research informs the teaching and learning process.

4.6 *Outcome Orientation*: Teaching and learning are purposeful activities and based on clearly stated and measurable learning outcomes.

- 4.7 *Alignment*: All key factors of the educational process are interlinked and aligned, namely, clearly articulated learning outcomes, instructional approaches, and assessment methods. The alignment of learning outcomes with instructional approaches requires that all teaching and learning activities support students in the achievement of these outcomes. Their alignment with assessment methods requires that the chosen methods allow students to fully demonstrate the achievement of intended learning outcomes.
- 4.8 *Attainability*: The teaching and learning process allows students to achieve intended learning outcomes and core competencies.
- 4.9 *Adequacy*: The level of teaching and learning activities is appropriate to the level of courses and students.
- 4.10 *Variety*: The instructional process employs a variety of teaching and learning methods. It thus engages students in various forms of activities intended to achieve different learning outcomes.
- 4.11 *Relevance*: The educational process includes experiential and practical learning opportunities that allow students to apply acquired competencies in real-life contexts.
- 4.12 *Participation*: The teaching and learning process provides students with stimulating learning experiences and with opportunities to participate actively and to their full potential.
- 4.13 *Learner Orientation*: Students are at the center of the teaching and learning process. Teachers promote a learner-oriented focus by employing inquiry-based methods and various forms of independent study, project-based learning, collaborative learning, and experiential learning.
- 4.14 *Inclusiveness*: The educational process is inclusive and sensitive to the needs of students. It employs a variety of teaching and learning methods so that all students can participate equitably and to their full potential.
- 4.15 *Information*: Students are provided with all relevant information prior to the beginning of a course or unit of study.
- 4.16 *Feedback*: Students are regularly provided with information on their performance and learning progress and potentially with advice on how they may improve.
- 4.17 *Improvement*: Teachers continuously solicit feedback from students and other stakeholders and use this feedback as well as student assessment results to improve the teaching and learning process.
- 4.18 *Collaboration*: All actors directly involved and collaboratively engaged in the educational process (students, faculty, staff members) pursue quality in teaching and learning and thus work towards the implementation of ADA University's mission and core values and of the principles outlined in this document.

## 2.4.2 STUDENT ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

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### 1. Purpose

Student assessment is an essential component of the educational process. The purpose of this document is to outline specific rules and proceedings for the design of assessments, the conduct of examinations, and for the assessment of student academic performance at ADA University.

## 2. Scope and Recommendations

This regulation applies to all undergraduate and graduate degree programs (as well as to all non-degree programs and to the *English for Academic and Professional Purposes Program*) offered face-to-face, or in a blended or online format at ADA University. It provides a framework for the evaluation of student performance and of the achievement of learning outcomes on the level of courses and programs.

Students and teachers as well as administrative staff involved in the process of student assessment are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the rules and proceedings delineated in this document.

Students and teachers are strongly recommended to consult ADA University's *Online Education and Assessment Regulations* for courses and programs offered in the blended or online format and/or for assessments that are conducted online.

Students are expected to be thoroughly familiar with ADA University's *Honor Code*. They are recommended to consult ADA University's *Student Appeal and Grievance Policy* for any complaints or disagreements over academic matters that cannot be resolved among the involved parties.

## 3. Definitions

*Assessment Criteria* delineate precise requirements for the achievement of learning outcomes. These requirements are clearly defined statements of what a student is expected to demonstrate during or at the end of a process of learning in order to have partly or fully achieved a specific learning outcome. They thus provide detailed guidelines for the evaluation of assessment tasks.

*Assessment Tasks* are assignments that serve to determine the level on which students have achieved specific learning outcomes in a course or unit of study.

*Assessment Types* are categories of assignments that serve different purposes during the educational process.

The term *Assessment Method* comprises both assessment tasks and assessment types.

A *Capstone Project* is an independent group study assignment that is to be completed in the second year of a Master degree program.

*Academic Integrity* is a fundamental guiding principle according to which every educational and research activity is to be conducted in an honest, responsible and altogether ethical manner. Most importantly, this principle precludes any kind of cheating and plagiarism as well as the awarding of grades and degrees based on anything else but the performance of students and their attainment of course learning outcomes and program requirements.

*Contract Cheating* represents a breach of academic integrity. It is a form of academic dishonesty in which an assessment task that was supposedly completed by one student (or a group of students) and that has been submitted for evaluation was instead (fully, substantially, or to a significant degree) prepared by a third party. It applies to all cases in which a third party was involved, and this regardless of the third party's relationship to the student (or group of students) and whether the third party received

any sort of remuneration from the student (or group of students). It also applies to cases in which someone other than a student sits (or attempts to sit) an exam on behalf of that student.

The *Grade Scale Percentage* is a numerical expression of a student's performance in an assessment task.

*Grade Points* are a numerical equivalent to the Grade Scale Percentage achieved by a student in an assessment task. They furthermore serve to express the overall performance of student in a course or unit of study. As such, they are calculated in the following manner: (1) For each assessment task, grade points are assigned. (2) The grade points for each assessment task are multiplied by its percentage weight (which is the relative contribution of an assessment task to the overall grade of a course or unit of study). (3) The resulting products are added up to produce the final grade assigned to a student in a course or unit of study.

*Grade Descriptors* are terms that serve to express a student's level of performance in a specific assessment task, course or unit of study.

*Grade Descriptions* provide definitions of grade descriptors. Grade descriptions are based on the level on which learning outcomes are achieved. This level of achievement is indicated by the extent to which assessment criteria are fulfilled. The latter presupposes that learning outcomes and assessment methods are aligned (for details, see ADA University's *Curriculum and Course Development Policy* and its *Core Competence and Learning Outcome Specification Policy*).

A *Grading Rubric* is a scoring guide that allows for the precise evaluation of student performance in a specific assignment. It further specifies (subdivides) grade descriptors and thus explicates the achievement of grade scale percentages and the allocation of grade points.

The *Term Grade Point Average (TGPA)* indicates a student's academic performance during a specific semester or term. It is calculated in the following manner: (1) For each unit of study considered, grade points earned are multiplied by credit hours attempted. (2) The resulting values for all the units of study considered are added up. (3) The resulting sum is then divided by the credit hours attempted that semester or term. The term GPA does not cover units of study evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis, and it only includes the highest grade earned in a repeated course.

The *Cumulative GPA (CGPA)* indicates a student's overall academic performance in a degree program. It is calculated in the same manner as the *Term Grade Point Average*, but includes all units of study attempted by the time of calculation. Grades from approved transfer courses taken at another institution do not count towards a student's cumulative GPA at ADA University. Neither do units of study evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis. The cumulative GPA only includes the highest grade earned in a repeated course.

A *Student Transcript* is a standardized document that serves as an official record of a student's performance. It includes all the credits and grades earned by a student for a specific degree program.

#### **4. Assessment: Purposes, Types, Directives**

##### **4.1 Purposes of Assessment**

- a. Student assessment at ADA University is a deliberate process that must serve specific and well-defined purposes.

- b. *Assessment of Learning* serves the purpose of evaluating the attainment of learning outcomes and of measuring the level on which students have achieved specific learning outcomes. This purpose can be accomplished by a wide range of formative and summative assessment tasks.
- c. *Assessment for Learning* serves the purpose of providing teachers with reliable evidence on the learning progress of their students. It can thus inform the teaching and learning process in a course or unit of study and allow teachers to determine subsequent teaching and learning activities. This purpose is mainly accomplished by diagnostic and formative assessment tasks.
- d. *Assessment as Learning* serves the purpose of supporting students to reflect upon their own learning progress and approaches to learning. It can thus enable students to adjust their learning strategies and become more self-reliant, goal-oriented and successful in their learning. This purpose is mainly accomplished by formative and ipsative assessment tasks.
- e. *Assessment for Accountability and for Certification* serves two purposes. Firstly, it serves to provide evidence to the public in general and to the public administration in particular that the University fulfills its mission. Secondly, it serves to document that the University fulfills the requirements of national and international accrediting agencies and of similar certifying organizations. This purpose can best be accomplished by means of aggregate data on student performance at the program, School and institutional level.

#### 4.2 Types of Assessment

- a. A variety of assessment types are used at ADA University in order to support and evaluate the learning progress of students. Students must furthermore have the opportunity to demonstrate acquired competencies in different forms of assessment tasks. These rules apply to all courses offered face-to-face or via a blended or online learning format.
- b. *Criterion-Referenced Assessment*: This type of assessment compares the performance of students to pre-defined criteria. All courses or units of study and all assignments at ADA University are criterion-referenced in that they base the evaluation of a student's performance on clearly defined assessment criteria. These criteria as well as appropriate assessment tasks are delineated in the course description of each course. A multitude of assessment tasks serve the purpose of criterion-based assessment, ranging from quizzes and multiple choice question tests to written and oral examinations and to individual study projects.
- c. *Diagnostic Assessment*: This type of assessment is conducted at the beginning of a process of learning. It evaluates the current performance of students (their strengths and weaknesses) in a particular field and thus allows for an adjustment of the teaching and learning process at the outset of a course. Diagnostic assessments can also be used *before and after* a process of learning in order to evaluate the (individual and collective) learning progress of students in a course or unit of learning. Assessment tasks that serve this purpose include quizzes, mind maps, in-class discussions, written exams, learning diaries and other forms of individual reflection.
- d. *Formative Assessment*: This type of assessment is conducted during a process of learning. It provides insights into the learning progress of students, and it thus allows for an adjustment of the teaching and learning process in order to improve student performance and the attainment of learning outcomes. Assessment tasks that serve this purpose include quizzes, in-class discussions, presentations, essays, peer feedback activities, group projects, learning diaries, or portfolios.
- e. *Summative Assessment*: This type of assessment is conducted at the end of a process of learning. It evaluates the attainment of learning outcomes at the conclusion of a course or unit of study. Assessment tasks that serve this purpose include multiple choice question tests, unseen written exams, open book exams, oral exams, term papers, or group projects.

- f. *Ipsative assessment*: This type of assessment can be used at any stage of the learning process. It is a self-referential type of assessment that compares a student's previous performance (grades or achievements in a specific field) with his/her current performance, thus allowing for an evaluation of the individual student's learning progress. Ipsative assessments can be used to induce students to focus on their own performance and improvements instead of comparing themselves to other students. Assessment tasks that serve this purpose include portfolios, individual projects, learning diaries and other forms of individual reflection.

#### 4.3 Directives for Assessment

- a. *Academic Freedom*: It is the prerogative and responsibility of faculty to define assessment types and tasks for all courses or units of study and to establish appropriate assessment criteria.
- b. *Purpose*: Assessment tasks must be designed purposefully. They must allow for the evaluation of student performance and/or provide evidence on the learning progress of students and/or enable them to improve their learning.
- c. *Alignment*: Assessment tasks must be aligned with learning activities and with the intended learning outcomes of a course or unit of study. Learning outcomes and assessment criteria must be aligned throughout a degree program and allow for a gradual learning progress of students (for details, see ADA University's *Core Competence and Learning Outcome Specification Policy*).
- d. *Validity*: Assessment tasks and assessment criteria must clearly address the intended learning outcomes of a course or unit of study. They must thus effectively measure student achievement of these learning outcomes.
- e. *Equivalence*: Similar courses offered in different modes (face-to-face, blended, or online) may vary in their chosen assessment tasks, but they must ensure equivalence in terms of assessment criteria and in terms of the evaluation of the attainment of learning outcomes.
- f. *Disclosure*: Assessment tasks and assessment criteria must be clearly specified and defined in each course description or in an equivalent document (such as the *Master Thesis and Capstone Project Handbook*).
- g. *Reliability*: Assessment tasks must reflect the teaching and learning process within a course or unit of study. The evaluation of assessments must be consistent and be based on clearly defined assessment criteria.
- h. *Variety*: A range of assessment methods must be employed in order to cover different learning outcomes and/or levels of learning outcomes.
- i. *Authenticity*: Assessment tasks must be meaningful and should, whenever possible, reflect real-life contexts and scenarios as well as the conditions and requirements of professional environments.
- j. *Clarity*: Assessment tasks must be phrased in an unambiguous and intelligible manner.
- k. *Adequacy*: Assessment tasks must be appropriate in length and correspond to the level of courses and students.
- l. *Inclusiveness*: Assessment tasks should be equitable and not disadvantage any group of students (as far as this is possible without compromising course or program requirements). In order to embrace the diversity of students, a range of assessment tasks should be employed, and assignments should (whenever appropriate) incorporate choice.
- m. *Support*: Assessment tasks are intended to guide the learning activities of students towards the attainment of learning outcomes. They furthermore serve to diagnose weaknesses in student performance that can thus be effectively addressed during the teaching and learning process.
- n. *Guidance*: Students must be provided with timely and effective feedback on their performance in assessments. This allows them to potentially adjust their learning activities and thus to

improve their attainment of learning outcomes as well as their performance in subsequent assessment tasks.

- o. *Integrity*: Assignments must be designed and conducted in a manner that minimizes the risk of plagiarism and other kinds of cheating (including contract cheating). Students must be provided with clear instructions on how to avoid breaches of academic integrity.

## 5. Conduct of Examinations

### 5.1 Final Examination Regulations

- a. Final examinations take place at the end of the Fall semester (January), at the end of the Spring semester (May), and at the end of the Summer term (July). In the program *Master of Business Administration*, courses run for 7 weeks, and final exams are conducted accordingly.
- b. Final examinations are scheduled by the Office of Admissions and Student Records.
- c. Students with two exams scheduled at the same time, and students with three or more exams on one day should submit a request to reschedule exams to the Dean's Office of their respective School. This request must be submitted via email no later than 3 days after the announcement of the examination schedule.
- d. Provided that rescheduling is possible, the exam from the course with the lowest enrollment will be rescheduled. All efforts must be made by the Office of Admissions and Student Records and by the Dean's Offices of all the Schools involved to resolve schedule conflicts. Rescheduled exams must take place during the respective examination period.
- e. An unexcused absence during a final exam may result in an Academic Fail (F or FZ) grade for the respective course and/or in similar sanctions. Students who can offer a compelling reason for their absence during a final exam may be eligible for a deferred exam. Deferred exams must differ from the original exam, but they must be on the same level of assessment. They take place either during or shortly after the respective examination period or by the end of the following semester. Students who are eligible for a deferred exam will be assigned an Incomplete (I or IP) grade, which must be replaced by a valid grade by the end of the following semester or be converted into an Academic Fail (F or FZ) grade.
- f. Students must adhere to any additional rules and proceedings issued by their respective School. In case these additional rules and proceedings contradict ADA University's official examination rules and proceedings, the latter will always prevail.

### 5.2 In-Class Examination Rules and Proceedings

- a. The following rules and proceedings apply to all in-class examinations at the undergraduate and graduate level.
- b. Students must be on time for all in-class examinations. Students who arrive late for an exam may be admitted to the examination room, but they will not be given any additional time to compensate for their delay.
- c. Students are not permitted to wear coats, scarves, hats, or any outdoor clothing during examinations. Teachers and proctors will request students to remove such clothing for the duration of the exam. No clothing may be kept on desks during examinations.
- d. All mobile phones and smart devices (including smart watches) must be switched off or to silent mode (with vibration deactivated) during examinations. They must be put face/screen down on the teacher's or proctor's desk. Failure to comply with this rule will be treated as a violation of the University's *Honor Code*.
- e. Students must bring their own pens, pencils, and any other equipment required for each exam.

- f. Students are not allowed to bring any kind of paper to exams. Exam sheets will be provided by the University.
- g. For examinations requiring the use of a calculator, only non-programmable, non-text storing calculators are permitted (unless specified otherwise by the teacher).
- h. Talking or communicating in any way with other students is forbidden during an exam. Failure to comply with this rule will be treated as a violation of the University's *Honor Code*.
- i. The teacher and proctor have the authority to assign and reassign seats to students prior and during an exam.
- j. Students are strictly forbidden to be in possession of any kind of notes, documents or other unauthorized material during examinations. Failure to comply with this rule will be treated as a violation of the University's *Honor Code*.
- k. In open-book exams, students are not allowed to bring any materials other than those permitted by the teacher of the respective course. The teacher will provide students with a list of permitted materials prior to the exam.
- l. To avoid disruptions of the examination process, students are not allowed to bring food into the examination room (unless medical authorization is provided). Water may be consumed during examinations.
- m. In case of questions or any issues students wish to point out during an exam (including potential errors in the exam paper), they are to raise their hand and wait for the teacher or proctor to approach them. They are not allowed to communicate with anyone else.
- n. Students are only allowed to leave the examination room upon the completion of their exam. In exceptional circumstances they may be permitted to leave the room under the conditions set by the teacher or proctor. Students are not allowed to leave the examination room during the first 30 minutes of an exam.
- o. Students are to stop writing immediately when told to do so by the teacher or proctor at the end of an exam.
- p. Students bear full responsibility for the consequences of illegible writing. What cannot be read will be considered to be incorrect.
- q. Students are expected to be familiar with the *Honor Code* of ADA University and with all documents relevant to the conduct of examinations.
- r. In case of any suspected violation of the *Honor Code* during an exam, a student will be given a first oral warning, and he/she may be allocated a new seat. With the second warning, the exam will be taken away, and the student's examination result will be annulled. The student's name will be reported to the administration, and the case will be referred to ADA University's Honor Committee. Penalties for misconduct will be (1) zero points for the exam, (2) an Administrative Fail (FX) grade for the entire course, and/or (3) further disciplinary action taken by the Honor Committee. In case the student is in his/her first semester at ADA University (*Forgiveness Period*), and if it is his/her first violation of the *Honor Code*, the student will only be assigned zero points for the respective exam without any further consequences.
- s. The teacher of a course may define examination rules and proceedings in addition to those delineated in 5.2.b to 5.2.r. In case these additional rules and proceedings contradict ADA University's official examination rules and proceedings, the latter will always prevail.

### **5.3 Take-Home Examination Rules and Proceedings**

- a. The following rules and proceedings apply to all take-home examinations at the undergraduate and graduate level. They cover all independent assignments that are to be completed (either individually or as a group work) outside of class (further rules for Master Theses and Capstone Projects are delineated below in 6.11).

- b. Students are to avoid any kind of cheating and plagiarism. It is the teacher's or supervisor's responsibility to inform students about the rules and proceedings applying to a specific take-home exam.
- c. Students must submit take-home examinations electronically, using software-assisted plagiarism detection. This rule applies regardless of a teacher's hardcopy requirements. It is the teacher's responsibility to provide students with all the information relevant to the proper submission of take-home examinations. Students are expected to contact the University's IT Service Desk for assistance in case of any technical problems when trying to submit assignments electronically.
- d. If a student fails to submit a take-home exam in the manner described in 5.3.c, and if the student can state a compelling reason for his/her failure to do so, the teacher must ensure that the respective take-home exam is checked by plagiarism detection software.
- e. All submitted take-home exams must include the following (dated and signed) *Declaration of Academic Integrity*: "I hereby confirm that this assignment is my own work and that I have acknowledged all sources used in its preparation. I am conscious that the incorporation of any material from other works (including the work of other students and/or persons) without acknowledgement will be treated as plagiarism and be subject to the regulations outlined in ADA University's *Honor Code* and its *Student Assessment Regulations*. I furthermore confirm that this assignment (in whole or in part) has not been submitted for assessment to any other course at ADA University or at any other institution of higher education."
- f. In case of any suspected violation of the *Honor Code* in a take-home exam, the student's name will be reported to the administration, and the case will be referred to ADA University's Honor Committee. Penalties for misconduct will be (1) zero points for the assignment, (2) an Administrative Fail (FX) grade for the entire course, and/or (3) further disciplinary action taken by the Honor Committee. In case the student is in his/her first semester at ADA University (*Forgiveness Period*), and if it is his/her first violation of the *Honor Code*, the student will only be assigned zero points for the respective assignment without any further consequences.
- g. Any assessment task submitted after the respective submission deadline is considered as a late submission. The penalty for the late submission of an assignment consists of a reduction of the original grade that would have been allocated in case of the assignment's timely submission. Starting with the first minute after the submission deadline, and for every 24-hour interval during which the assignment is late (including weekends and holidays), 10% of the original Grade Scale Percentage will be deducted. This rule will be applied until the assignment is submitted or until the Grade Scale Percentage has reached zero (00). In cases where an extension has been granted by the course's teacher, this rule applies once the extension deadline has expired. An extension may be granted only for compelling reasons. In no case will assignments be accepted for submission after those assignments that had been handed in on time have been graded and returned to students.

#### **5.4 Oral Examination Rules and Proceedings**

- a. The following rules and proceedings apply to all oral examinations at the undergraduate and graduate level. Specific rules for the oral defense of Master Theses are delineated below in 6.11.
- b. Oral examinations may be chosen as a form of student assessment if so provided for in a degree program's description.
- c. Oral examinations last between 15 and 25 minutes. The precise duration of an oral exam must be specified in a course's description.

- d. Oral examinations are to be conducted individually, assessing one student at a time. They are closed to the public, and no student other than the candidate may be present in the examination room during an oral exam.
- e. Students must be on time for all oral examinations. Students who arrive late for an oral exam may (at the teacher's discretion) be denied the opportunity to take the exam.
- f. All mobile phones and smart devices (including smart watches) must be switched off or to silent mode (with vibration deactivated) during examinations. They must be put face/screen down on the teacher's desk. Students are strictly forbidden to record oral exams. Failure to comply with any or all of these rules will be treated as a violation of the University's *Honor Code*.
- g. During oral examinations, students are not allowed to use any materials other than those permitted by the teacher of the respective course. The teacher will provide students with a list of permitted materials prior to the exam.
- h. It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure a sufficient scope of the tasks allocated to students. This is meant to minimize the opportunity for students to exchange relevant information outside of the examination room and thus to influence examination results.
- i. Oral examinations are recorded by the examining teacher, using University equipment. All recordings will be retained by the teacher and the respective School's administration and may only be deleted after a student's graduation.
- j. The teacher will assign a grade upon the completion of each individual exam. Students may only receive their grades and any kind of feedback on their performance once all candidates from the respective course have been examined.
- k. In case of any suspected violation of the *Honor Code* during an exam, the respective individual exam will be terminated with immediate effect, and no grade will be assigned. The student's name will be reported to the administration, and the case will be referred to ADA University's Honor Committee. Penalties for misconduct will be (1) zero points for the exam, (2) an Administrative Fail (FX) grade for the entire course, and/or (3) further disciplinary action taken by the Honor Committee. In case the student is in his/her first semester at ADA University (*Forgiveness Period*), and if it is his/her first violation of the *Honor Code*, the student will only be assigned zero points for the respective exam without any further consequences.
- l. At their discretion, teachers may conduct additional oral exams in order to verify the results of previously completed (written) assignments. They may be conducted regardless of a student's previous performance. Teachers must ensure that the content and level of verification exams correspond to the content and level of the previous assignment for which the result is to be verified.

### **5.5 Inclusiveness of the Examination Process**

- a. All possible and reasonable measures must be taken to ensure that students can participate equitably in examinations. This rule applies to all in-class and take-home examinations.
- b. It is the shared responsibility of teachers, Schools, ADA University's Student Academic Support Services, and the University's Information Technology Services to create equal opportunities for all students and to ensure that examinations are conducted in an inclusive and equitable manner.
- c. Measures that may be taken include (but are not limited to) extending the time allowed for the completion of an examination; giving permission to students with special needs to use additional technical devices; adjusting exam sheets to improve legibility; supporting students with special needs to access the examination room; and supporting students with internet and/or hardware problems.
- d. Students with special needs or with chronic health issues are strongly recommended to contact the University's Student Academic Support Services well ahead of examination dates. Students

with recurring or permanent internet and/or hardware problems are strongly recommended to contact the University's IT Service Desk and/or the *Blackboard* Administrator well ahead of examination dates.

- e. The issues of inclusiveness and equity are further delineated in ADA University's *Equity, Diversity and Non-Discrimination Policy*.

## 6. Evaluation of Academic Performance

### 6.1 Grading, Grade Submission and Information Regulations

- a. The evaluation of assessment tasks is the responsibility of faculty. It must be based on clearly defined assessment criteria and on grading rubrics (for details, see chapter 7 of ADA University's *Core Competence and Learning Outcome Specification Policy*).
- b. Blind grading is to be implemented whenever possible. For this purpose, student work is stripped of all information that might reveal a student's identity.
- c. The evaluation of assessment tasks that require group work should recognize individual contributions and assign individual marks to all members of the respective group.
- d. Assessment tasks must be assigned a precise percentage weight. No single grading component of a course taught at ADA University shall exceed 40% of the overall course grade.
- e. All regulations related to the assessment of student performance (including assessment tasks, assessment weighting, assessment criteria, and assessment submission) are to be clearly delineated in each course's description, which is to be made available to students on the LMS platform (*Blackboard Learn*) prior to the beginning of a course. Teachers are encouraged to remind students of these regulations during the semester.
- f. Any subsequent changes to the assessment regulations outlined in a course description require the approval of the respective Program Director and will be permissible only in exceptional cases. They must be clearly and promptly communicated to students in class and via *Blackboard Learn*.
- g. Student assessment should take place throughout the semester, and students should have the opportunity to complete at least 30% of a course's grading components (assessment tasks) before the end of the withdrawal period (withdrawal deadlines for each term are announced in the University's *Academic Calendar* prior to the beginning of an academic year).
- h. In order to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning, teachers must provide students with regular and meaningful feedback on their performance in assessment tasks and on their overall learning progress in a course. Feedback must be provided within 2 weeks after the completion or submission deadline of an assessment task and prior to the submission date of any subsequent assignment. It must offer guidance to students on how to improve the quality of their work and their overall performance on a course. It should support students in identifying their strengths as well as areas for improvement without undermining their confidence and motivation. Teachers will furthermore post an interim grade on *Blackboard Learn* by the beginning of the seventh week of classes (Fall semester and Spring semester) and no later than mid-term (Summer term).
- i. Students are expected to collect their graded work prior to any subsequent assessment task in order to be able to reflect upon their performance and to benefit from the feedback provided by the teacher.
- j. Teachers are to keep a record of all grades assigned and feedback provided to students.
- k. Teachers must enter all individual assessment grades on *Blackboard Learn*. They must ensure that the grades for at least 30% of a course's grading components (assessment tasks) are available to students on *Blackboard Learn* by the midterm grade due date (midterm grade due

dates for each term are announced in the University's *Academic Calendar* prior to the beginning of an academic year).

- l. After having entered all individual assessment grades on *Blackboard Learn*, teachers must transfer the resulting final grades for a course to *Banner* and thus submit it to the Office of Admissions and Student Records no later than 96 hours after the completion of a course's final exam. All final grades must thus be submitted before the final grade submission deadline (final grade submission deadlines for each term are announced in the University's *Academic Calendar* prior to the beginning of an academic year). Students are entitled to receive their final grades no later than 96 hours after the completion of the respective examination period.
- m. All final grades are kept in *Banner*, and students are able to access these grades on *Banner*. The Office of Admissions and Student Records maintains all grades and records them on each student's transcript.
- n. All grades are strictly confidential and are only accessible to the individual student, to the Office of Admissions and Student Records, to select administrative members of the student's respective School, to the Grievance Committee of that School (only in case of unresolved complaints or disagreements over academic matters), or to ADA University's Honor Committee (only in case of any suspected violation of the *Honor Code*). In no case shall a grade be disclosed to anyone else. Committees may only see those grades that are required to resolve complaints, disagreements, or violations of the *Honor Code*.

## 6.2 Regrading of Assessment Tasks

- a. Regrading of assessment tasks is only permissible if there is evidence that assessment criteria were not applied adequately and/or equitably.
- b. In cases where students assume that assessment criteria were not applied adequately and/or equitably in the evaluation of an assignment, they are recommended to discuss the respective grade with the course's teacher.
- c. If the teacher accepts the student's complaint, he/she shall regrade the respective assignment and allocate a new grade within 2 working days.
- d. If the teacher rejects the student's complaint, or if the student assumes that regrading has not been undertaken adequately and/or equitably, the student may request mediation by the respective Program Director. In cases where students feel hesitant to initially discuss the matter with the course's teacher, they may consult their Academic Advisor, who will submit the case directly to the Program Director.
- e. After having consulted both parties, and after having evaluated the case (including assignment, assessment criteria, and grade), the Program Director will decide whether the assignment must be regraded. If the Program Director accepts the student's request for regrading, he/she shall regrade the assignment within 2 working days.
- f. If the Program Director rejects the student's request for regrading, or if the student assumes that regrading has not been undertaken adequately and/or equitably, the student may submit a formal complaint to the Dean of the respective School (using the *Student Appeal and Grievance Form*) within 3 working days of the request's rejection. The Dean will forward the complaint to the School's Grievance Committee (together with all the information pertaining to the case), which will make a final decision on whether the assignment shall be regraded or not. Both the student and the teacher will be invited to attend the Committee's meeting in order to state their case and to address potential questions.
- g. In cases where the Grievance Committee decides that the assignment must be regraded, it will appoint a non-involved faculty member of the respective School, who shall regrade the assignment within 2 working days.

- h. Student appeal and grievance procedures are further delineated in ADA University's *Student Appeal and Grievance Policy*.

**6.3 Class Attendance**

- a. Regular class attendance plays a significant role in the educational process. Students should be absent only for compelling reasons and if the absence is unavoidable.
- b. It is the teacher's responsibility to record class attendance at the beginning of each class.
- c. Absences may adversely affect a student's grade. Students are required to catch up with and complete all the coursework missed due to absence. If a student is unable to complete all the required coursework by the end of the term, he/she may receive an Incomplete (I or IP) grade at the teacher's discretion.
- d. Students are expected to be on time for classes. Students who are late by 5 minutes or more (tardiness) may be allowed to join the class at the teacher's discretion, but they will receive an absent mark.
- e. Students who miss more than twenty-five percent (25%) of classes will be assigned an Administrative Fail (FX or ZX) grade.
- f. In courses of the *English for Academic and Professional Purposes (EAPP) Program*, ten percent (10%) of the total course grade will be based on class attendance. Depending on the number of classes, students are allowed to be absent for up to two or four times in a 7.5-week session, and for up to four or eight times in a 15-week session (see table below; for details on the *EAPP Program*, see ADA University's *English for Academic and Professional Purposes Regulations*). For each additional absence, a student will lose 2.5% of the overall course grade. Four additional absences will accordingly exhaust the ten percent of the overall grade allocated to class attendance.

Weeks per Session	Number of Classes per Course	Number of Excused Absences
7.5 Weeks	30	2
	30 / 38	2
	52	4
15 Weeks	45	4
	60	4
	94	8

- g. Individual teachers may have additional attendance requirements. It is the student's responsibility to be thoroughly familiar with these requirements and to consult the teacher in case of questions.

**6.4 Grading System**

- a. Grading at ADA University is based on the criterion-referenced grading systems commonly used in the U.S. education system (see the following table and the table in 6.5).

Grade	Grade Points	Grade Scale Percentage	Grade Descriptor
A	4.00	94 – 100	Excellent
A-	3.67	90 – 93	
B+	3.33	87 – 89	Good
B	3.00	83 – 86	
B-	2.67	80 – 82	
C+	2.33	77-79	Satisfactory
C	2.00	73-76	
C-	1.67	70-72	
D+	1.33	67-69	Poor
D	1.00	60-66	
F	0.00	00-59	Academic Fail
FX	0.00	00	Administrative Fail

- b. The following grade descriptions serve to define the grade descriptors mentioned in the table above. For each course, grade descriptions (including assessment criteria) are further specified in the respective course description that is made available to students prior to the beginning of the course.
- c. *Excellent* indicates that a student has fully achieved all the intended learning outcomes of a course. The student's performance has completely fulfilled all of the assessment criteria of the course.
- d. *Good* indicates that a student has largely achieved most or all of the intended learning outcomes of a course. The student's performance has largely fulfilled most or all of the assessment criteria of the course.
- e. *Satisfactory* indicates that a student has partly achieved some or most of the intended learning outcomes of a course. The student's performance has partly fulfilled some or most of the assessment criteria of the course. If only some of the assessment criteria are partly fulfilled, the student's performance may not be sufficient to pass the course.
- f. *Poor* indicates that a student has partly achieved some of the intended learning outcomes of a course. The student's performance has only minimally fulfilled some of the assessment criteria of the course and may thus not be sufficient to pass the course.
- g. *Academic Fail* indicates that a student has largely or entirely failed to achieve the intended learning outcomes of a course. The student's performance has generally fallen short of the minimum assessment criteria of the course.
- h. *Administrative Fail* is assigned if a student did not satisfy the class attendance requirements delineated in 6.3, and/or if the student violated the University's *Honor Code*.

## 6.5 Further Grades

- a. The following table provides an overview of further grades and grade descriptors used at ADA University.

Grade	Grade Descriptor
N	No Grade / Invalid Grade
I	Incomplete
W	Withdrawal
P	Pass in Pass/Fail Course
FZ	Academic Fail in Pass/Fail Course
ZX	Administrative Fail in Pass/Fail Course
IP	Incomplete in Pass/Fail Course
O	Audit
ZO	Administrative Withdrawal from Audit
T	Transferred Grade

- b. *No Grade* or *Invalid Grade* indicates that no valid grade has been submitted. This grading symbol is assigned by the Office of Admissions and Student Records if a valid final grade has not been received before the final grade submission deadline. The Office of Admissions and Student Records must ensure that they obtain a valid final grade within one term or semester.
- c. *Incomplete* (not included in TGPA and CGPA) indicates that a student has not fully completed all the work required to finish a course. The Office of Admissions and Student Records must ensure that they obtain a valid final grade no later than the end of the following term or semester.
- d. *Withdrawal* from a course (not included in TGPA and CGPA) is assigned if a student pulls out of a course after the add/drop period and before the end of the withdrawal period, or if he/she is administratively removed before the end of the withdrawal period. Both the add/drop and the withdrawal periods for each term are announced in the University's *Academic Calendar* prior to the beginning of an academic year.
- e. *Pass in Pass/Fail Course* (not included in TGPA and CGPA) indicates a certain level of student performance. The performance of undergraduate students must be equivalent to D or better if they are to be assigned a Pass grade. The performance of graduate students must be equivalent to C or better if they are to be assigned a Pass grade.
- f. *Academic Fail in Pass/Fail Course* (not included in TGPA and CGPA) indicates that the level of student performance was below D (undergraduate level) or below C (graduate level).
- g. *Administrative Fail in Pass/Fail Course* (not included in TGPA and CGPA) is assigned if a student did not satisfy the class attendance requirements delineated in 6.3, and/or if the student violated the University's *Honor Code*.
- h. *Incomplete in Pass/Fail Course* (not included in TGPA and CGPA) indicates that a student has not fully completed all the work required to finish a Pass/Fail course.
- i. *Audit* (no credit and not included in TGPA and CGPA) is assigned if a student has attended a course but does not wish to receive credit for this course. It presupposes that the student has satisfied the class attendance requirements delineated in 6.3. Students who wish to audit a course require the prior permission of the respective teacher.

- j. *Administrative Withdrawal from Audit* (not included in TGPA and CGPA) is assigned if a student fails to meet the class attendance requirements delineated in 6.3.
- k. *Transferred Grade* (not included in TGPA and CGPA) indicates grades that are transferred to ADA University. Each transferred grade is marked with the grading symbol T that precedes the grade.
- l. Grades and credits that are excluded from all GPA and credit calculations (such as waived courses) are marked with an asterisk (\*).

#### **6.6 Calculation of Final Grades**

- a. Final numerical grades for courses are calculated to two decimal places and rounded to the nearest whole number before the corresponding letter grade is assigned.
- b. Grades are rounded according to the standard mathematical rounding system. Decimal parts smaller than 0.5 will be rounded down; decimal parts equal to or greater than 0.5 will be rounded up. A numerical grade of 93.45 will accordingly be rounded down to 93 and result in the letter grade A-; a numerical grade of 93.50 will be rounded up to 94 and result in the letter grade A.

#### **6.7 Incomplete Grades**

- a. An Incomplete (I or IP) grade may be assigned by a teacher before the end of a semester. It will be submitted to the Office of Admissions and Student Records together with all the other final grades for the course.
- b. This grade may only be assigned if the student is prevented from completing the remaining coursework for compelling reasons and if this coursework can reasonably be expected to be completed before the end of the following semester.
- c. The teacher must provide the student and the Office of Admissions and Student Records with a written statement (using the *Incomplete Grade Form*) which details the requirements for the completion of the course. These requirements must specify the work that needs to be completed as well as the deadline for the completion of the remaining coursework.
- d. If the student does not meet the requirements specified in the *Incomplete Grade Form*, and if the teacher is thus unable to submit a valid final grade before the final grade submission deadline of the following semester, the Office of Admissions and Student Records will convert the Incomplete grade into an Academic Fail (F or FZ) grade. This also applies if a student is separated from the University.
- e. An Incomplete (I or IP) grade may only be removed by repeating a course once the Incomplete has been converted into an Academic Fail (F or FZ) grade as delineated in 6.7.d.
- f. Students may not withdraw from a course once an Incomplete grade has been submitted to the Office of Admissions and Student Records.
- g. Students on academic probation may not receive an Incomplete grade.
- h. An Incomplete cannot remain as a permanent grade and must be replaced by a valid final grade before a student will be able to graduate. This may result in a delayed graduation date.

#### **6.8 Pass/Fail Courses**

- a. Students may select a certain number of courses for which they will be assigned a Pass/Fail grade.
- b. Undergraduate students may select no more than two Pass/Fail courses during their studies.
- c. Graduate students may select no more than one Pass/Fail course during their studies.
- d. Functional Enablers, Master Theses and Capstone Projects are excluded from the rules delineated in 6.8.a to 6.8.c.

## 6.9 Repetition of Courses

- a. Students must repeat a course if they do not sufficiently fulfill the assessment criteria of the course. In the case of Technical Elective, Free Elective and some General Education courses, failed courses may also be replaced.
- b. Undergraduate students must repeat (or replace) courses with a grade below D.
- c. Graduate students must repeat (or replace) courses with a grade below C.
- d. Students of the *English for Academic and Professional Purposes (EAPP) Program* must repeat a level in case they receive an overall grade below C.
- e. Students are strongly recommended to repeat (or replace) a course at the earliest opportunity (usually in the subsequent semester, academic year, or *EAPP* session).
- f. Any course can be repeated as many times as necessary to pass the course or as many times as a student wishes (with the exception of *EAPP* courses). Students may thus improve the grade of the respective course.
- g. Students of the *EAPP Program* have two attempts to pass a level. They are not eligible for a withdrawal.
- h. Repeating (or replacing) courses may have academic implications for a student. Most importantly, it may adversely affect a student's progress towards degree completion. Students must consult with their Academic Advisor in order to discuss potential implications of the repetition (or replacement) of a course and to determine ways to improve their performance.
- i. Students must also consult with the Office of Student Accounts to determine potential financial implications of the repetition (or replacement) of a course.
- j. Grades for each attempt of a course are recorded on the student's transcript, but only the highest grade and the credit associated with that course will count towards a student's cumulative GPA. Courses that are not identical in course title and course code will be recorded on the transcript, and each grade and the credit associated with each course will count towards a student's cumulative GPA.
- k. In cases where the replacement of a failed course is not permissible and its repetition not possible due to the discontinuation of the course, a student may request to substitute this course by another course (course substitution). The latter course must be of the same level and be similar in content. Formal requests must be submitted to the student's Academic Advisor by using the University's *Course Substitution Form*. Requests must be approved by the Academic Advisor and by the Dean of the respective School.
- l. In cases where the replacement of a failed course is not permissible and its repetition not possible due to the discontinuation of the course and where a similar course is not available for substitution, the required course might be waived upon the approval of the Academic Advisor and the Dean of the respective School (course waiver). A course waiver does not reduce the overall credit requirements of a degree program. Students must accordingly select and successfully pass another course to fulfill all degree requirements. Students must consult with their respective Academic Advisor before selecting another course.
- m. Courses passed before separating from and reapplying to ADA University at the same level (undergraduate or graduate) might also be waived. Students may share up to 30 credits or 5 courses from their previous and uncompleted program, provided that they have been passed with a grade of C or better no more than 5 years prior to the semester for which the student is reapplying to ADA University. All other courses are mandatorily waived.
- n. Grades of failed courses that are subsequently substituted or waived are recorded on the student's transcript, but they are excluded from all GPA calculations.
- o. Withdrawal from a course counts as a repetition of a course, but it is excluded from all GPA calculations. A Withdrawal (W) cannot replace a grade assigned in any prior or later attempt of the same course.

- p. Students will not be able to graduate if they have not passed all the courses required by their respective degree program.

### **6.10 Internships**

- a. All undergraduate degree programs include an internship component. With the exception of the *Bachelor of Laws* program, the internship component consists of the course *Career Development Skills and Strategies*, which is comprised of a first (and theoretical) part and of the internship itself. The latter must cover at least 120 hours of work over a period of at least 4 to 6 weeks.
- b. The internship component is evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis (P or FZ).
- c. Undergraduate students must initially (in the Fall semester of their third year) and successfully pass the first part of the course *Career Development Skills and Strategies*. After having passed this first part of the course, students will receive an Incomplete (IP) grade. Students who fail the first part of the course will receive an Academic Fail (FZ) grade and must retake it before being eligible for the internship. Grades for each attempt are recorded on the student's transcript.
- d. Students must subsequently (in the Spring semester or Summer term of the same academic year) and successfully complete an internship. The evaluation of the internship is the responsibility of an assigned Career Advisor from ADA University's Career Services. This evaluation must also include an assessment by the student's workplace supervisor. After having successfully completed and passed the internship, students will receive a Pass (P) grade for the entire course *Career Development Skills and Strategies*. Students who fail the internship must retake it and retain the Incomplete (IP) grade until they have successfully completed and passed the internship.
- e. Regulations for the internship component of the *Bachelor of Laws* program are delineated in the program's description.
- f. Graduate students may choose to take an internship (voluntary internship). This internship would be taken as part of the Technical Elective component of the student's program.

### **6.11 Master Theses and Capstone Projects**

- a. With the exception of the program *Master of Business Administration (MBA)*, a Master Thesis or Capstone Project is an integral part of the degree requirements of all graduate programs at ADA University. The *MBA* program requires either a Master Thesis, a Business Consultancy Project, or a Business Plan (detailed regulations are outlined in the *MBA* program description).
- b. At the beginning of their second year, graduate students require a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.50 to be eligible to enroll in the course *Master Thesis I*. All other students will enroll in the course *Capstone I*. Students who successfully complete the course *Master Thesis I* will write a Master Thesis during their last semester. Students who successfully complete the course *Capstone I*, and students who fail to pass the course *Master Thesis I* will complete a Capstone Project during their last semester. Students who fail to complete the course *Capstone I* must repeat the course. Graduate programs of the School of Business and the School of IT and Engineering may have different regulations, which will be specified in the descriptions of the respective programs.
- c. Most of the University's graduate programs require that Master Theses are graded on a Pass/Fail basis (P or FZ; exceptions are specified in the descriptions of the respective programs). Grades are assigned by the members of the Defense Committee (which includes the supervisor of the thesis) for the written Master Thesis and for the oral defense of the thesis. A student must pass both the Master Thesis and the oral defense in order to successfully complete the entire Master Thesis project. The Defense Committee may request minor revisions

of the thesis before assigning a final grade, which will be assigned by the majority of the Committee's members.

- d. Most of the University's graduate programs require that Capstone Projects are graded on a Pass/Fail basis (P or FZ; exceptions are specified in the descriptions of the respective programs). Grades are assigned by the supervisor of the project. In most of the University's graduate programs, the Capstone Project consists of a group project (the *MBA* program requires that students complete a final project that consists of an individual study assignment). At the completion of the project (and notwithstanding the recommendation outlined in 6.1.c), all group members are assigned the same grade. The supervisor may request minor revisions of the (individual or group) project before assigning a final grade. The Capstone Project does not require an oral defense.
- e. Master Thesis and Capstone Project requirements and assessment criteria as well as regulations pertaining to the role of the Defense Committee and of the supervisor are delineated in ADA University's *Master Thesis and Capstone Project Handbook*.
- f. The grade for the Master Thesis or Capstone Project does not affect a student's cumulative GPA for most of the University's graduate programs (exceptions are specified in the descriptions of the respective programs), but the credits earned for the thesis or project will count towards the total number of credits needed for graduation.
- g. The supervisor may assign an Incomplete (I or IP) grade before the end of the semester in which the Master Thesis or Capstone Project is due if a student, who could reasonably be expected to complete and pass the thesis or project, is prevented from doing so during that semester for compelling reasons.
- h. An Incomplete cannot remain as a permanent grade and must be replaced by a valid final grade before the end of the following semester.
- i. The rules delineated in 6.11.g and 6.11.h presuppose that a student receives a permit to extend his/her studies by one semester. For this purpose, the student must appeal to the Dean of his/her School (using the *Request for Extension Form*). The Dean will forward the student's request to the Office of Admissions and Student Records, who may grant the extension and who will subsequently record the Incomplete (I or IP) grade.
- j. Before formally requesting an extension by one semester, students must consult with the Office of Student Accounts to determine potential financial implications of this request.
- k. An extension by one semester will result in a delayed graduation date.
- l. Students who do not successfully pass their Master Thesis or Capstone Project will not be able to graduate.

### **6.12 Latin Honors**

- a. Latin honors are awarded to students to recognize their excellent performance during an entire undergraduate or graduate degree program.
- b. ADA University awards the following Latin honors: Summa Cum Laude ("With Highest Honor"), Magna Cum Laude ("With Great Honor"), Cum Laude ("With Honor").
- c. Latin honors are awarded based on students' cumulative GPA. To be eligible for Latin honors upon graduation, undergraduate and graduate students must achieve a certain minimum cumulative GPA. Latin honors are awarded for the following achievements:

Latin Honors	Cumulative GPA
Summa Cum Laude	3.90 or higher
Magna Cum Laude	3.75 – 3.89
Cum Laude	3.50 – 3.74

- d. Latin honors are recorded on the student’s transcript by the Office of Admissions and Student Records upon graduation.
- e. Graduates will receive a State Diploma with Honors (“færqlønme diplomu”) if their cumulative GPA is 3.80 or higher. This applies to both the undergraduate and graduate level and to all Bachelor and Master degree programs.

### 2.4.3 ONLINE EDUCATION AND ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

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#### 1. Purpose

ADA University aims to ensure excellence in online education and assessment. The online format poses specific challenges due to the lack of physical proximity between teachers and students. It requires not only a certain technological infrastructure, but also adjustments of didactic practices and of assessment methods. The purpose of this document is to outline specific regulations for the design and conduct of online education and assessment. It is intended to supplement ADA University’s *Statement on Teaching and Learning* and its *Student Assessment Regulations*.

#### 2. Scope and Recommendations

This regulation applies to (1) all undergraduate and graduate programs and courses that are delivered in an online format and to (2) all online components of undergraduate and graduate programs and courses that are delivered in a blended format.

It also applies to all face-to-face programs and courses that are only temporarily delivered in an online or blended format. This may occur in the context of (international or national) collaborations. It may also occur in situations of force majeure, during a pandemic situation, or in the case of any other event that is beyond the control of the University.

This regulation furthermore applies to all remote exams at ADA University that are (1) synchronous and proctored and (2) either computer-based, paper-based or conducted orally.

Rules and proceedings for asynchronous take-home exams are delineated in ADA University’s *Student Assessment Regulations*.

Students and teachers engaged in online education and assessment are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the regulations set forth in this document. They are strongly recommended to read this document in conjunction with ADA University's *Student Assessment Regulations*. Teachers are furthermore expected to consult the University's *Statement on Teaching and Learning*.

### 3. Definitions

Entire degree programs or individual courses offered in the *Online (Distance)* format are based exclusively on remote forms of teaching and learning.

Entire degree programs or individual courses offered in the *Blended (Hybrid)* format combine classroom-based and online teaching and learning activities.

Entire degree programs or individual courses offered *Face-to-Face* are classroom-based. They make use of the online mode only for additional student support and to share teaching and learning materials.

*Synchronous Teaching and Learning* describes constellations in which teachers and students engage with specific course content at the same time. It usually refers to scheduled class time during which activities are guided by the teacher. If conducted online, synchronous teaching and learning requires the use of appropriate communication and/or teaching and learning software.

*Asynchronous Teaching and Learning* describes constellations in which students engage with specific course content according to their own schedule. This includes recorded lessons during which students are instructed and guided by the teacher, but also various forms of projects and independent or collaborative learning activities during which students engage with a specific topic with little or no support from their teacher. If conducted online, asynchronous teaching and learning requires the use of appropriate communication and/or teaching and learning software.

*Online Exams* are assignments that are conducted using the internet. They can be (1) conducted in class or remotely, (2) synchronous or asynchronous, (3) proctored or non-proctored, (4) written (computer-based or paper-based) or oral.

A *Remote Exam* is an assignment that a student completes while being in a location other than the physical classroom and for which the student needs to use the internet.

A *Synchronous Exam* is an assignment that all students of a course need to complete at the same time and during a designated and limited period of time.

An *Asynchronous Exam* is an assignment that students do not need to complete at the same time and for whose submission students are usually allowed a longer period of time.

A *Proctored Exam* is an assignment that students complete while being supervised by one or several teachers and/or proctors.

A *Non-Proctored Exam* is an assignment that students complete without being supervised by a teacher or proctor.

A *Computer-Based Exam* is a written assignment that students complete using a technical device.

A *Paper-Based Exam* is an assignment that students complete using pen and paper. Paper-based exams can also be conducted remotely.

#### 4. Online Education Regulations

##### 4.1 General Provisions

- a. Programs and courses at ADA University are predominantly delivered face-to-face. Any program and/or course that is delivered (temporarily or permanently) in a blended or online mode must correspond to the regulations outlined below.
- b. The requirements for the design of curricula and courses delineated in ADA University's *Curriculum and Course Development Policy* also apply to programs and courses delivered in the blended or online format.
- c. The requirements for the specification of learning outcomes delineated in ADA University's *Core Competence and Learning Outcome Specification Policy* also apply to programs and courses delivered in the blended or online format.
- d. The requirements for the delivery of courses are outlined in chapter 5.1 of ADA University's *Curriculum and Course Development Policy*.

##### 4.2 Directives for Online Education

- a. *Equivalence*: Similar courses offered in different formats (online, blended, or face-to-face) vary in their mode of delivery and assessment, and they may require adjustments of various components (such as learning outcomes, instructional methods and learning activities, course content, teaching and learning materials, or assessment methods). This notwithstanding, they must ensure equivalence in terms of course level and quality and in terms of the level of student performance.
- b. *Attainability*: Intended learning outcomes must be appropriate for the online or blended format and must thus be attainable by students.
- c. *Alignment*: Instructional methods and learning activities must be aligned with learning outcomes and assessment methods and selected so that students can achieve the previously defined learning outcomes.
- d. *Variety*: Courses must provide opportunities for both synchronous and asynchronous learning and thus engage students in various forms of activities intended to achieve different learning outcomes.
- e. *Innovation*: Teachers must include new and innovative methods of online teaching and learning in their courses.
- f. *Participation*: The selection of instructional methods and learning activities must ensure a high level of student engagement and collaboration.
- g. *Relevance*: The content of courses must be meaningful and should, whenever possible, reflect real-life contexts and scenarios as well as the conditions and requirements of professional environments.
- h. *Comprehensiveness*: Teachers must use the University's LMS platform (*Blackboard Learn*) extensively and creatively during the process of teaching and learning.
- i. *Information*: Teachers must ensure that all information relevant to a course is made available to students prior to the beginning of the course. This must include technical issues related to *Blackboard Learn* and its use in the respective course.
- j. *Feedback*: Teachers must provide students (individually and/or as a group) with regular information on their performance and progress and potentially with advice on how they may improve.

- k. *Support*: ADA University's *Blackboard* Administrator must provide students and teachers with technical support and thus facilitate the online teaching and learning process.

#### **4.3 Course Enrollment**

- a. The maximum number of participants for online or blended courses corresponds to the number of students that can be enrolled in face-to-face courses. This number takes into account the number of students that are required to take a course in the respective semester.
- b. Schools and the Office of Admissions and Student Records must ensure that students are able to attend all of the courses required by their respective degree programs without compromising the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.
- c. Students enroll in courses via *Banner*.

#### **4.4 Contact Hours and Additional Requirements**

- a. ADA University's *Credit Regulations* also apply to all programs and courses offered in an online or blended format.
- b. The duration of lessons delivered in the online or blended mode corresponds to the duration of face-to-face lessons. Based on the University's *Credit Regulations*, 1 contact hour consists of 37.5 minutes.
- c. Teachers are expected to provide students with opportunities for asynchronous learning by regularly recording and/or pre-recording lessons. Each recording is supposed to be 30-40 minutes in length and to be uploaded on *Blackboard Learn*.
- d. Teachers are expected to supplement regular online lessons with weekly question and answer sessions and/or office hours of at least 60 minutes per course.

#### **4.5 Training for Teachers and Students**

- a. The University regularly offers trainings that serve to equip teachers and students with the knowledge and skills required in an online teaching and learning environment. The organization and delivery of these trainings is the responsibility of the Office of Faculty Affairs and Academic Administration and of the University's Information Technology Services.
- b. Mandatory trainings for teachers consist of a two-day *Blackboard* Orientation Workshop, a subsequent Peer Support Program, and an ensuing and extended E-Teacher Program. These trainings serve to progressively familiarize teachers with the usage of *Blackboard Learn* and with the innovative use of teaching and learning technology. Teachers may also and additionally request individual advisory sessions, and they are strongly recommended to share new and innovative practices with their peers.
- c. Students are required to attend an Orientation Session in which they are introduced to the usage of *Blackboard Learn*. This session aims to ensure that students are proficient in the use and navigation of the LMS platform and are thus able to successfully attend classes delivered in the online or blended format without being impeded by a lack of technical knowledge and skills.

### **5. Remote Exam Regulations**

#### **5.1 General Provisions**

- a. The following rules and proceedings serve as a supplement to ADA University's *Student Assessment Regulations*. They are intended to ensure that remote exams are conducted smoothly and that the risk of cheating in exams is minimized.
- b. Before choosing the option of a remote exam, teachers are requested to consider alternative assessment formats. Remote exams are not recommended for high-stake assessments.

- c. Students are expected to act with integrity during remote exams and to comply with the following regulations. Failure to comply with any or several of these regulations will be treated as a violation of the University's *Honor Code*.
- d. The teacher of a course may define examination rules and proceedings in addition to those delineated below. In case these additional rules and proceedings contradict ADA University's official examination rules and proceedings, the latter will always prevail.
- e. Rules for the excused or unexcused absence from an exam are delineated in ADA University's *Student Assessment Regulations*.

## 5.2 Technological Requirements

- a. Students must comply with the following hardware and internet requirements:
  - (1) They must ensure that the required technological equipment (such as computer, camera, microphone, internet connection) is available and working. This rule is based on the principle that while in-class exams presuppose the physical presence of students, remote exams require a certain technological infrastructure.
  - (2) They are strongly recommended to have a reliable backup internet connection (such as a mobile hotspot).
  - (3) They must have two external webcams and a desk webcam stand available.
- b. Students must comply with the following software requirements:
  - (1) They must ensure that the following software required for remote exams as well as updates are properly installed on the computer or device used for an exam.
  - (2) Software that has been approved by ADA University for remote exams and proctoring are *Respondus LockDown Browser* and *Respondus Monitor*, both of which are compatible with the LMS platform (*Blackboard Learn*) used by the University as well as with *Microsoft Teams* and *Zoom Video Conferencing*. While *Respondus LockDown Browser* prevents students from using additional applications and functions on their computers, *Respondus Monitor* uses their cameras and microphones to record each candidate and his/her environment and to flag any potentially suspicious behavior. An introduction to *Respondus LockDown Browser* can be found at [web.respondus.com/lockdownbrowser-student-video/](http://web.respondus.com/lockdownbrowser-student-video/).
  - (3) Remote exams are usually conducted using *Blackboard Learn*. At the teacher's discretion, *Microsoft Teams* or *Zoom Video Conferencing* may be used for oral exams.
- c. Teachers and proctors must ensure that all the relevant software as well as updates are installed and working on their computers or devices. They are strongly recommended to have a reliable backup internet connection (such as a mobile hotspot).

## 5.3 Information Requirements and Technical Support

- a. Teachers are expected to provide students with all the information relevant to a specific remote exam. This requirement also covers technical issues related to the software applications mentioned in 5.2 and the pre-exam checklist delineated in 5.4.
- b. Students are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the technology and software required for an exam and with all the relevant examination procedures. In case of technical problems, they are strongly recommended to contact the teacher of the respective course and/or the University's *Blackboard* Administrator well ahead of examination dates. Students may also use the Help Center of *Respondus LockDown Browser* to try and troubleshoot technical issues with their computer and to check their webcams and microphone prior to an exam.
- c. Teachers are expected to contact the University's *Blackboard* Administrator in case they need support with any technical problem they or any of their students may face.
- d. Teachers are recommended to conduct a test-run prior to the first remote exam of a course. This test-run should be designed so that it utilizes all the technology and software required for

exams. By doing so, potential technical problems can be identified and solved prior to the first exam.

#### 5.4 Pre-Exam Checklist

- a. Students must have their *ADA Student ID Card* at hand and be able to present it to the camera before, during or after an exam.
- b. Students must ensure that no other person can use their credentials to access any of the software applications used for remote exams.
- c. Students must ensure that they will not be interrupted by any other person during an exam. Contact with other persons during the exam will be considered as cheating.
- d. Students should take remote exams in a well-lit room, but they must ensure that the camera (when properly positioned) does not face an unshaded window or any other main source of light.
- e. Students are not to wear any kind of headdress that shades or covers their faces.
- f. Students must clear the desk or table used for an exam of all materials (such as books and papers) not permitted for the exam.
- g. Students must ensure that all devices other than the computer or device used for an exam are switched off and placed well out of their reach. This includes (but is not limited to) mobile phones, smart devices and watches as well as additional computers. They must be put face/screen down, or their screens must be turned away from the student.
- h. Students must ensure that the computer or device used for an exam is placed on a firm surface (such as a desk or table). It must not be kept on the lap, and it must not be moved during an exam.
- i. The camera used for an exam must be mounted on a desk webcam stand. It must be placed sideways at a 90-degree angle from the student so that it shows a student's head and part of the face, the torso (whilst seated in front of the computer or device), the desk or table surface, as well as the keyboard and mouse (if one is being used). It must also provide a sideways view of the screen. Any materials permitted for an exam must be placed on the desk or table and be within the camera view throughout the entire exam. After having positioned the camera accordingly, students may only adjust the camera position and angle during an exam if asked to do so by the teacher or the proctor of the exam. An instructional video on the adequate placement of the camera can be found at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoeXRLfpYv4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoeXRLfpYv4). If students wish to use their mobile phone as an external webcam, they must ensure that it is put to silent mode (with vibration deactivated) and that all other applications are inactive during an exam. An instructional video on how to use a mobile phone as webcam can be found at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7iXt9fLI2U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7iXt9fLI2U).
- j. If students intend to use any technological equipment for an exam that is different from the one used during a test-run or previous exam, they must ensure that it is properly and reliably working prior to the exam.

#### 5.5 Proctoring and Duration of Exams

- a. All synchronous exams at ADA University that are conducted remotely are proctored.
- b. The duration of synchronous exams that are conducted remotely should not exceed two hours.

#### 5.6 Conduct of Examinations

- a. Right before the beginning of an exam, students must start the *Respondus LockDown Browser*. While *Respondus LockDown Browser* launches from any standard browser, students cannot access remote exams with their preferred browser without having launched *Respondus LockDown Browser*. When using *Respondus LockDown Browser*, students will be unable to exit an exam until all questions have been completed and/or submitted.

- b. Both the camera and the microphone must be switched on during the entire duration of an exam or until a student has completed and submitted the exam.
- c. Students must remain in front of their computers or devices for the entire duration of an exam or until they have completed and submitted the exam.
- d. Students are expected to be prepared for and promptly comply with any requests made by the teacher or by the proctor of an exam. They may (for example) be requested to activate a second camera; provide a 360-degree view of their surroundings before, during or after an exam; or submit screenshots of the computer or device used for the exam.
- e. Written remote exams must be conducted as *Blackboard Tests*. In order to ensure the integrity and high quality of exams, teachers must use the following options on *Blackboard Learn*:
  - (1) *Test Description*: This option allows teachers to provide students with all the information relevant to an exam (including purpose, duration, or question types).
  - (2) *Display After*: This option allows teachers to select the date and time at which the exam will begin and thus be available to students.
  - (3) *Displaying Until*: This option allows teachers to select the date and time at which an exam will end and close on *Blackboard Learn*. The time allowed should be appropriate for the exam and thus prevent students from consulting unauthorized materials and from communicating with others.
  - (4) *Randomize Questions*: This option ensures that different questions are selected in a different order each time an exam is taken. It thus also aims to ensure that different students will not get the same questions in the same order.
  - (5) *One at a Time*: This option allows students to see no more than one question at a time. It may or may not be combined with the option *Prohibit Backtracking* (see below in 5.6.f).
  - (6) *Show Test Results and Feedback to Students*: In this menu, teachers must choose either the option *After Due Date* or the option *After Availability End Date*. This will ensure that correct and incorrect answers are only displayed to students after the end of an exam. Students will thus be prevented from cheating by exchanging relevant information gathered from the exam while it is still in progress.
- f. Teachers may additionally choose some of the following options on *Blackboard Learn* when conducting written remote exams:
  - (1) *Password*: This option allows teachers to set a password for the exam. Students will need this password in order to access the exam.
  - (2) *Prohibit Backtracking*: This option prevents students from returning to questions they have already completed. Teachers should inform students beforehand if this option is enabled.
  - (3) *Multiple Attempts*: This option allows students to take an exam several times. Teachers must select which attempt is to be counted from the *Score Attempts Using* menu. To avoid that students are able to repeatedly complete the same or a similar set of questions, the *Multiple Attempts* option should only be chosen if there is a large pool of questions and if questions are selected randomly. When choosing this option, teachers must ensure that students will not make use of the additional time required to complete an exam several times to cheat by consulting unauthorized materials or by communicating with others. This option is not compatible with the *Force Completion* option.
  - (4) *Force Completion*: This option allows students to take an exam only once, and they are required to complete it in one sitting. They may not exit and re-enter the exam. This option is not compatible with the *Multiple Attempts* option.
  - (5) *Set Timer*: This option forces students to complete an exam within a specific period of time. *Set Timer* is redundant in synchronous remote exams in which *Display After* and *Display Until* must be selected (see above in 5.6.e). Yet, if the timer is set to *Auto-Submit*, it ensures that the exam of each student is automatically submitted once the timer has run out.

- g. Some assessment tasks present students with technical difficulties when conducted virtually since they may (for example) require them to solve equations or to develop charts and illustrations. In such cases, teachers may opt for a pen and paper exam. Such paper-based remote exams will be conducted in *Blackboard Learn* according to the following rules and proceedings:
- (1) Prior to the beginning of an exam, students must prepare blank sheets of white paper (A4 format) with their name on each page.
  - (2) At the beginning of the exam, students will open the assignment on *Blackboard Learn* and see the tasks and/or questions on their screen.
  - (3) Students will complete the exam using pen and paper.
  - (4) After having completed the exam, students must show all pages to the camera for confirmation purposes. Pages that are not thus displayed will not count towards the exam grade.
  - (5) After having thus confirmed their exam sheets, students are strictly forbidden to make any changes to their exams. They must scan all the exam sheets and create or combine them into one PDF file, using the application specified by the course's teacher. Students will then upload the PDF file via a separate *Blackboard Learn* assignment that will close 15 minutes after the end of an exam. Failure to upload the PDF file during this period may result in an Academic Fail (F or FZ) grade for the exam.
- h. Teachers may also opt for a combined examination format in which a paper-based element supplements the computer-based component. In this case, the regulations delineated in 5.6.e to 5.6.g will apply as appropriate.
- i. Teachers may consider allowing some additional time for a remote exam in order to compensate for potential connectivity issues. Since this can create additional opportunities for cheating (as indicated above in 5.6.e), they must ensure that it does not compromise the integrity of the exam.

## **5.7 Verification Exams and Deferred Exams**

- a. Teachers have the right to take further steps to evaluate a student's performance. This includes (but is not limited to) additional oral exams that serve to verify the results of previously completed (written) assignments. Such verification exams will be conducted online by the teacher of the respective course, and they will be recorded. They may be conducted regardless of a student's previous performance. Teachers must ensure that the content and level of verification exams correspond to the content and level of the previous assignment for which the result is to be verified.
- b. If students are unable to take an exam at the scheduled time due to medical, technical or other compelling reasons, they may be eligible for a deferred exam. At the respective teacher's discretion, the deferred exam will be conducted either remotely or on campus. Deferred exams must differ from the original exam, but they must be on the same level of assessment.

## **6. Contingency Regulations**

### **6.1 Contingency Situations**

- a. The University must ensure that it promptly and comprehensively implements all regulations issued by the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan in exceptional and unforeseen situations (such as force majeure or a pandemic). Such regulations may (for example) require a temporary suspension of educational activities or a complete or partial shift to online education.

- b. In case of any contingency that requires that some or all programs and courses be temporarily delivered in the online or blended mode, teachers and Schools must ensure that the regulations outlined in this document are promptly and comprehensively implemented for all programs and courses affected.
- c. The prompt and comprehensive implementation of the regulations mentioned in 6.1.a and 6.1.b will be supervised by the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs. It is the Vice Rector's responsibility to take appropriate steps in case of delayed or incomplete implementation.
- d. Access to the campus and the usage of the University's physical facilities may be entirely or partially restricted during contingency situations.

## **6.2 Contingency Measures**

- a. Any situation in which the regular teaching and learning process is severely disrupted (as indicated in 6.1.a and 6.1.b) may require measures to mitigate its impact on students. Such measures may temporarily adjust regulations pertaining to (for example) class attendance or student assessment.
- b. Contingency measures should be intended to facilitate the fulfillment of program requirements without compromising the integrity of the University's degrees.
- c. Contingency measures can be proposed by any group of faculty members or by members of the senior management of ADA University.
- d. Proposals shall be submitted to the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, and they need to be evaluated positively by the Vice Rector and two other members of the senior management. The members of the senior management involved may reject the proposal or request adjustments before submitting it to the University's bodies mentioned in 6.2.e. These steps become redundant if the Vice Rector and/or any other member or members of the senior management initiated the proposal.
- e. Each proposal needs the approval (1) of the Committee of Faculty Affairs and the Deans' Council (who will convene together) and (2) of the University Senate. The Vice Rector of Academic Affairs must ensure that these bodies will convene without delay and at the earliest possible date. The decision of the Senate becomes redundant if a proposal is rejected by the combined majority of the Committee and Council members.
- f. Unless otherwise decided by the University Senate, approved contingency measures shall become effective on the day of their approval by the Senate. The Vice Rector of Academic Affairs must ensure that they are immediately made available to all members of ADA University and that they are posted on the University's homepage.
- g. Contingency measures must be implemented promptly and comprehensively by the actors specified in the respective document. It is the Vice Rector's responsibility to take appropriate steps in case of delayed or incomplete implementation.

## 3. RESEARCH

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### 3.1 QUALITY STANDARD

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Scholarship is innovative and serves both to advance knowledge within relevant academic disciplines and to enhance teaching and learning at the University. It is based on the free pursuit of knowledge and on academic integrity. ADA University provides an environment in which excellence and good practice in research are encouraged. To this end, there are formal processes that serve to support, evaluate, reward and enhance research conducted at the University.

### 3.2 QUALITY GUIDELINES

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Research, together with the educational program, defines the framework for academic excellence at ADA University. Both areas are closely interrelated, and scholarship and teaching are thus considered to be complementary and mutually supportive. This presupposes that the University's faculty continually engage in research activities and develop their academic capabilities throughout their entire career. In order to ensure a consistently high quality of research as well as its potential to enhance teaching and learning, scholarship at ADA University must comply with the following quality requirements:

- ❖ Research must adhere to and serve the vision, purposes, academic principles and core values of ADA University.
- ❖ Research projects must address relevant subjects.
- ❖ Research projects must be designed in a way that is appropriate to the problem (or problems) addressed by a project.
- ❖ Research projects must take into consideration relevant theories and approaches as well as the most recent developments in the area (or areas) covered by a project.
- ❖ Research projects must be based on an initial research plan. This plan must outline the significance, description and design of the project as well as its research objectives and projected outcomes. It must also include the expected timeline, an itemized budget, further resource requirements, and (if applicable) external funding. It must address potential conflicts of interest and (if applicable) any legal and/or ethical issues.
- ❖ Researchers must receive (internal and/or external) peer review in order to ensure a high quality of their research project.
- ❖ Research outcomes must be substantial and relevant in nature, and they must contribute to the advancement of knowledge within one or more academic disciplines. They must be published with recognized academic journals and/or publishers and thus in a way that makes them available to a larger academic (and international) audience.
- ❖ In case of collaborative research projects, faculty members of ADA University must ensure that the University's research standard, requirements and principles are met comprehensively and throughout the entire project. Potential conflicts and/or discrepancies must be resolved at the beginning of a project.

- ❖ All research projects must comply with the principle of academic integrity. Researchers must avoid plagiarism, misrepresentation of data and research outcomes, the violation of intellectual property rights, and any transgressions of legal regulations and ethical standards. They must ensure the protection of personal and other sensitive data and inform all those involved about its use and dissemination. The gathering, use and storage of data must comply with legal regulations and ethical standards. Conflicts of interest must be made transparent and (if possible) resolved.
- ❖ Researchers must provide evidence to the University that they allocated all resources received to support their research activities adequately.

In order to support its faculty and to ensure excellence and good practice in research, ADA University must provide an environment that is conducive to research and that offers favorable conditions to its faculty members. This obligation entails that the University must:

- ❖ guarantee academic freedom to all its researchers.
- ❖ consider research as an integral part of the rights and obligations of a majority of its faculty members.
- ❖ offer a funding program and a reward program to its faculty.
- ❖ provide training opportunities and further academic support to its researchers.
- ❖ provide guidance on legal and ethical matters and on the resolution of conflicts of interests.
- ❖ regularly evaluate its researchers, their research projects and outcomes, as well as the quality of the institutional research output.
- ❖ regularly assess all documents pertaining to research quality.
- ❖ regularly use the results of these assessments to improve the quality of relevant documents and of the quality of research conducted at ADA University.

### 3.3 QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY: RESEARCH

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#### 1. Purpose

This document is based on ADA University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*. Its purpose is to define specific structures and procedures of academic quality assurance for the area *Research*.

#### 2. Scope and Recommendations

This policy applies to the area *Research*. It provides guidance on the assessment and enhancement of the area's *Quality Standard* and *Quality Guidelines*, of its key documents and of actual outcomes.

This policy should be read in conjunction with ADA University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*.

#### 3. Definitions

The area *Research* contains major documents that provide the framework for scholarship at ADA University. These include fundamental principles of research; regulations pertaining to the funding of

research and of the professional development of faculty; as well as a reward program for excellence in research.

*Quality Indicators* are clearly defined criteria that allow for the assessment of academic quality and quality assurance documents as well as of their outcomes. The results of these assessments serve to further enhance the quality of documents and outcomes.

#### 4. Quality Indicators

- 4.1 Quality indicators must be based on international best practices and reflect the quality standards and requirements defined for *Research* in ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*. They must cover all key documents and related outcomes as well as the area's *Quality Standard* and *Quality Guidelines*.
- 4.2 When reviewing key documents, their actual outcomes and the *Quality Standard* and *Quality Guidelines* contained in the area *Research*, the process of quality assurance must be based on the quality indicators defined in 4.3 to 4.11.
- 4.3 The *Quality Standard* and *Quality Guidelines* continue to reflect international best practices and serve to provide an environment of excellence in research.
- 4.4 Research throughout all Schools adheres to and serves the vision, purposes, academic principles and core values of ADA University.
- 4.5 Research at ADA University is innovative and conducted according to high international standards. It contributes both to the advancement of knowledge within relevant academic disciplines and to the enhancement of teaching and learning at the University.
- 4.6 No faculty member of ADA University is restricted in his/her free pursuit of knowledge. The University's faculty are continually engaged in research (and are allocated sufficient time to do so) and in the further development of their academic qualifications and capabilities.
- 4.7 No researcher violates the principle of academic integrity, and conflicts of interest are made transparent and are (whenever possible) resolved. All resources received to support research are allocated adequately throughout all Schools and research projects.
- 4.8 The principles defined in ADA University's *Statement on Research* reflect international best practices. They are comprehensively implemented throughout all Schools and research projects. When assessing the implementation of the principles set forth in the *Statement on Research*, the process of quality assurance will be guided by the following quality indicators:
  - a. All research projects conducted at the University address topics that are of disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary significance. They are designed in a way that is appropriate to the respective topic. They furthermore take into consideration relevant theories and approaches as well as the most recent developments in the field (or fields) of research.
  - b. All research projects conducted at the University are based on a well-structured and comprehensive research plan. Each project obtains peer review at significant stages that serves to contribute to the high quality of the project.
  - c. The outcomes of each research project implemented at the University are substantial and relevant in nature. They are published with recognized academic journals and/or publishers.
  - d. Faculty members from all Schools are regularly engaged in collaborative research projects on a national and/or international level. These projects fully correspond to the research standard, requirements and principles defined by ADA University.
- 4.9 The University's *Faculty Research and Development Fund and Regulations* provide a substantial and efficient program that is sufficiently endowed with financial resources to support the research activities and professional development of its faculty. The review mechanisms that serve to

evaluate applications for the funding of research projects, conference participation and professional development adequately identify and select those proposals that correspond to ADA University's quality requirements and that are best suited to promote research excellence and the academic capabilities of its faculty. All funds and grants allocated to Schools and individual faculty members are used adequately and solely for their respective purposes, and the University receives reports on the allocation of these funds from each School and individual faculty member.

4.10 ADA University's *Research Reward Program and Regulations* provide a substantial reward mechanism that is sufficiently endowed with financial resources to fulfill its purpose of rewarding publications of high quality. The program's rewards continue to be appropriate. Its reward criteria adequately identify the most renowned international publishers and journals and effectively target the University's research output.

4.11 In addition to its funding and reward programs, ADA University supports the research activities of its faculty by offering research trainings, advice on legal and ethical matters and on the resolution of conflicts of interest, as well as guidance on publication opportunities and procedures. These offerings are efficient and serve to further develop the research capabilities of the University's faculty and to improve the quality of its research output.

## **5. Quality Assurance Procedures**

5.1 The process of quality assurance in the area *Research* is based on the quality indicators defined above and on the quality review cycle and the procedures delineated in ADA University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*.

5.2 The process of quality assurance must pay particular attention (1) to the quality of research projects and outcomes and of the institution's entire research output; (2) to the effectiveness of the University's funding and reward mechanisms; and (3) to the effectiveness of its assessment procedures that must serve to further strengthen research excellence at the University. In case of shortcomings, the Quality Assurance Committee will initiate and supervise improvements as appropriate and with the objective of enhancing the quality of the area's documents and of the research conducted at ADA University.

## **3.4 KEY DOCUMENTS**

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### **3.4.1 STATEMENT ON RESEARCH**

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#### **1. Purpose**

ADA University aims to provide an environment that promotes excellence in research and that allows its faculty members to excel and perform to their highest potential. The purpose of this statement is to define the fundamental principles that guide all research activities at ADA University.

## 2. Scope and Recommendations

This statement provides the framework for all the research activities performed and all the research projects carried out at ADA University.

All members of ADA University that are engaged in research are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the principles set forth in this document.

## 3. Definitions

*Principles of Research* are fundamental concepts that serve to guide the scholarly pursuit and dissemination of knowledge.

## 4. Principles of Research

- 4.1 *Centrality*: Research forms an integral component of ADA University's vision, its purposes, and its principle of *academic excellence*.
- 4.2 *Academic Freedom*: The University's principles of research serve as framework for academic excellence and must not restrict the right of free expression and inquiry. Within their respective disciplines, all faculty members are thus free in their research and in their choice of research topics and methods.
- 4.3 *Academic Integrity*: Research is conducted based on high ethical standards. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are sanctioned based on the University's *Honor Code*. Conflicts of interest are made transparent, and they are addressed in accordance with relevant legal regulations and ethical standards.
- 4.4 *Academic Excellence*: Research is conducted according to high international standards.
- 4.5 *Significance*: Research projects address subjects that are of disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary relevance.
- 4.6 *Appropriateness*: Research projects are designed in a way that is appropriate to the respective subject.
- 4.7 *Currency*: Research projects take into consideration relevant theories and approaches as well as the latest developments in the field (or fields) of research.
- 4.8 *Thoroughness*: Research projects are based on a well-structured and comprehensive research plan. Both the research plan and the outcomes of a project are subject to (internal and/or external) peer review.
- 4.9 *Innovation*: Research outcomes are substantial and serve to advance knowledge within one or more academic disciplines.
- 4.10 *Impact*: Research results are published in high impact journals (articles) or with recognized academic publishers (books).
- 4.11 *Collaboration*: The University's faculty regularly carry out collaborative research projects with members from other institutions of higher education and/or from international and national research institutes. These projects correspond to the standard and requirements for research set forth in ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.
- 4.12 *Nexus*: Research and education are closely connected. Whenever possible, research results are used to enrich and enhance teaching and learning at the University.
- 4.13 *Individual Development*: Faculty members regularly engage in research activities. They thus continually develop their academic qualifications and capabilities.

- 4.14 *Accountability*: Faculty members are accountable for the resources they receive to support their research activities.
- 4.15 *Support*: The University fosters research by providing support to its faculty. It offers research trainings; resources, funding opportunities and a reward program; advice on legal and ethical matters; and guidance on publication and the dissemination of knowledge. Faculty members whose rights and obligations include research are allocated time to pursue research activities.
- 4.16 *Assessment and Enhancement*: The University regularly evaluates the research projects and outcomes of its faculty members. It continuously works to strengthen research excellence at the University.

### **3.4.2 FACULTY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FUND AND REGULATIONS**

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#### **1. Purpose**

The continuous enhancement of research and of the academic qualification of its faculty is an integral part of ADA University's vision of academic excellence. The purpose of this document is to delineate funding opportunities for faculty that are intended to support their research activities and their continued professional development.

#### **2. Scope and Recommendations**

This regulation covers funding opportunities provided by ADA University's *Faculty Research and Development Fund* and by the ERASMUS+ program *Staff Mobility for Teaching*.

Any faculty member who seeks funding for research and/or professional development is expected to be thoroughly familiar with the regulations delineated in this document. In case a faculty member intends to apply for an ERASMUS+ grant, he/she is also strongly recommended to consult relevant ERASMUS+ websites for further information and conditions.

#### **3. Definitions**

The *Faculty Research and Development Fund* is a funding mechanism established by ADA University. It is intended to provide a dedicated and uniform source of funding and thus to create incentives for faculty, both standing and new, to pursue research activities and professional development.

#### **4. Faculty Research and Development Fund**

##### **4.1 Research and Conference Funding**

- a. Each faculty member in the rank of Assistant or Associate Professor who has newly joined ADA University is entitled to base level research funding. Assistant Professors are entitled to 1,500 AZN; Associate Professors to 2,500 AZN.

- b. Each standing faculty member in the rank of Assistant or Associate Professor who meets the minimum requirements during the annual evaluation and whose teaching load does not increase due to research inactivity is entitled to merit-based funding. Assistant Professors may receive up to 4,000 AZN; Associate Professors up to 5,000 AZN. Criteria for the evaluation of faculty are delineated in ADA University's *Faculty Development, Evaluation and Promotion Policy*.
- c. Funding will be provided in 2 installments. The amount of each installment will be determined based on the submitted research proposal.
- d. Funding can be used for research activities and for conference participation. It may be used to cover costs associated with:
  - (1) the conduct of research (for example conducting surveys and/or experiments, purchasing specialized software and/or databases, purchasing research-related materials and/or supplies, collecting and analyzing data);
  - (2) publication (for example editing, proofreading, open access fees);
  - (3) conference presentations (travel and registration fees). Conference travel awards are intended to defray the cost of travel to professional conferences dedicated to the field of a faculty member. Funding requires that at least one paper is presented at the conference.
- e. All items purchased with funding are property of ADA University. All payments will be made by the University. No reimbursement will be made for expenses paid for by a faculty member. No retroactive requests for reimbursement will be granted.
- f. In addition to applying for University funding, faculty are expected to pursue external sources of funding.

#### **4.2 Requirements for the Submission of Grant Applications**

- a. Faculty applying for a research grant are required to submit a research proposal that must include the following information:
  - (1) a clear indication of the significance of the research;
  - (2) a clear statement of research objectives, of the expected timeline, and of expected outcomes of the research project;
  - (3) an itemized budget with supporting justification of expenses;
  - (4) any additional documentation that may support the application;
  - (5) a detailed description of other support and/or funding of the project (if available).
- b. Faculty who wish to apply for conference grants are required to provide the following information:
  - (1) a description of the conference;
  - (2) a copy of the presentation proposal submitted to the conference;
  - (3) a confirmation of conference participation (acceptance letter);
  - (4) an estimated budget.
- c. Submissions for grant applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. Faculty are requested to submit all components of their application electronically as one PDF file to the Dean of their respective School.

#### **4.3 Review of Applications and Approval of Grants**

- a. Each Dean will forward grant applications received from faculty members of his/her School to the Committee of Faculty Affairs.
- b. A panel of the Committee of Faculty Affairs will (together with the respective Dean) review and make a recommendation on each application.
- c. The entire Committee will afterwards select those applications that are (together with the corresponding recommendations) to be submitted for approval to the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs.

- d. The final decision on the approval of grants will be made by the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, who must thoroughly consider the recommendations provided by the Committee and Deans.

#### **4.4 Reporting Regulations**

- a. Faculty members are expected to prepare a brief report on the activities and outcomes supported by the funding received from ADA University. This report must be submitted to the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs within 30 days after the end of the grant period.
- b. All future funding is contingent on the submission of the respective report.
- c. Any funds remaining at the end of the grant period will be automatically returned to the *Faculty Research and Development Fund*.

#### **4.5 Research Seminar Funds**

- a. Each School receives funding of 5,000 AZN per year for the organization of research seminars.
- b. These funds can be used to invite faculty members from other universities in order to give a research presentation or offer a lecture or workshop to students of ADA University and an external audience.
- c. A brief report on the activities and outcomes of each research seminar is to be submitted to the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs within 30 days of the seminar date.

#### **4.6 Research Reward Program**

- a. The *Research Reward Program* aims to honor the efforts and accomplishments of the University's researchers.
- b. It is furthermore intended to encourage faculty members to actively conduct research that is internationally recognized and thus to enhance the University's international reputation as a center of excellence in research.
- c. The University's *Research Reward Program* is outlined in the document *Research Reward Program and Regulations*.

#### **4.7 Professional Development Grants**

- a. The University actively supports and funds the professional development and further qualification of its faculty.
- b. Funding can be used for the following purposes:
  - (1) participation in professional workshops and seminars;
  - (2) payment for professional licenses or certification fees;
  - (3) membership in professional organizations.
- c. A faculty member who applies for any of the purposes mentioned in 4.7.b must provide an explanation of how its achievement would further his/her professional and/or scholarly work.
- d. A brief report on activities undertaken and outcomes achieved is to be submitted to the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs within 30 days after the completion of the activity or the achievement of the outcome.

### **5. ERASMUS+ Staff Mobility for Teaching**

- 5.1 As part of the ERASMUS+ program *Staff Mobility for Teaching*, full-time faculty of ADA University have the opportunity to teach at partner institutions of higher education abroad.
- 5.2 With its participation in the ERASMUS+ program, ADA University pursues the following objectives:
  - a. to support the professional development of faculty members with a view to innovate and improve the quality of teaching;

- b. to encourage faculty members to broaden and enrich the range and content of their courses;
  - c. to promote the exchange of expertise and experience on pedagogical methods;
  - d. to create and strengthen links between ADA University and other institutions of higher education; to consolidate and expand relationships between departments; to prepare future cooperation projects.
- 5.3 For each teaching mobility period, calls for applications will be sent to all full-time faculty members. In order to apply, faculty members are requested to use ADA University's online application form.
- 5.4 The evaluation of applications will be performed by an Evaluation Committee, which shall be comprised of no less than three members. The members of the Committee will be appointed by the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs.
- 5.5 The Evaluation Committee assesses and scores each application. The purpose of the evaluation process is to assess applications in relation to the objectives mentioned in 5.2. For this purpose, each application is evaluated against a set of detailed selection criteria that will be included in each call for applications. For each selection criterion, applications will receive a certain score.
- 5.6 Those applicants with the highest overall scores will receive the ERASMUS+ mobility grants that are available for the respective teaching mobility period. In case two or more applicants receive the same score, the following rules will be applied (in the order in which they are mentioned):
- a. Priority will be given to the applicant who has so far not participated in (or participated less in) the *Staff Mobility for Teaching* program.
  - b. Priority will be given to the applicant who has (based on the number of days) more teaching experience at ADA University.
- 5.7 ERASMUS+ mobility grants contribute to the costs for travel and subsistence. The travel allowance is independent of the price of travel tickets and is instead based on the distance between the home and the respective partner university. It is calculated as a round trip, using the ERASMUS+ Distance Calculator at: [erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/resources-and-tools/distance-calculator](https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/resources-and-tools/distance-calculator). Grants may not cover all the costs associated with a visit to another institution of higher education.
- 5.8 Faculty members participating in the *Staff Mobility for Teaching* program will continue to receive their regular salaries while visiting the host university.
- 5.9 A brief report on the activities undertaken at a host university is to be submitted to the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs within 30 days of the completion of each visit. The report must include all receipts for travel and subsistence.

### **3.4.3 RESEARCH REWARD PROGRAM AND REGULATIONS**

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#### **1. Purpose**

ADA University aims to encourage its faculty to pursue research excellence and to contribute to the further enhancement of the University's international reputation as a center of excellence in research. As part of this objective, ADA University offers a reward program for publications that correspond to high international standards. The purpose of this document is to outline the specific rules of this reward program.

## 2. Scope and Recommendations

This regulation covers academic books and articles that comply with specific publication standards and that were published by full-time faculty members of ADA University.

Faculty members of ADA University are strongly recommended to consult the reward program's eligibility requirements before publishing the results of their research.

## 3. Definitions

The *Research Reward Program* is a reward mechanism established by ADA University. It is intended to create incentives for faculty to actively and continuously engage in research activities and to reward them for publications that fulfill high international standards.

The *Impact Factor (IF)* of a journal is the average number of times articles from that journal have been cited in a particular year. This calculation takes into account articles that were published in the two years preceding the year for which the Impact Factor is computed. The Impact Factor is used as an indication of the relative importance of an academic journal within its field.

The *Median Impact Factor (MIF)* is the middle (median) value of all journal Impact Factors within a certain field (discipline).

## 4. Research Reward Program

### 4.1 Program Timeframe and Eligibility Requirements

- a. Beginning with the Fall semester of 2020, the reward program is effective for the period of one academic year. After having been reviewed and potentially amended, it will be renewed each academic year.
- b. Only full-time faculty of ADA University may apply for the rewards provided by the program.
- c. Monetary remuneration may only be granted for research output that was not sponsored by the University's *Faculty Research and Development Fund*.
- d. For each publication, authors are expected to clearly state ADA University as their affiliation.
- e. Publications may only be rewarded if they fulfill one of the following criteria:
  - (1) Research article published in a journal indexed in *SSCI (Social Sciences Citation Index)*, *SCI (Science Citation Index)*, or *SCIE (Science Citation Index Expanded)*.
  - (2) Book published with one of the publishing houses listed in category A or B below (see chapter 5).

### 4.2 Publication Rewards for Single Authors

- a. Books falling into category A will be rewarded with 2,500 AZN each. Books falling into category B will be rewarded with 1,500 AZN each.
- b. Each article that is published in an indexed journal as defined above in 4.1.e will be rewarded based on the following formula:  $Reward = (IF/MIF)^{1.5} \times 1,000 \text{ AZN}$ . A reward calculator that automatically determines the reward resulting from this formula can be obtained from the Office of Faculty Affairs and Academic Administration.
- c. The maximum reward for one journal publication is 5,000 AZN.
- d. The formula defined in 4.2.b is based on the following principles:

- (1) Each reward is dependent on the impact factor of the journal in which an article is published. The higher the impact factor of a journal, the higher the reward.
- (2) Journal impact factors are to be considered in the context of disciplines. A journal's impact factor is thus put in relationship to (and adjusted based on) the median impact factor of that journal's discipline. The larger the difference between the journal's impact factor and the discipline's median impact factor (with  $IF \geq MIF$ ), the higher the reward.
- (3) The exponent (1.5) is part of the reward mechanism and must not negatively affect the reward. In cases where the adjusted impact factor ( $IF/MIF$ ) is lower than 1, the exponent is thus removed from the formula.

#### 4.3 Rewards for Co-Authored Journal Publications

- a. The rewards stipulated in chapter 4.2 are adjusted for co-authored journal articles. The reason for these adjustments is to adequately address and reward the contribution of each author to the respective publication.
- b. If 2 or more authors from ADA University publish jointly, the reward initially resulting from the formula defined in 4.2.b is increased by 50%. The resulting adjusted reward is divided equally between all the authors of a publication. In the case of 2 authors, each author accordingly receives an amount that is equivalent to 75% of the initially calculated reward; in the case of 3 authors, the reward for each author will be 50% of the initially calculated reward. This formula will be applied for any number of authors.
- c. If 1 author from ADA University publishes together with more than 1 non-member of the University, the reward initially resulting from the formula defined in 4.2.b will be decreased by 10% for each additional author. In the case of 2 authors that are non-members of ADA University, the deduction is accordingly 10%; in the case of 3 such authors, the deduction will be 20%. This formula will be applied for any number of authors that are non-members of the University.
- d. A reward calculator that automatically determines the rewards resulting from the regulations defined in 4.3.b and 4.3.c can be obtained from the Office of Faculty Affairs and Academic Administration.

## 5. Ranking of Academic Publishing Houses

5.1 The following categories of academic publishers are based on the rankings developed by the SENSE Research School, which have been adapted to reflect the research conducted at ADA University.

5.2 Category A comprises the following top international publishing houses:

Cambridge University Press	Oxford University Press
Columbia University Press	Princeton University Press
Harvard University Press	Stanford University Press
Johns Hopkins University Press	University of Chicago Press
MIT Press Cambridge (MA)	Yale University Press

5.3 Category B comprises the following good international publishers:

Academic Press (imprint of Elsevier)	Martinus Nijhoff Publishers
Allen & Unwin	Methuen
American Chemical Society (ACS)	Nomos
Aspen Publishing	Palgrave Macmillan
Australian National University Press	Pergamon Press
Avebury / Ashgate	Permanent Black / Orient Blackswan
Basic Books	Pluto Press
Blackwell	Polity Press
Bloomsbury Academic	Praeger
Brill Publishers	Psychology Press (part of Taylor & Francis)
Bruylant	Random House
Cameron May	Routledge
Clarendon Press	Rowman & Littlefield
Cornell University Press	Royal Society of Chemistry
CRC Press (part of Taylor & Francis)	SAGE Publishing
Curzon Press	SETAC Press
Duke University Press	Springer
Earthscan	Springer VS
Edward Elgar Publishing	St. Martin's Press
Elsevier Science	State University of New York Press
Frank Cass Publishers	Sweet & Maxwell (part of Thomson Reuters)
HarperCollins	Taylor & Francis
Hart Publishing	T&T Clark
Heinemann	University of California Press
IWA Publishing	University of Michigan Press

James Currey	University of Pennsylvania Press
Karthala	University of Texas Press
Kluwer Academic Publishers	Verso
Kluwer Law International	Westview Press
Lynne Rienner Publishers	Wiley
Macmillan	

## 6. EQUITY AND TRANSPARENCY

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### 6.1 QUALITY STANDARD

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ADA University provides a welcoming, supportive and integrative environment in which no one is discriminated against and in which everyone is able to develop and contribute to their full potential. To this end, there are formal processes that serve to promote equity, diversity and inclusiveness and that aim to prevent all forms of negative discrimination. The University has efficient measures for the collection, storage, processing and safeguarding of personal data. It uses this data to enhance its performance and the quality of its academic offerings, and it regularly provides information to relevant stakeholders, including the general public.

### 6.2 QUALITY GUIDELINES

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Equity, diversity and non-discrimination form an integral part of the professional and academic environment at ADA University. These values, together with the effective and transparent communication of information to internal and external stakeholders, contribute to the improvement of the University's performance and to the fulfillment of its institutional purposes of serving the needs of the community and of students. In order to provide an inclusive environment and a consistently high quality of information management and communication, the University must comply with certain quality requirements. More specifically, it must:

- ❖ promote diversity and offer additional opportunities to individuals and groups of individuals that are in need of special support.
- ❖ have and implement procedures that aim to prevent negative discrimination against (and harassment of) any of its (current, prospective or potential) members, partners and guests. Procedures that aim to ensure non-discrimination (and thus foster inclusiveness) must cover areas such as the recruitment of students and employees; the assessment of students; the evaluation of employees (including promotion and rewarding); the sanctioning and dismissal of students and employees; the selection and invitation of individuals participating in any of the University's events; and the promotion of the freedom of speech.
- ❖ ensure that all of its members involved in any of the activities mentioned above keep detailed records of relevant decisions.
- ❖ offer trainings on equity, diversity and non-discrimination and regularly communicate these values to its members, partners and guests.
- ❖ have procedures in place that ensure compliance with the principles of equity, diversity and non-discrimination.
- ❖ have an Anti-Discrimination Officer and procedures for the submission and resolution of discrimination-related complaints.
- ❖ define the purposes and benefits of gathering and using personal data and of the disclosure of information to third parties.

- ❖ clearly define and address relevant legal and ethical issues related to the collection and usage of personal data.
- ❖ have and implement procedures and regulations for the collection, storage, usage and protection of personal data.
- ❖ offer trainings to its members on the adequate usage and protection of personal data.
- ❖ acquire the informed consent of data subjects to the collection and usage of their personal data.
- ❖ classify personal data according to different levels of confidentiality.
- ❖ ensure that all (quantitative and qualitative) data required for purposes such as quality assurance and reporting is available on the University's *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database*, that it is comprehensive and valid, and that it is provided according to a clearly defined timeline. This includes (but is not limited to) data on courses and grades, research, students (including enrollment, retention and graduation), faculty and staff, and graduate employment.
- ❖ define those members of the University that have access to the University's *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database* and/or its physical archive.
- ❖ have and implement clear regulations for data reporting.
- ❖ ensure that reports to be submitted to internal and external stakeholders are comprehensive, current, meaningful, comprehensible and prepared according to a clearly defined timeline.
- ❖ define those third parties to which data may be disclosed and the data that may be disclosed.
- ❖ have procedures for the resolution of data breaches and the unauthorized use of data.
- ❖ have a Data Protection Officer and procedures for the submission and resolution of data-related complaints.

### **6.3 QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY: EQUITY AND TRANSPARENCY**

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#### **1. Purpose**

This document is based on ADA University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*. Its purpose is to define specific structures and procedures of academic quality assurance for the area *Equity and Transparency*.

#### **2. Scope and Recommendations**

This policy applies to the area *Equity and Transparency*. It provides guidance on the assessment and enhancement of the area's *Quality Standard* and *Quality Guidelines*, of its key documents and of actual outcomes.

This policy should be read in conjunction with ADA University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*.

### 3. Definitions

The area *Equity and Transparency* contains major documents that provide the University's framework for inclusiveness and non-discrimination, the handling of personal data, and the effective and transparent information of internal and external stakeholders. These documents include procedures for the achievement of equity and diversity and the prevention of discrimination; requirements for the usage and protection of personal data; as well as regulations for the management and processing of such data.

*Quality Indicators* are clearly defined criteria that allow for the assessment of academic quality and quality assurance documents as well as of their outcomes. The results of these assessments serve to further enhance the quality of documents and outcomes.

### 4. Quality Indicators

- 4.1 Quality indicators must be based on international best practices and reflect the quality standards and requirements defined for *Equity and Transparency* in ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*. They must cover all key documents and related outcomes as well as the area's *Quality Standard* and *Quality Guidelines*.
- 4.2 When reviewing key documents, their actual outcomes and the *Quality Standard* and *Quality Guidelines* contained in the area *Equity and Transparency*, the process of quality assurance must be based on the quality indicators defined in 4.3 to 4.10.
- 4.3 The *Quality Standard* and *Quality Guidelines* continue to reflect international best practices. They serve to provide an inclusive environment, and they ensure an effective and safe usage of personal data.
- 4.4 The University's *Equity, Diversity and Non-Discrimination Policy*, its *Personal Data Usage and Public Information Policy*, and its *Data Management and Reporting Regulations* continue to comply with international best practices and with relevant legal regulations of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The *Personal Data Usage and Public Information Policy* continues to reflect essential requirements of the European *General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)*.
- 4.5 The outcomes of the documents mentioned above in 4.4 contribute to the improvement of the University's performance and/or to the fulfillment of the institution's purposes of serving the needs of the community and of students.
- 4.6 Sufficient resources are allocated to the comprehensive implementation of the requirements and provisions outlined in the 3 documents mentioned above in 4.4. This includes financial resources, human resources, and technical resources.
- 4.7 Any data breaches, violations of data privacy, and/or cases of negative discrimination (including harassment) that may have occurred were addressed adequately and according to the requirements and procedures outlined in the *Personal Data Usage and Public Information Policy* and the *Equity, Diversity and Non-Discrimination Policy*. Appropriate measures were taken to prevent further such instances (as far as is possible).
- 4.8 The University's *Equity, Diversity and Non-Discrimination Policy* provides adequate and effective requirements and procedures for the promotion of inclusiveness and the prevention of negative discrimination. When assessing these procedures and requirements, the process of quality assurance will be guided by the following quality indicators:
  - a. The benefits of equity, diversity and an inclusive environment are adequately and sufficiently defined.
  - b. Requirements and procedures for the promotion of equity, diversity and inclusiveness and for the prevention of discrimination are sufficiently specified and effective, and they are

comprehensively implemented. The University has a successful record of preventing discrimination and harassment, promoting diversity, and offering additional opportunities to those in need of special support. Its working environment is inclusive and family-friendly.

- c. The requirements and procedures mentioned above are consistently applied to all (current, prospective or potential) members, partners and guests of the University and across all areas defined in the policy. These areas are both sufficiently specified and broad in scope to prevent discrimination against any individual or group of individuals.
  - d. All members of the University involved in any activity relevant to the promotion of inclusiveness and the prevention of discrimination keep detailed records of their decisions.
  - e. Trainings on equity, diversity and non-discrimination are regularly offered to the members of the University. These trainings are efficient and serve to create an inclusive environment and a culture of respect by creating an awareness of the values of equity, diversity and non-discrimination among the University's community. These values are also regularly and effectively communicated to the University's members, partners and guests.
  - f. The University regularly and systematically gathers anonymized information from its members, partners and guests on the state of equity, diversity and non-discrimination at the University by conducting surveys and through an online platform. Both the surveys and the online platform are efficient means for respondents to provide feedback on their personal experiences and on suggestions for improvements.
  - g. Procedures for the submission and resolution of discrimination-related complaints are adequate to address and resolve such complaints.
  - h. The University's Anti-Discrimination Officer is effective in the fulfillment of his/her duties.
- 4.9 The University's *Data Usage and Public Information Policy* provides adequate and effective requirements and procedures for the protection, usage and disclosure of personal data. When assessing these procedures and requirements, the process of quality assurance will be guided by the following quality indicators:
- a. The purposes and benefits of collecting and using data and of the disclosure of information to relevant parties are adequately and sufficiently defined. All data that may be disclosed to internal and external parties, as well as the parties to which it may be disclosed, is/are sufficiently specified. The disclosure to information to these parties complies with relevant legal and ethical requirements.
  - b. All relevant legal and ethical issues related to the collection and usage of personal data are defined and comprehensively addressed in the document.
  - c. Requirements and procedures for the usage and protection of personal data are sufficiently specified and comprehensively implemented. Permission to access the University's *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database* and/or its physical archive is only granted to those members of the University that require such permission to fulfill their duties. All personal data gathered and used by the University is appropriately classified according to different levels of confidentiality.
  - d. The University actively and continuously acquires the informed consent of data subjects to the collection and usage of their personal data. Its *Personal Data Consent Form* details all the necessary information outlined in the *Data Usage and Public Information Policy* and adequately fulfills the purpose of acquiring such consent. Maximum periods of storage for each dataset are clearly defined and implemented by the University.
  - e. Trainings on the appropriate use and protection of personal data are regularly offered to the members of the University. These trainings are efficient and serve both to create awareness among the University's community and to further qualify all Data Operators and Data Users at the University.

- f. Procedures for the resolution of data breaches and/or the unauthorized use of data as well as for the submission and resolution of data-related complaints are adequate to address and resolve such issues.
  - g. The University's Data Protection Officer is effective in the fulfillment of his/her duties.
  - h. The University's website and its Academic Catalogue provide current and comprehensive information on the University as an institution of higher education to the general public, students, and other interested groups.
- 4.10 The University's *Data Management and Reporting Regulations* delineate efficient and effective provisions for the collection, storage and usage of data. Their rules and proceedings are comprehensively implemented by those administrative and academic units mentioned in the document. All (quantitative and qualitative) data is submitted in a timely manner; it is complete, valid and available on the University's *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database*. The data and scope of data specified in the document is adequate and required for the purposes of quality assurance, decision-making and reporting. All reports mentioned in the document are prepared in a timely manner; they are comprehensive, current, comprehensible and meaningful, and they contribute substantially to the assessment and enhancement of the University's performance.

## 5. Quality Assurance Procedures

- 5.1 The process of quality assurance in the area *Equity and Transparency* is based on the quality indicators defined above and on the quality review cycle and the procedures delineated in ADA University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*.
- 5.2 The process of quality assurance must pay particular attention to the effectiveness of (1) the University's procedures to foster inclusion and prevent negative discrimination and harassment, (2) the University's procedures to safeguard data and prevent any misuse of personal data, and (3) the University's data collection and reporting proceedings. In case of shortcomings, the Quality Assurance Committee will initiate and supervise improvements as appropriate and with the objective of enhancing the area's documents and, more particularly, of strengthening inclusion, data security, and data management and reporting at ADA University.
- 5.3 The Quality Assurance Committee will annually hear reports by (and hold discussions with) the Anti-Discrimination Officer and the Data Protection Officer on the state of inclusion, (non-)discrimination and data protection at the University. In conjunction with the respective Officer, it will act upon potential deficits and initiate and supervise appropriate improvements. More particularly, the Committee, in conjunction with the Anti-Discrimination Officer, will regularly consider the feedback and suggestions on equity, diversity and non-discrimination referred to above in 4.8.f. If appropriate and feasible, they will take appropriate steps for the implementation of such feedback and suggestions.
- 5.4 The Quality Assurance Committee will regularly hear reports by (and hold discussions with) the Director of Quality Assurance and Accreditation on the quality and timeliness of the data submitted to the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation and to the University's *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database*. The Committee will furthermore, and at the end of each academic year, assess the structure and meaningfulness of all data reports prepared by the Office. In conjunction with the Director, the Committee will act upon potential deficits and initiate and supervise appropriate improvements.
- 5.5 The Quality Assurance Committee will ensure that all data reports are used systematically and efficiently by relevant committees, units and/or members of the University for the purpose of

improving the University's performance in all the areas covered by the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*.

## 6.4 KEY DOCUMENTS

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### 6.4.1 EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

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#### 1. Purpose

With diversity among its core values, ADA University is committed to the active promotion of equity and the creation of an inclusive environment, which is part of its institutional purpose of serving the needs of the community and society. This pledge to social responsibility, which is another of the University's core values, requires that those that are disadvantaged have the opportunity to fully participate, and that individuals from a multitude of contexts and with different attributes and qualities are welcome and integrated into the University's community. The purpose of this policy is to outline the requirements and procedures intended to create and maintain an environment of equity, diversity and inclusion.

#### 2. Scope and Recommendations

This policy applies to all members of the University, including students, faculty, staff and senior management. It also applies to all individuals that are cooperating with the University (such as visiting researchers or participants in exchange programs) and/or that are participating in any of its activities (such as members of the larger community). It furthermore applies to all prospective or potential members, partners or guests of the University.

All those involved in the educational process and/or in research, in the recruitment and support of students, in the recruitment, evaluation and promotion of personnel, and in any other activity related to the performance and/or well-being of (current, prospective or potential) members, partners or guests of the University are expected to be thoroughly familiar with this document and to actively promote equity, diversity and inclusiveness at the University to the best of their abilities.

#### 3. Definitions

*Equity* describes a fundamental guiding principle according to which individuals are to be treated in a manner that is fair and appropriate to their specific circumstances. This implies that no one is (intentionally or unintentionally) discriminated against by being excluded from certain opportunities due to these circumstances. *Equity*, as opposed to *equality*, thus acknowledges differences between individuals and aims at inclusiveness by facilitating access to these opportunities and providing additional support for those that are disadvantaged so that they can develop their full potential.

*Diversity* describes the existence of a variety of characteristics in a group of people. These characteristics may cover differences in gender, age, health, race, nationality, ethnicity or cultural affiliation, religion, marital or familial status, sexual orientation, social origin, or economic circumstances. They may also include differences in competencies, experiences, talent, opinions, beliefs, and personality.

*Inclusion* describes the ongoing process of practicing equity and promoting diversity. As its outcome, *Inclusiveness* describes a responsive and welcoming environment in which all individuals are supported according to their respective needs and thus have the opportunity to fully participate. Such an environment also values diversity and difference and actively strives to integrate individuals from a multitude of backgrounds and contexts.

*Discrimination* describes the differential treatment of individuals based on characteristics such as gender, age, health, race, nationality, ethnicity or cultural affiliation, religion, marital or familial status, sexual orientation, social origin, or economic circumstances. While *Positive Discrimination* (defined as the preferential treatment of disadvantaged individuals) serves to foster equity and inclusiveness, *Negative Discrimination* (defined as the unfair treatment of individuals based on such characteristics) tends to prevent diversity by excluding specific individuals or groups of individuals from participation.

The concept of *Non-Discrimination* prohibits any form of negative discrimination. It allows for (and requires) positive discrimination as far as is necessary to promote and achieve equality, diversity and inclusiveness.

*Harassment* is a kind of behavior that is unsolicited, unwanted and improper and that causes distress in those that are harassed. Harassing behavior can be of a physical, verbal and/or suggestive nature, and it can occur in person or electronically. It includes (but is not limited to) the misuse of power with the intention of causing harm to others (bullying), actual or attempted intimidation, unsolicited advances, direct insults, and malicious gossip. To be considered harassment, such behavior must either be displayed repeatedly, or it must constitute a single act of a serious nature. Harassment does not include justified decisions, requests, work assignments and assessments of performance by supervisors; disciplinary measures based on the regulations approved by the University; reasonable expressions of opinion and criticism; and interpersonal conflict that does not transgress the limits of what a person may reasonably be expected to tolerate in tense and stressful situations.

#### **4. Equity, Diversity and Non-Discrimination**

##### **4.1 Benefits of Equity, Diversity and an Inclusive Environment**

- a. Equity and the promotion of diversity benefit individual members of the society by providing access to the University and its various opportunities and offerings, by facilitating the full participation of every member of the society, and by thus ensuring that no one is unduly excluded due to their background, certain external and/or internal characteristics, and/or circumstances beyond their control.
- b. Equity and diversity benefit the institution by tapping into the community's resources, by attracting talent from all walks of life, and by thus including a multitude of different perspectives, competencies, and experiences.
- c. An inclusive environment benefits the community as a whole by enhancing the performance of the University as one of Azerbaijan's major institutions of higher education. The University thus

continues to extend its positive impact on society and promotes the further well-being and prosperity of society.

#### **4.2 Non-Discrimination, Non-Harassment, and Special Needs Groups**

- a. The University is committed to the principle of non-discrimination. It aims to prevent any form of negative discrimination against individuals and groups of individuals, and it fosters equity and diversity.
- b. The principle of non-discrimination presupposes an environment in which everyone can fully participate and develop their full potential. This also requires that everyone is free to express their opinions without undue restrictions.
- c. The principle of non-discrimination requires that every person is treated with respect. This explicitly precludes harassing behavior, and the University prohibits any form of harassment on its premises, including (but not limited to) sexual harassment and harassment motivated by race, gender, or health. Neither does it tolerate harassment in off-site activities and events in which any of its members are involved, including (but not limited to) conferences, internships, or exchange programs.
- d. The University prohibits negative discrimination on the basis of gender, age, health, race, nationality, ethnicity or cultural affiliation, religion, marital or familial status, sexual orientation, social origin, economic circumstances, opinions or beliefs, and personality (diversity). In this regard, all individuals must be treated equally, and all forms of:
  - (1) admission, assessment, degree progress, and awarding of degrees (students);
  - (2) recruitment, evaluation, promotion, and rewarding (employees);
  - (3) invitation, collaboration, and participation (partners and guests);as well as all similar processes decided on by the University or any of its members must be strictly based on merit (such as competencies, experience, performance, achievements) and on the University's professional and/or academic requirements. This also precludes the existence of quotas.
- e. The University works to support those that are disadvantaged and in need of special support (equity). In order to fulfill this objective (as well as its institutional purposes of serving the needs of the community and of students), it provides special opportunities to students and employees from the following groups (also see the University's *Statement of Institutional Purposes*):
  - (1) People with a diagnosed disability;
  - (2) People who are socially and financially disadvantaged (including students who are deprived of parental care);
  - (3) Azerbaijani citizens from internally displaced families and refugee families;
  - (4) Azerbaijani citizens from families of martyrs and disabled war veterans.

#### **4.3 Requirements and Procedures for Inclusiveness and Non-Discrimination**

- a. ADA University acknowledges that the achievement of equity, diversity and inclusiveness is an ongoing process that requires verifiable measures and the commitment of its members.
- b. In general, all members of the University must work towards the achievement of equity, diversity and inclusiveness. They must, in particular, avoid all forms of negative discrimination and harassment.
- c. More specifically, the achievement of equity, diversity and inclusiveness at ADA University is guided by the following actionable measures.
- d. All members of the University involved in the recruitment of students and employees must ensure that they use non-discriminatory language in all public statements related to such recruitment.

- e. The University must have clear and transparent criteria for the acceptance of students. Without regard to any attribute of individual applicants other than their prior academic performance, these criteria serve the sole purpose of evaluating their aptitude to study and successfully complete a specific degree program at ADA University. As an exception to this requirement, acceptance criteria must open up additional opportunities for those groups mentioned above in 4.2.e. All members involved in the process of student acceptance must apply these criteria consistently.
- f. The University must define clear and transparent requirements for each vacancy announced. Those members of the Department of Organization and Personnel involved in the initial evaluation of applications must base their decisions solely on these requirements. The Department will remove all sensitive personal information (such as gender, age, health, or nationality, as well as photos) from those application documents forwarded to the appropriate academic and/or administrative unit(s), who will use these documents to select suitable candidates for job interviews. This selection process, as well as the ensuing job interviews, must be based solely on the applicants' competencies, educational backgrounds and professional experiences. Job interviews must be conducted in a consistent manner and in accordance with the requirements of the respective vacancy. All those members of the University involved in the selection of candidates and the ensuing appointment of faculty and staff must use quantitative *and* qualitative indicators during the evaluation and selection process and thus be able to substantiate and defend their decisions. These procedures apply both to the internal and the external selection and recruitment of employees.
- g. The University must have clear and transparent criteria for the assessment of students and their progress towards degree completion. All members involved in the assessment of students and their progress towards degree completion must apply these criteria consistently. Blind grading is to be implemented whenever possible by de-identifying student work (also see chapter 6.1 of the University's *Student Assessment Regulations*).
- h. The University must have clear and transparent criteria for the evaluation, promotion and rewarding of its employees. These criteria must be applied consistently and disregard any attribute of employees other than their competencies, performance, achievements and (if applicable) their aptitude for the new position.
- i. The University must have clear and transparent criteria for sanctioning and/or dismissing students and employees. These criteria must be applied consistently and disregard any attribute of students and employees other than their behavior, performance and aptitude to study or work at ADA University.
- j. The University and its individual representatives must define clear and transparent criteria for each of its events and/or collaborative projects. The selection and invitation of individual partners for such events and projects must be based on these criteria and on the aptitude of individuals to contribute to the respective event or project and disregard any other attribute of the potential partner(s). Regulations for the admission of external guests to any event held by the University (such as conferences, training programs, open lectures) must be applied consistently and without discriminating against specific individuals and/or groups of individuals.
- k. The University must provide an environment in which everyone is free to express their opinions within the limits defined by the legal regulations of the Republic of Azerbaijan. It must protect and actively promote the freedom of speech and of expression (including academic freedom) by encouraging its members, partners and guests to engage in open debate (in the classroom, in academic settings, and in professional contexts) and by specifically developing the capabilities of students to engage in critical thinking. The University and its individual representatives must apply the criteria for each event held by the University as defined above in 4.3.j without excluding anyone based on their opinions and beliefs and without ruling out

controversial topics and thoughts. The University must furthermore provide an infrastructure and settings in which thoughts may be challenged in an open and respectful debate. Its Anti-Discrimination Officer must actively assist those whose freedom of speech and expression is (or appears to be) threatened by others (for details on the Anti-Discrimination Officer, see chapter 5 below).

- l. All those members of the University involved in the procedures mentioned above in 4.3.d to 4.3.k must keep detailed records of their decisions (documentation). The University's Anti-Discrimination Officer will regularly review samples of these records and evaluate them based on the requirements and procedures outlined in this document.
- m. The University must provide an environment that is free of harassment. It must protect and actively promote a culture of respect by offering trainings on equity, diversity and non-discrimination (see 4.4.b below) and by regularly communicating these values to the members, partners and guests of the University (see 4.4.c below). Its Anti-Discrimination Officer must actively assist those who are (or appear to be) harassed by others.
- n. The University must accommodate for the needs of those with disabilities. This includes (but is not limited to) barrier-free access to its premises, facilities and services (including digital services); providing for an inclusive environment in which attitudes do not exclude certain individuals by separating people into imaginary groups (also see 4.4.b and 4.4.c below); offering additional opportunities for students with disabilities during the admission process; providing for an inclusive process of teaching, learning and student assessment (also see chapter 5.5 of the University's *Student Assessment Regulations*); and offering special support services (such as the University's Student Academic Support Services) available to students, employees, partners and guests.
- o. Whenever possible, the University must offer family-friendly working conditions. This includes flexible working hours, opportunities to work from home, and special offers for employees with small children.

#### **4.4 Requirements for Policy Implementation**

- a. It is the shared responsibility of the University's Anti-Discrimination Officer and the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation to supervise the implementation of (and ensure compliance with) the requirements and procedures outlined in this document.
- b. The University must ensure that all its members are regularly trained in the principles of equity, diversity and non-discrimination. The organization and delivery of these trainings is the shared responsibility of the Anti-Discrimination Officer and the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation.
- c. All members, partners and guests of the University are to be made aware of the principles of equity, diversity and non-discrimination and of their corresponding rights. Regular communication of these principles and rights is the responsibility of the Anti-Discrimination Officer. For this purpose, he/she will cooperate with relevant administrative and/or academic units of the University (such as the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation and the Department of Organization and Personnel) and make use of a wide variety of channels and means of communication (such as the University's *Monthly Newsletter*, emails, posters, and further digital and printed information material).
- d. Throughout the academic year, the Anti-Discrimination Officer must meet with members of the University's student, faculty and staff bodies in order to gather feedback on (and discuss potential proposals for the improvement of) the University's equity, diversity and non-discrimination provisions.
- e. Throughout the academic year, the Anti-Discrimination Officer must systematically gather anonymized information from students, faculty, staff, partners and guests on the issues of

equity, diversity and non-discrimination at the University. This will be done by means of regular surveys and the use of an online feedback platform. Respondents must be able to provide feedback on personal experiences with equity, diversity and (non-)discrimination as well as suggestions for potential improvements. In conjunction with the Quality Assurance Committee, the Officer must ensure that feedback and suggestions are thoroughly considered and adequate steps for their implementation are taken (if appropriate and feasible).

- f. In accordance with the *Quality Assurance Policy: Equity and Transparency*, the Quality Assurance Committee (in conjunction with the Anti-Discrimination Officer) will regularly review the current policy and its implementation and (if necessary) develop plans for further actions to be taken in order to improve its procedures and outcomes. This must take into consideration qualitative and quantitative information received from students, faculty, staff, partners and guests as delineated above in 4.4.d and 4.4.e as well as quantitative data on equity, diversity and (non-)discrimination at the University.

## **5. Complaints and Complaint Resolution**

### **5.1 General Provisions**

- a. The principle of non-discrimination requires that all members, partners and guests of the University have the opportunity to defend their interests in case they suspect any violation of the equity, diversity and non-discrimination provisions outlined in this document.
- b. To ensure that these provisions are protected at all times, the University has an Anti-Discrimination Officer.

### **5.2 Anti-Discrimination Officer**

- a. The Anti-Discrimination Officer is responsible to monitor and ensure compliance with the equity, diversity and non-discrimination provisions outlined in this document. He/she represents the interests of individuals and groups of individuals.
- b. The Anti-Discrimination Officer is elected by the Quality Assurance Committee and appointed by the Rector of ADA University for the duration of an entire quality review cycle (5 academic years). He/she may be reelected and reappointed once. The Anti-Discrimination Officer can only be removed from office (by a majority of the Committee's members) in case of a serious neglect of duty. The Committee's decision requires the approval of the Rector. The Anti-Discrimination Officer may appeal the decision by submitting a written complaint to the University Senate, who will make the final decision.
- c. The Anti-Discrimination Officer annually reports to the Quality Assurance Committee.

### **5.3 Complaint Resolution**

- a. Individual members, partners and guests of the University (or groups consisting of such individuals) may address the Anti-Discrimination Officer if they suspect an infringement on their interests resulting from a violation of the equity, diversity and non-discrimination provisions outlined in this document. Each instance observed at the University shall be reported to the Anti-Discrimination Officer.
- b. The Officer must investigate every suspected violation reported to him/her and (if verified) initiate a resolution process and thus protect the interests of the affected individual(s).
- c. Those reporting an instance in good faith shall not face any sanctions in case their allegation turns out to be unfounded after being investigated by the Officer.
- d. In case of a verified violation of any equity, diversity and non-discrimination provision(s), the Officer will notify the individual(s) affected by the occurrence (if applicable). In conjunction with

the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation and the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development, he/she will furthermore undertake all steps required (1) to mitigate negative consequences for the respective individuals(s), (2) to prevent further such violations, and (3) to potentially sanction those responsible for the occurrence according to the University's *Honor Code*, *Employee Handbook* and *Student Code of Conduct* as well as the legal regulations of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Sanctions are determined by the University's Honor Committee, who will come to a decision according to the procedures outlined in the 3 documents previously mentioned. Before undertaking any legal steps, the Anti-Discrimination Officer and the Honor Committee shall determine whether the occurrence can be solved by mediation.

- e. The University acknowledges that discrimination and harassment may occur unintentionally and based on internalized and unconscious biases or on misconceptions. If the Anti-Discrimination Officer and the Honor Committee come to the conclusion that this is the case in any occurrence under investigation, they are recommended (if possible) to solve the issue by mediation, to apply the principle of forgiveness, and to support the offender(s) through trainings in order to overcome biases and thus prevent further acts of discrimination. This form of resolution is ruled out in cases of serious discrimination and/or harassment (such as bullying, sexual harassment, and any other behavior that represents a serious violation of the legal regulations of the Republic of Azerbaijan).
- f. The procedures outlined above also cover acts of discrimination committed by non-members of the University (partners, guests) on its premises and/or during any of its activities. They furthermore cover acts of discrimination committed by members or non-members of the University during off-site activities and events in which any of its members are/were involved. In the latter case, the University will do everything in its power to protect the rights of those that are/were discriminated against.
- g. All complaints submitted to the Anti-Discrimination Officer must be treated with strict confidentiality. They are to be shared only with those actors mentioned above that are involved in the process of complaint resolution. If the latter requires that the name(s) of the complainant(s) be disclosed to those accused of a violation of an equity, diversity and non-discrimination provision, prior consent of the complainant(s) needs to be obtained. The interests of the latter are to be protected at all times, and the Anti-Discrimination Officer must ensure that they will not experience negative consequences (retaliation) as a result of their complaint.

## **6.4.2 PERSONAL DATA USAGE AND PUBLIC INFORMATION POLICY**

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### **1. Purpose**

ADA University collects, stores and processes data to improve the quality of its academic offerings, to facilitate decision-making processes, and to provide relevant information to the public and other relevant parties. In this context, it is essential to ensure that data is handled in an ethical manner and according to applicable legal regulations. The objective of this policy is to delineate the requirements for the collection and storage as well as the processing and usage of data for non-research purposes at ADA University.

## 2. Scope and Recommendations

This document covers the collection, storage, processing and usage of personal data for non-research purposes in all areas covered by ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*, namely the academic program (including teaching, learning and assessment), research, students (including graduates), faculty and staff. It particularly refers to the rapidly developing field of learning analytics whenever appropriate.

All members of ADA University that are dealing with personal data and/or have partial or full access to its *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database* and/or its physical archive are expected to be thoroughly familiar with this policy and to strictly adhere to its requirements and procedures.

This policy should be read in conjunction with ADA University's *Data Management and Reporting Regulations*.

## 3. Definitions

In accordance with the *Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan On Personal Data* and the European *General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)*, *Data* in this policy is defined as "personal data". *Personal Data* refers to any information that allows, either directly or indirectly, to identify a natural person.

The *General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)* is a European regulation on the protection of personal data throughout the European Union.

A *Data Subject* is an identified or identifiable natural person whose data is gathered and used. The term *Subject* connotes both that the person is *subject to* the processes of data collection and usage *and* that it must (for ethical and legal reasons) be considered as an *active subject* in these processes.

*Data Pseudonymization* requires that personal data is processed in such a manner that it cannot be attributed to a data subject without additional information. Data subjects can still be re-identified by the use of such additional information.

*Data Anonymization* describes a process in which personal data is permanently stripped of all information that may lead to the identification of a data subject.

The *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database* serves to collect, organize and keep all the quantitative and qualitative information (raw data) required to assess the University's performance in all the areas relevant to the evaluation and improvement of academic quality.

*Learning Analytics* describes the collection, analysis and usage of data on students and their learning activities with the objective of understanding and improving educational processes and providing effective support to learners. Learning analytics poses new challenges to the ethical and legal usage of data due to the considerably extended scope and amount of data that may be systematically generated and gathered by digital information systems.

## 4. Data Usage and Protection

### 4.1 Purposes of Data Gathering and Usage

- a. The collection and usage of data benefits both the institution and its individual members.
- b. Data serves to evaluate the University's performance in all areas relevant to academic quality. These areas include the academic program; teaching, learning and assessment; research; students (including graduates); faculty and staff. The analysis of data allows for well-informed decisions and for the improvement of the institution's performance in these areas.
- c. Data serves to support students in their learning activities and progress. Learning analytics and the analysis of data enable the University to provide feedback to students and to identify areas in which they may (individually or collectively) be in need of additional learning opportunities in order to be more successful in their performance.
- d. Data serves to support faculty in their teaching and research activities. The analysis of data enables the University to provide feedback to its faculty members and to identify areas in which they may (individually or collectively) need to improve and/or may require additional support and training opportunities in order to be more successful in their teaching and research.
- e. Data serves to facilitate internal administrative processes. It is used (for example) to organize events and certificate programs, to ensure a well-structured process of personnel recruitment, and to efficiently communicate throughout the University.
- f. Data is used for the information of relevant stakeholders and thus for the purposes of reporting, accountability and transparency (for details, see chapter 5.1 below).

### 4.2 Legal and Ethical Issues

- a. *Infringement on Privacy*: In general, the collection and usage of data could infringe upon the privacy of a data subject, which is considered to be a fundamental human right. It could infringe upon the informational self-determination of that subject, which describes the right to decide which information should or should not be disclosed to others.
- b. *Re-Identification*: More specifically, the collection and usage of data could result in the re-identification of a data subject by using multiple datasets and by aggregating de-identified data. This in particular would violate the right of informational self-determination and allow discrimination against individual members of the University.
- c. *Lack of Transparency*: Data could be collected and used for purposes other than those communicated to data subjects. This would further infringe upon the right of informational self-determination and prevent any intervention on the part of data subjects.
- d. *Excessiveness of Data*: The amount of data gathered could exceed the scope of what is needed to fulfill well-founded, clearly defined and explicitly communicated purposes. This would result in a further encroachment on the privacy and rights of the data subject.
- e. *Inadequacy of Data*: The data collected and used could be incorrect. It could misrepresent a data subject and/or his/her academic performance and thus unfairly advantage or disadvantage certain members of the University.
- f. *Unauthorized Access*: Members and/or non-members of the University could gain unauthorized access to (and use) data stored on the *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database* and/or in the University's physical archive. This would represent a breach of confidentiality and infringe upon the individual's right of informational self-determination.
- g. *Reduction*: Learning analytics and the focus on data carry the risk of reducing students to a certain set of quantitative and/or qualitative information. Yet, data gathered by the University can only provide an incomplete picture of individual students, whose needs and performance are also influenced by factors that are not covered by the University's *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database*.

- h. *Generalization*: The use of aggregate data could have adverse effects on individuals. It could result in simplification and disregard the specific needs of individual members of the University.
- i. *Reinforcement of Bias*: The collection and usage of data could impede the positive development of students and other members of the University. It could result in oversimplified categorization and thus in the perpetuation of ethnic and/or sociocultural stereotypes and in unintended discrimination.
- j. *Closure*: Data could be interpreted in a way that projects the prior academic performance of data subjects into the future. This would restrict individual opportunities for development and interfere with both the fundamental openness of the future and the principle of equity.

#### **4.3 Requirements and Procedures for Data Usage and Protection**

- a. The following requirements and procedures must ensure that data is used in both a legal and ethical manner (addressing all the issues mentioned above in chapter 4.2) while, at the same time, enabling an efficient use of data (for details, see the University's *Data Management and Reporting Regulations*) for the purpose of internal quality assurance and for the fulfillment of all obligations to accrediting agencies, the Ministry of Science and Education and the Azerbaijan National Academy of Science, and the general public (for details, see chapter 5 below).
- b. The following requirements and procedures thus apply both to the internal usage (data gathering, storing and processing) and the external usage of data (disclosure of information to accrediting agencies, the Ministry of Science and Education, the Azerbaijan National Academy of Science, and the general public).
- c. Data may be disclosed to third parties other than those defined in 4.3.b for well-founded academic and/or administrative purposes and/or if the disclosure of data is legally required. Any such disclosure must strictly follow the requirements and procedures outlined in this document. All third parties that are not state entities must sign a *Non-Disclosure Agreement* with ADA University before any data may be provided to the respective party.
- d. The following requirements and procedures are based on the *Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan On Personal Data*, on the *European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)*, and on international best practices.
- e. *Data Privacy*: Personal data must be protected against unauthorized access, usage, change, or destruction. This includes protection against the unwarranted disclosure of information to internal and/or external stakeholders and against the re-identification of data subjects from aggregate data or from the combination of several datasets by anyone other than those University member(s) having access to the respective datasets. It requires the unambiguous identification of those members of the University that have (partial or full) access to the University's *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database* and/or its physical archive as well as the precise classification of data according to data privacy categories. Information exempted from the requirement of privacy is data that is made public by individual members of the University as part of the academic process (such as information on publications). Further details on access to the University's database and on data classification can be found in chapter 4.4 below.
- f. *Data Pseudonymization*: Data privacy requires that personal data used for reporting and information purposes be processed in a manner that it cannot be attributed to a specific data subject. This includes the de-identification and aggregation of data.
- g. *Data Protection*: Data privacy requires appropriate technical and physical solutions to safeguard (protect) data. Members of the University involved in data management and data reporting (Data Operators) may only use software applications that have been approved by the University for these purposes. This includes all those members of the University that receive data and reports in a digital format (Data Users). The Office of IT and Information Services is responsible to

provide a current list of software approved by the University. Learning analytics at the University is conducted using *Blackboard Analytics for Learn*. Any other software used for this purpose requires the prior approval of the Office of Faculty Affairs and Academic Administration and the Office of IT and Information Services. To the extent possible, the latter Office must also prevent any breaches of the integrity of the University's *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database* by applying the tools and techniques available at the University. Paper-based data must be stored safely by those gathering and processing the respective data. It must be moved to designated archives at regular intervals.

- h. *Purpose Limitation*: The University must ensure that data is gathered, stored and processed only for legitimate and clearly specified purposes. These purposes must be explicitly and comprehensibly communicated to each data subject whose data is gathered, stored and processed by the University or any of its members. It is the shared responsibility of the University's Data Protection Officer and the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation to precisely determine, regularly assess and potentially reevaluate the purpose(s) of each dataset stored and used by the University (for details on the Data Protection Officer, see chapter 4.4 below). To fulfill this responsibility, they will cooperate with relevant administrative and/or academic units of the University whenever necessary.
- i. *Data Minimization*: The University must ensure that it limits the collection of personal data to what is required to fulfill specific and clearly defined purposes. It must thus ensure that it gathers, stores and processes as much data as necessary and as little data as possible. This applies, in particular, to data gathered and processed for the purposes of learning analytics, which has the potential to significantly extend the limits of information gathered on individual students. It is the shared responsibility of the University's Data Protection Officer and the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation to regularly assess and potentially reevaluate the significance of all data gathered, stored and processed by the University. To fulfill this responsibility, they will cooperate with relevant administrative and/or academic units of the University whenever necessary.
- j. *Data Accuracy*: All data stored and processed by the University must be valid and reliable. Data accuracy is the responsibility of all administrative and academic members and units of the University (also see chapter 4.1 of the University's *Data Management and Reporting Regulations*).
- k. *Positive Intervention*: Data is expected to serve the major purpose of improving academic processes and the performance of the University's individual members. This implies that adverse effects should be minimized or altogether avoided. Such effects may result from (for example) generalization or simplification when analyzing and using data.
- l. *Equitable and Conscious Data Usage*: Positive intervention presupposes that data is used consciously by all members of the University and in a manner that prevents any form of reduction, generalization, reinforcement of bias and/or closure. This requires that all those dealing with personal data are regularly and thoroughly trained in the adequate use of such data (as outlined below).
- m. *Information and Consent*: The University gathers and uses a variety of personal data (for details, see the University's *Data Management and Reporting Regulations*) to comply with legal requirements and to be able to fulfill its institutional purposes (for details, see the University's *Statement of Institutional Purposes*). In this context, the University must provide comprehensive and comprehensible information to those whose data is gathered and used about (1) the kind of data that is collected, (2) the purposes that it is used for, (3) the ways in which it will be stored and processed, (4) the ways in which it will be protected, (5) the period for which it will be stored, (5) the benefits derived from data gathering and usage, (6) the members of the University operating the data, and (7) the rights of data subjects in relation to the storage and usage of

their data. The University must acquire unambiguous consent that clearly indicates the respective data subject's informed agreement to the gathering and processing of his/her personal data. This consent must be acquired using the University's *Personal Data Consent Form*, which must clearly refer to the data that is gathered and used and the purpose(s) for which this is done. It must also detail the conditions for the refusal or withdrawal of consent, the periods for which data will be stored, and the University's procedures for data archiving and destruction. Informed consent is necessary for all data that the University is not mandatorily required to collect and process in order to comply with the legal regulations of the Republic of Azerbaijan. It is explicitly required for all data gathered and processed for the purposes of learning analytics. It must be renewed if data is to be used for purposes other than those for which initial consent was given. If a person refuses to give (or withdraws) his/her consent to provide relevant personal data that (1) the University is not legally required to collect, store and use, that (2) is lawfully collected, stored and used, and that (3) is necessary for the effective operation of the University (and for the fulfillment of its institutional purposes), this person must be made aware that this may result in the University not (or no longer) being able to provide education, employment and/or other services.

- n. *Accessibility and Intervention*: At regular (and reasonable) intervals, and to the extent that this can reasonably be accomplished, all members of the University have the right to access their personal data that is collected and stored by the University and to receive a digital copy of this data as well as detailed information on its usage. They may thus verify data and/or request that personal data be rectified (in case data should be incorrect) and/or deleted. They may also ascertain that their data is used in a lawful manner and request that the use of their data be restricted. Deleting data and/or restricting its usage is not permissible in cases where this would violate any legal regulation(s) of the Republic of Azerbaijan and/or the University's obligation to document academic processes and/or their outcomes. Neither is it permissible in cases of an overriding public interest that requires the disclosure of information on the University. If a person requests that data be deleted and/or its lawful usage be restricted which (1) the University is not legally required to collect, store and use, which (2) is lawfully collected, stored and used, and which (3) is necessary for the effective operation of the University and for the fulfillment of its institutional purposes, this person must be made aware that this may result in the University no longer being able to provide education, employment and/or other services.
- o. *Complaint Resolution*: Individual members of the University may address the Data Protection Officer if they suspect a violation of the requirements for data usage and protection outlined in this document in general and/or their right of informational self-determination in particular. The Officer will investigate every suspected violation reported and (if verified) initiate a resolution process as outlined below in chapter 4.5. All complaints must be treated with strict confidentiality. They are to be shared only with those actors mentioned in chapter 4.5 below that are involved in the process of complaint resolution. If the latter requires that the name(s) of the complainant(s) be disclosed to those accused of a violation of data privacy, usage and protection requirements, prior consent of the complainant(s) needs to be obtained. The interests of the latter are to be protected at all times, and the Data Protection Officer must ensure that they will not experience negative consequences (retaliation) as a result of their complaint.
- p. *Data Storage Limitation*: The University must ensure that data is stored for no longer than is strictly necessary to fulfill the purposes for which the data was gathered and processed. For each dataset, and in accordance with international best practices and with the minimum legal retention requirements stated in the *Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan On Personal Data*, the University's Data Protection Officer and the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation shall define a maximum period for which the respective data may be stored. Data subjects have the right to request that their data be erased after the respective maximum period and/or whenever

data is no longer required to fulfill the purpose(s) for which it was gathered and stored. This right particularly applies to data gathered and processed for the purposes of learning analytics, which is frequently of temporary significance to support the learning progress of individual students. Data exempted from the requirement of erasure is data that is of continuous public interest, that is legally required to be archived, and/or that is indispensable for the accountability and/or the further development and improvement of the University. Permanently archived personal data must (after the respective maximum storage period) be fully de-identified and be stripped of all personal information, provided that the purpose(s) for which the data continues to be stored can be fulfilled in that manner. In that case, data subjects have the right to request the anonymization of their personal data.

- q. *Primacy of Privacy*: As a general rule, and in addition to the requirements and procedures outlined above, all those involved in the process of data collection and usage shall always consider the interests of the data subject and, in case of doubt, give preference to these interests.
- r. *Data Literacy*: The University must ensure that all its members (administrators, faculty, students) are regularly trained in the appropriate use and protection of data. Students, in particular, are to be made aware of their right of informational self-determination. The organization and delivery of trainings and information sessions is the shared responsibility of the University's Data Protection Officer, the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation, and the Office of IT and Information Services.

#### **4.4 Data Privacy and Data Classification**

- a. Data privacy requires that access to the University's *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database* and its physical archive is strictly limited.
  - (1) Partial or full access to the database and/or the archive is only granted to those members of the University that are involved in the processes of data management and data reporting (also see chapter 4.2 of the University's *Data Management and Reporting Regulations*).
  - (2) University members seeking (partial or full) access to the database and/or archive must submit a request to the Data Protection Officer, using the University's *Data Access Form*. Permission to (partially or fully) access the database and/or archive may only be given if required by the respective member of the University to fulfill his/her duties. Such permission needs to be confirmed by the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development before becoming effective.
- b. Data privacy requires that the University has a Data Protection Officer.
  - (1) The Data Protection Officer is responsible to monitor and ensure compliance with the data usage and protection requirements outlined in this document.
  - (2) The Data Protection Officer represents the interests of data subjects and must investigate any suspected violation of these requirements reported to him/her by any member of the University. In case of a verified violation, the Data Protection Officer will initiate appropriate steps to protect the rights of the affected data subject(s) as outlined below in chapter 4.5.
  - (3) The Data Protection Officer is elected by the Quality Assurance Committee and appointed by the Rector of ADA University for the duration of an entire quality review cycle (5 academic years). He/she may be reelected and reappointed once. The Data Protection Officer can only be removed from office (by a majority of the Committee's members) in case of a serious neglect of duty. The Committee's decision requires the approval of the Rector. The Data Protection Officer may appeal the decision by submitting a written complaint to the University Senate, who will make the final decision.
  - (4) The Data Protection Officer annually reports to the Quality Assurance Committee.

- c. Data privacy requires that the University has one or several specifically appointed Data Analyst(s).
  - (1) Data Analysts are responsible for data reporting. They must ensure that data is processed safely at all times. They may only use software applications approved by the University. The University must ensure that they are specifically trained in the requirements of data privacy and protection.
  - (2) Data Analysts are part of the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation. Data reporting may partly be delegated to members of other Offices (if required).
  - (3) Data Analysts will regularly report to the Director of Quality Assurance and Accreditation and promptly submit any suspected violation of the University's data protection requirements to the Data Protection Officer.
- d. Data privacy requires that all Data Operators and Data Users strictly adhere to the requirements for data usage and protection outlined in this document. Data Operators are all members of the University that collect, edit, organize, store, process and/or analyze personal data. Data Users are all members of the University that access personal data gathered and processed by the University. All Data Operators and Data Users must submit any complaint and/or suspected violation of the requirements for data usage and protection to the Data Protection Officer.
- e. Data privacy requires that the Office of IT and Information Services provides technical support and guidance to all members of the University dealing with personal data whenever required. The Office is furthermore required to continually monitor the University's software infrastructure and to suggest potential improvements related to the University's *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database* in general or to the requirements and procedures for the usage and protection of personal data in particular whenever appropriate.
- f. In order to ensure a high level of data privacy, personal data is classified into 3 categories.
  - (1) Data classified as *public* is personal information that is generally made available to a wider audience as part of the academic process and/or that is of a general and overriding public interest. This includes information on issues such as research outcomes (faculty), degrees acquired (faculty), or rewards received (faculty, staff, students). Such personal data does not require the consent of the data subject to be made public by the University.
  - (2) Data classified as *confidential* is personal information that is not generally made available to a larger audience and/or the public. This includes information on, for example, student performance, faculty evaluations, or graduate employment. Such personal data requires the explicit and informed consent of the data subject to be gathered and used. It must be processed in such a manner that it can no longer be attributed to a specific data subject.
  - (3) Data classified as *sensitive* is confidential personal information that, if made available to a larger audience, could have a significant negative impact on the data subject. This includes information on the ethnic and/or sociocultural background of the data subject. Such personal data must only be accessible to specifically designated members of the University. It must be kept separate from all other personal data and may only be used for restricted purposes (such as reporting to the Ministry of Science and Education). Personal data must be stripped of such information before being made accessible to other members of the University as defined above in chapter 4.4.a.
  - (4) It is the shared responsibility of the University's Data Protection Officer and the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation to determine, regularly assess and potentially reevaluate the classification of all data gathered and used by the University (information on the latter can be found in the University's *Data Management and Reporting Regulations*).

#### **4.5 Breaches of Data Privacy and Unauthorized Data Usage**

- a. The University will investigate all instances in which a breach of data privacy and/or an unauthorized use of data may have occurred.
- b. Each instance must be reported to the University's Data Protection Officer. In case of a verified breach of data privacy and/or misuse of data, the Officer will notify the data subject(s) affected by the occurrence (if applicable). In conjunction with the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation and the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development, he/she will furthermore undertake all steps required (1) to mitigate negative consequences for the respective University member(s), (2) to prevent further breaches and/or misuse of data, and (3) to potentially sanction those responsible for the occurrence according to the University's *Honor Code* and *Employee Handbook* as well as the legal regulations of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Sanctions are determined by the University's Honor Committee, who will come to a decision according to the procedures outlined in the 2 documents previously mentioned. Before undertaking any legal steps, the Data Protection Officer and the Honor Committee shall determine whether the occurrence can be solved by mediation.
- c. The procedures outlined above also cover breaches of data privacy and/or the unauthorized use of data by non-members of the University.
- d. Data breaches that involve gaps in and/or failures of the University's IT infrastructure must additionally be reported to the Office of IT and Information Services. In conjunction with the Data Protection Officer, the Office will undertake all steps required to prevent such breaches and suggest improvements to the IT security of the information systems and tools used by the University.

### **5. Transparency and Public Information**

#### **5.1 Purposes of the Disclosure of Information**

- a. As part of its reporting processes, information is made available to relevant members of the University. This contributes to the institution's self-transparency and allows for the internal assessment and enhancement of academic quality and for the further development of the institution.
- b. Information is made available to national and international accrediting agencies. The reports submitted to these agencies further contribute to the institution's self-transparency and to the continuous improvement of the University's performance in key academic areas.
- c. In accordance with the legal regulations of the Republic of Azerbaijan, information is made available to the Ministry of Science and Education and the Azerbaijan National Academy of Science. The official reports submitted to the Ministry and the Academy provide a regular account of the University's activities and performance in key academic areas.
- d. Information is made available to the general public, to current and prospective students, and to other interested groups. In the context of its institutional purpose of serving the needs of the community and society, the University thus ensures transparency by giving a regular account of its activities and performance.

#### **5.2 Disclosure of Information**

- a. Information made available to internal and external stakeholders must be restricted to what is necessary to fulfill the purpose(s) envisaged by the disclosure of that information.
- b. Information to internal and external stakeholders must be made available in accordance with the data classification outlined above in chapter 4.4.

- c. Information made available to internal and external stakeholders must be meaningful. It must be accessible and comprehensible to the intended target audience.
- d. Information is made available via reports, the University's website, its Academic Catalogue, and further printed and/or digital information material.
- e. Internal reporting is based on the data usage and protection requirements outlined in this document. It covers all the areas included in the University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* in general and its *Data Management and Reporting Regulations* in particular. This includes (for example) data on student enrollment and retention, student performance and graduation, learning outcome implementation, exchange program participation, faculty performance and evaluation, research projects and output, and graduate employment. All personal data that is used in internal reports and that is not classified as *public* must be de-identified. Exceptions are only permissible in cases where the overriding purpose of quality assessment requires the identification of individual members of the University (as in the case of faculty evaluation). In such cases, the explicit and informed consent of the respective data subject(s) is required, and those bodies and members of the University involved in the process of quality assessment must treat personal data confidentially and in accordance with the data usage and protection requirements outlined in this document. Unless stated otherwise in the University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*, reporting is the responsibility of the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation.
- f. Information reported to accrediting agencies is based on the legal regulations of the Republic of Azerbaijan (national agency) and on the requirements of the respective accrediting organization (international agencies). It thus covers all areas and data necessary to comply with the standards for accreditation of the respective agency, including (for example) information on degree programs and requirements, program effectiveness, student enrollment and retention, teaching and learning, student assessment, quality assurance, and the University's body of students, faculty and staff. Data submitted to the national Agency for Quality Assurance in Education will be identifiable or de-identified according to the applicable legal regulations of the Republic of Azerbaijan. In the case of international agencies, all personal data that is not classified as *public* must be de-identified prior to being submitted to the respective organization. The submission of information to national and international accrediting agencies is the responsibility of the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation.
- g. Information reported to the Ministry of Science and Education and the Azerbaijan National Academy of Science is based on the legal regulations of the Republic of Azerbaijan. It includes data on (for example) student enrollment and retention, student performance and graduation, the composition of the University's student body, and on the University's research projects and output. Data will be identifiable or de-identified according to applicable legal requirements. Reporting to the Ministry and the Academy is the responsibility of the Office of Admissions and Student Records and the Office of Faculty Affairs and Academic Administration.
- h. Information for the general public, students, and other interested groups is published on the University's website and selectively supplied as printed and/or digital information material. It covers all areas necessary to provide a comprehensive picture of the University's academic performance, namely education, research, students and graduates, as well as faculty and staff. This includes data on (for example) student enrollment and retention, student performance and graduation, research output, graduate employment, and the composition of the University's body of students, faculty and staff. Unless classified as *public*, all data must be de-identified prior to publication. The publication of all relevant information on the University's website is the shared responsibility of the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation and the Office of IT and Information Services. Depending on the respective occasion and target group, printed and/or

digital information material will also be provided by other administrative and/or academic units of the University.

- i. On its website, in its Academic Catalogue, and by means of printed and/or digital information material, the University supplies further information intended to provide a broader picture of the University as an institution of higher education to the general public, students, and other interested groups. Since the information referred to in this case is non-personal in nature, it does not fall under the data usage and protection requirements outlined in this document. It includes (for example) a detailed overview of degree programs, learning outcomes, student admission and enrollment regulations, tuition fees, degree requirements, assessment regulations, and student support services. It generally covers all academic quality and quality assurance documents and altogether a wide variety of aspects of the University that are of significance to an interested audience. It is the shared responsibility of the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation and the Office of IT and Information Services to ensure that the University's website presents a comprehensive picture of the University. Responsibility for the Academic Catalogue rests with the Office of Admissions and Student Records. These Offices will cooperate with other academic and/or administrative units of the University whenever necessary.

### **6.4.3 DATA MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING REGULATIONS**

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#### **1. Purpose**

ADA University aims to ensure that it has a comprehensive and reliable database, which is the precondition for an effective system of quality assurance and for well-informed decisions on the further development of the institution. What is more, such a database allows the University to make relevant information available to the public. The purpose of this document is to delineate the scope of the University's database as well as the rules and proceedings pertaining to data management and data reporting at ADA University.

#### **2. Scope and Recommendations**

This document addresses the practices of data management and data reporting in those areas that are essential for the assessment and enhancement of academic quality at the University, namely the academic program (including teaching, learning and assessment), research, students (including graduates), faculty and staff.

All administrative and academic units involved in the process of data management and data reporting are expected to be thoroughly familiar with this document. Most importantly, they are expected to provide and process all relevant data and information in a comprehensive and timely manner.

### 3. Definitions

*Data Management* describes the process of collecting, organizing and keeping relevant quantitative and qualitative information (raw data) systematically, efficiently and securely. Data management forms the basis of a meaningful process of data reporting.

*Data Reporting* describes the practice of processing relevant quantitative and qualitative information (raw data) by translating it into accessible formats and meaningful summaries. Data reporting forms the basis of informed and data-driven assessments and decisions.

The *Reporting Period* is the timespan that must be covered by a specific dataset and/or report.

*Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)* are clearly specified criteria that serve to measure the level of achievement in a certain area. They thus provide evidence of the extent to which pre-defined objectives have been met, missed or surpassed. Key performance indicators can be quantitative or qualitative in nature, providing either numerical or textual information. All information requires interpretation to ensure that it serves as contextualized representation of the performance in a certain area and as meaningful measurement of the achievement of specific objectives.

The *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database* serves to collect, organize and keep all the quantitative and qualitative information (raw data) required to assess the University's performance in all the areas relevant to the evaluation and improvement of academic quality.

### 4. Data Management and Reporting Regulations

#### 4.1 General Provisions

- a. It is the responsibility of the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation to regularly monitor the implementation of the following directives.
- b. More specifically, the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation, in conjunction with the Office of IT and Information Services, must ensure that the respective administrative and academic units provide all the relevant data in a comprehensive and timely manner; that all data is organized and kept systematically, efficiently and securely on the University's *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database*; and that all necessary reports are prepared and made available to relevant stakeholders (including the University's senior management).
- c. Deadlines mentioned in this document indicate the date on which a specific dataset or report is due. Most importantly, they mark the termination of any unit's process of data gathering and submission for the respective reporting period (academic year, semester or term). Any data provided late, and any data generated afterwards, is part of the subsequent reporting period and will not be included in reports that cover the preceding academic year, semester or term.
- d. In order to guarantee the reliability of the University's database, all administrative and academic units must thus ensure that their data is valid and that it is uploaded to *Banner* or provided to the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation prior to the respective deadlines mentioned in this document.

#### 4.2 Data Management

- a. The University's *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database* includes information on student application, acceptance, admission, enrollment and retention; on student performance and on graduation; on student scholarships and on exchange programs; on course

and faculty evaluation; on research projects and output; on the University's faculty and staff; and on the employment of the University's graduates. This information will regularly be provided by the administrative and academic units specified below in 4.2.d to 4.2.k.

- b. The database must be organized according to the categories delineated above in 4.2.a. The systematic organization and regular maintenance of the University's database is the responsibility of the Office of IT and Information Services.
- c. The management of the University's database is guided by the principles of safety and confidentiality. All data is kept securely and exclusively on the platforms subscribed to and provided by the University. Partial or full access to the database requires special permission, which is only granted to those members of the University that are involved in the processes of data management and data reporting (including select members of the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation, of the Office of Admissions and Student Records, or of the Office of IT and Information Services). No sensitive personal data will be disclosed to the public or to any member of the University not involved in the management of the database. Further details on the confidentiality and disclosure of information can be found in ADA University's *Personal Data Usage and Public Information Policy*.
- d. Office of Admissions and Student Records:
  - (1) For each academic year, the Office will provide information on applications to the University on *Banner* (graduate degree programs) or submit such information to the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation (undergraduate degree programs; the latter Office will add the information received to the database). This information must be available by the end of October and indicate (for each applicant) the degree program(s) for which he/she applied; the school, institution of education or institution of higher education that the applicant comes from; his/her gender, date of birth and citizenship; and (if applicable) his/her place of origin in Azerbaijan (the district of Baku or Sumgait or the name of region). It must also indicate (for each applicant) whether he/she applied via the State Examination Center (SEC) and if so, his/her entry score from the SEC university admission test and whether any of the University's degree programs was his/her first, second or third choice in the SEC application process (the latter information will be added to the database by Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation).
  - (2) For each academic year, the Office will provide information on the applicants accepted by the University on *Banner*. This information must be available by the end of October and indicate (for each accepted applicant) his/her name, surname and FIN Code; his/her admission type (such as, but not limited to, SEC university admission test, SAT test, ADA School, or transfer from another institution of higher education); his/her entry score from the respective admission type; his/her degree program and level (undergraduate or graduate); whether his/her parents did obtain a higher education degree and whether he/she thus is or is not a first-generation student; the level of English proficiency (if available; such as, but not limited to, *TOEFL iBT* or *IELTS* score); and the result of the entrance interview conducted by the University (if applicable).
  - (3) For each semester and term, the Office will provide information on student enrollment on *Banner*. This information must be available by the end of October, the middle of February and the middle of June and indicate (for each student) his/her degree program and level (undergraduate or graduate); the courses in which he/she is enrolled; and the CRN (Course Reference Number) and teacher for each course.
  - (4) For each semester and term, the Office must furthermore update information on students that are not enrolled in a degree program, but in courses that are part of a degree program or a certificate program (excluding Executive Education). This information must be available on *Banner* by the end of October, the middle of February and the middle of June

and indicate (for each student) the semester or term in which the student began his/her studies; the courses (and the certificate program, if applicable) in which he/she is enrolled; and the CRN (Course Reference Number) and teacher for each course.

- (5) The Office will regularly update the status of students on *Banner* and particularly ensure that the status of all students is up to date by the end of October, the middle of February and the middle of June. For each student, this information must indicate his/her respective status, namely *AS* (active degree or non-degree student who is in residence and enrolled in courses); *VT* (incoming student who is visiting as part of an exchange program); *OG* (outgoing student who participates in an exchange program); *IG* (student who has graduated and is thus inactive due to graduation); *TL* (student who is temporarily interrupting his/her studies for a valid reason and who is thus on temporary leave); *AD* (student who is dismissed for academic reasons); *SP* (student who is suspended as a result of the violation of the *Honor Code* and/or the *Student Code of Conduct*); *IV* (student who is involuntarily separated from the University as a result of the violation of the *Honor Code* and/or the *Student Code of Conduct*); *VS* (student who voluntarily separates from the University); or *IS* (inactive non-degree student who does not continue his/her studies).
- (6) For each semester and term, the Office will update the type of each student on *Banner*. This information must be available by the end of October, the middle of February and the middle of June. For each student, this information must indicate his/her respective type, namely *N* (newly admitted/enrolled); *C* (continuing/retained); *R* (returning from academic dismissal); *T* (transferred from another institution); or *U* (active and non-active non-degree student).
- (7) For each semester and term, the Office will ensure that the academic standing of each student is up to date on *Banner* after the respective final grade submission deadline. For each student, this information must indicate his/her respective academic standing, namely *00* (assigned if a student is newly admitted and has no GPA); *GS* (assigned if a student's cumulative GPA is 2.00 and above for undergraduates or 2.75 and above for graduates); *AW* (assigned if an undergraduate student's cumulative GPA falls below 2.00); *WA* (assigned if an undergraduate student's cumulative GPA falls below 1.00); *P1* (assigned if an undergraduate student's cumulative GPA is below 2.00 after *AW* or between 1.00 and 1.99 after *WA*); *P4* (assigned if a graduate student's cumulative GPA falls below 2.75); *AD* (academic dismissal with chance of readmission; assigned if a student's cumulative GPA is below 2.00 after *P1* or below 2.75 after *P4*); *DA* (academic dismissal without chance of readmission; assigned if a student's cumulative GPA is below 1.00 in 2 consecutive semesters for undergraduates or below 2.00 in 2 semesters for graduates; also assigned after *P3* and *P6* if a student fails to achieve good academic standing; also assigned if a student receives a level grade below D in the *EAPP Program*); *P2* (assigned if a dismissed undergraduate student is readmitted); *P3* (assigned if an undergraduate student's cumulative GPA is below 2.00 after *P2*); *P5* (assigned if a dismissed graduate student is readmitted); *P6* (assigned if a graduate student's cumulative GPA is below 2.75 after *P5*).
- (8) For each academic year, the Office will add all the information received from academic units on each faculty member's regular teaching load, on time allocated for research, and on further functions to be fulfilled in service to the University. This information must be available by the middle of October.
- (9) For each academic year, the Office will add all the information received from academic units on the teaching hours delivered by each faculty member and on further functions fulfilled by him/her in service to the University. This information must be available by the end of August.

- (10) For each semester and term, the Office will add all the information received from academic units on the envisaged number of students for each course to *Banner*. This information must be available by the middle of July, the middle of November, and the middle of April.
  - (11) For each semester and term, the Office must ensure that teachers transferred all the final grades for all students from *Blackboard Learn* to *Banner* before the respective final grade submission deadline (including the results for completed and delayed Master Theses and Capstone Projects). It will assign N (No Grade or Invalid Grade) if no valid final grade has been received before that deadline and ensure that it obtains a valid final grade within one semester or term. The Office must also ensure that it receives valid final grades for Incomplete grades (I or IP) from the preceding semester or term before the end of the current semester or term (for details on the submission of final grades, see the University's *Student Assessment Regulations*). It must finally ensure that it receives all the grades approved for transfer from Deans (or their respective designees) and/or students and that it uploads all these grades on *Banner* no later than 2 weeks after having received the respective grade(s) (for details on the submission of transfer credit, see the University's *Credit Regulations*).
  - (12) The Office will regularly update the status of students that graduated on *Banner* and ensure that the status of all students that graduated during the preceding academic year is thus updated by the end of September of each academic year. For each graduate, this information must also indicate his/her semester or term of graduation. By the same deadline, the Office must furthermore indicate those students on *Banner* that are expected to graduate during the current academic year.
- e. *English for Academic and Professional Purposes (EAPP) Program*:
- (1) The *EAPP Program* will provide the results of the *English Proficiency Exam (EPE)* conducted in August to the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation by the end of the first teaching week of each academic year. For each student enrolled in the *EAPP Program*, it must indicate whether he/she is expected to complete the Program within one semester or one year.
  - (2) By the end of each semester or term, and for each student, the *EAPP Program* must provide information on each student that graduated (on time or late) from the Program during the respective semester or term; on each student that is still enrolled, indicating those that are late to graduate; and on each student that was dismissed from the Program for academic reasons. Information on regular, late and delayed graduation must distinguish between students that were expected to complete the Program within one semester and within one year.
  - (3) The Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation will add all the information received from the *EAPP Program* to the database.
- f. Office of Faculty Affairs and Academic Administration:
- (1) For each semester, and one week before the respective final grade submission deadline, the Office will provide the results from the *Course and Faculty Evaluation Surveys* to the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation. This information must include the number of students enrolled in each individual course after the end of the respective withdrawal period and the de-identified (quantitative and qualitative) responses to each question for each student respondent (with each student being able to respond to the survey for each course taken during the respective semester).
  - (2) For each academic year, the Office must provide information on funding received by individual faculty members from the University's *Faculty Research and Development Fund* to the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation. This information must be submitted

- by the end of the academic year and indicate all recipients and all projects for which funding was received and the amount received for each project and by each faculty member.
- (3) For each academic year, the Office must provide information on rewards received by individual faculty members from the University's *Research Reward Program* to the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation. This information must be submitted by the end of the academic year and indicate all rewarded recipients and projects and the amount received for each project and by each faculty member.
  - (4) The Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation will add all the information received from the Office of Faculty Affairs and Academic Administration to the database.
- g. Office of Finance and Accounting:
- (1) For each academic year, and by the end of October, the Office will provide information on *Banner* on each applicant that was accepted by the University based on a scholarship and/or stipend. For each accepted applicant, this information must include the name and surname; the type (merit, non-merit) and name of the scholarship and/or stipend; and the fixed amount of financial support provided by the scholarship and/or stipend for one semester or one academic year (if the respective student enrolled at the University). It must also provide information on each accepted applicant with a special status, including the name and surname and indicating the specific status (IDP; those deprived of parental care; those with a diagnosed disability until and including the age of 18 and those with a category 1 or 2 disability after the age of 18; children of disabled war veterans; children from families of martyrs).
  - (2) For each semester or term, and one week after the respective final grade submission deadline, the Office will indicate on *Banner* the name and surname of each (undergraduate and graduate) student that received or retained a scholarship either as a result of his/her academic performance at ADA University or as a regular extension of the respective scholarship. This information must include the type (merit, non-merit) and name of the scholarship and the amount of financial support provided by the scholarship for one semester.
- h. Schools, *General Education Program, EAPP Program*:
- (1) These academic units must provide information on new research output to the Office of Faculty Affairs and Academic Administration at the end of January and the beginning of July of each calendar year (using the *Research Information Form*). This information must include all relevant details on every single publication and conference in which a faculty member of ADA University was actively involved (including the country of publication or the host country of the conference). It must also indicate research projects that were completed in collaboration with other faculty members of ADA University and/or with members from other institutions. For articles published in journals, it must furthermore specify whether the journal is indexed, and if so, the name of the database, the journal's impact factor, and the median impact factor of the journal's field or discipline at the time of the article's publication.
  - (2) These academic units must provide information on newly obtained patents to the Office of Faculty Affairs and Academic Administration at the end of January and the beginning of July of each calendar year (using the *Research Information Form*). For each patent, this information must include the recipient of the patent, the invention for which the patent was granted, the name and country of the granting authority, the patent number, and the period for which the patent is valid.
  - (3) These academic units must provide information on ongoing research projects to the Office of Faculty Affairs and Academic Administration at the end of January and the beginning of July of each calendar year (using the *Research Information Form*). For each project, this information must include the name(s) of the contributing faculty member(s) of ADA

- University and/or of members from other institutions; the project's topic or title; its anticipated publication format (and/or the name of the conference, if applicable) and whether it is expected to be published internationally or nationally (and/or the host country of the conference, if applicable); and the envisaged month of the project's completion.
- (4) For each academic year, these academic units must provide information on external research funding received by individual faculty members to the Office of Faculty Affairs and Academic Administration. This information must be submitted whenever a faculty member receives funding, and all units must ensure that it is fully submitted by the end of the academic year. It must indicate all recipients and all projects for which external funding was received; the amount received for each project and by each faculty member; and the source of external funding.
  - (5) Within two weeks, the Office of Faculty Affairs and Academic Administration will forward all the information received from the academic units mentioned above to the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation, who will add the information to the database.
  - (6) For each academic year, these academic units must (for each faculty member) provide information on his/her regular teaching load (specifying the teaching hours for each degree program and/or the *General Education Program* and/or the *EAPP Program*), on the time allocated for research, and on further functions to be fulfilled in service to the University. This information must be submitted by the end of September of the academic year to the Office of Admissions and Student Records.
  - (7) For each academic year, these academic units must (for each faculty member) provide information on delivered teaching hours (specifying teaching hours for each degree program and/or the *General Education Program* and/or the *EAPP Program*) and on further functions fulfilled in service to the University. This information must be submitted by the middle of August to the Office of Admissions and Student Records.
  - (8) For each semester and term, these academic units must provide the envisaged number of students for each course to the Office of Admissions and Student Records. This information must be submitted by the beginning of July, the beginning of November, and the beginning of April.
  - (9) For each semester and term, the teachers of the academic units mentioned above must transfer all the final grades for their students from *Blackboard Learn* to *Banner* before the respective final grade submission deadline (including the results for completed and delayed Master Theses and Capstone Projects and valid final grades for Incomplete grades from the preceding semester or term).
  - (10) For each semester and term, Deans (or their respective designees) must submit all grades that were earned prior to the enrollment at ADA University and that are approved for transfer to the Office of Admissions and Student Records. All grades must be submitted 2 weeks prior to the beginning of the respective semester or term.
- i. Department of Organization and Personnel:
- (1) The Department will provide detailed information on newly hired personnel and on personnel that left the University to the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation by the end of the first month of each semester (Summer term data must be provided together with the data for Fall semester).
  - (2) For new members of the University, this information must include name and surname; gender; citizenship and FIN Code; position at ADA University; employment category (faculty or staff); type of employment (full-time, part-time, associate, adjunct, visiting); academic degrees (including granting university, country, graduation year, and academic subject for each degree); previous work experience at institutions of higher education (including name of each institution, country, field of expertise, positions held, and duration

- in years); School affiliation and discipline (for faculty only); Office affiliation (for staff only); and the beginning of employment at ADA University.
- (3) For each employee that left the University, the Department will inform the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation about the employee's last day of employment at the University and the reason for his/her separation from the University (if provided).
  - (4) The Department will furthermore submit any updated information (such as a change in position of an employee) to the Office by the end of the first month of each semester.
  - (5) The Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation will add all the information received from the Department to the database.
- j. Office of Global Outreach and Partners:
- (1) The Office will provide detailed information on students participating in exchange programs to the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation by the end of each semester or term.
  - (2) For each outgoing student, this information must include his/her level (undergraduate or graduate) and academic program; the type (such as ERASMUS+) and name of the exchange program; and the name and country of the respective host institution.
  - (3) For each incoming student, this information must include his/her level and academic program; the type and name of the exchange program; and the name and country of the respective home university.
  - (4) The Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation will add all the information received from the Office of Global Outreach and Partners to the database.
- k. Career Services and Alumni Affairs:
- (1) These administrative units must provide information to the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation on the work experience of the students that graduated from the University during the preceding academic year and that were seeking employment. This information must be submitted by the end of January and the end of July of each academic year. For each graduate, this information must include his/her status (employed or unemployed), and if employed, the name of the current employing entity; the type of employment (full-time, part-time, self-employed, internship); the employment sector; the country of employment; the starting date of the first employment after graduation; the employee's position; and his/her initial salary (if provided).
  - (2) By the same deadlines, and for the same cohort of graduates and reporting period, these administrative units will furthermore submit information on the students that graduated from the University and that were not seeking employment. For each graduate, this information must specifically indicate if he/she is pursuing another degree or doing military service during the first year after graduation.
  - (3) These administrative units will furthermore gather qualitative feedback from those students that graduated from the University during the preceding academic year. This information must be submitted to the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation by the end of January and the end of July of each academic year and include (for each graduate) an assessment of his/her learning experiences and personal development during his/her studies at ADA University; of major competencies acquired during that time; and of his/her preparedness for the world of employment. It must also include (for each graduate) suggestions for potential improvements of the University and its offerings (if provided).
  - (4) These administrative units will also gather qualitative feedback from employers that hired students of the University that graduated during the preceding academic year. This information must be submitted to the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation by the end of July of each academic year and include (for each employer) his/her general satisfaction with the University's graduates as well as an assessment of their competencies, their personal development, and their preparedness for their new position.

- It must also include (for each employer) an evaluation of the University's graduates over the preceding years (if applicable) and suggestions for potential improvements of the University and its offerings (if provided).
- (5) The information provided by these administrative units must indicate the total number of graduates and the total number of employers that received their employment surveys as well as the number of graduates and the number of employers that responded to these surveys.
  - (6) The Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation will add all the information received from these administrative units to the database.
- I. The Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation and/or members of the University's senior management may request additional data from any of the administrative and academic units mentioned above whenever necessary.

### 4.3 Data Reporting

- a. Data reporting is the responsibility of the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation.
- b. The reports prepared by the Office must be based on a clear, uniform and modularized structure (a *Report Template* can be found in Appendix II of ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines*). This structure includes (1) the report's title and date and the reporting period, (2) a short introduction that describes the purpose of and the area covered by the report, (3) a short overview of the report's most relevant results, (4) tables and charts presenting more detailed results and data (including explanations for each table and chart, if required), (5) more detailed comments on the report and its results (if required), (6) a legend explaining relevant terms and/or abbreviations, and (7) copyright information.
- c. All reports must be current and be based on the University's *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database*. They must provide a comprehensive and coherent overview of their respective areas, including all relevant data while omitting any superfluous information. More specifically, they must cover all the (key) performance indicators that are delineated (for each area and report) in chapters 4.3.g to 4.3.v below. Further performance indicators may be added to a report, provided that they contribute to the meaningful assessment of the University's performance in the area covered by the respective report. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) must be clearly identified as such in each report.
- d. Reports must present data in a meaningful, interrelated, accessible and comprehensible manner. They must provide absolute numbers as well as percentages (whenever appropriate), use both tables and charts, and avoid any isolated data and information. All the data used in a report must consistently add up to transparent and conclusive totals throughout the report. If any data is omitted in any table or chart of a report (to reduce complexity and improve readability), the report must provide conclusive explanations in the respective table or chart legend.
- e. The Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation will thus ensure that its reports serve as useful guidelines for internal quality assurance and decision-making. The structure and meaningfulness of all the reports prepared by the Office will be assessed (and potentially improved) by the Quality Assurance Committee at the end of each academic year.
- f. The Office will submit each report to the members of the University Senate, to the members of the Committee of Faculty Affairs, to the administrative and academic units that provided data for the respective report, and to the Quality Assurance Committee (the latter will use the reports submitted by the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation according to the procedures delineated in chapter 6 of the University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*). Reports must be submitted no later than 2 weeks after the deadline(s) for the relevant dataset(s) mentioned above in chapter 4.2.

- g. The Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation will annually prepare an *Application Report* that covers the current academic year and the four preceding years. For each of these years, this report must present at least the following information: the total number of applications and the total number of applicants (KPI) for the University; the number and percentage of applicants who prioritized ADA University in the SEC application process (KPI) for any of the University's degree programs; the number of applications and the number and percentage of prioritizing applicants per degree program; the number of applicants and the number and percentage of prioritizing applicants for different entry score groups per program; the range and average entry scores of all applicants and of all prioritizing applicants (KPI) per program; the names of the 15 schools that provided the highest number of applicants; and the citizenship (Azerbaijani or international; KPI) and the origin (Baku or region in Azerbaijan) of all applicants and all prioritizing applicants per degree program and for the entire University. The report must distinguish between the number of applications and the number of applicants since one applicant can submit several applications for different degree programs to the University.
- h. The Office will annually prepare an *Acceptance Report* that covers the current academic year and the four preceding years. For each of these years, this report must present at least the following information: the total number of accepted students per level (undergraduate and graduate); the number of accepted students per degree program; the number and percentage of accepted students per admission type (such as SEC university admission test, SAT test, ADA School, or transfer from another institution of higher education); the number and percentage of accepted students for different entry score groups per level and program; the range and average entry scores of accepted students per program (KPI) and level; the total number of students accepted based on a scholarship or stipend and (divided into programs) the number and percentage of accepted students for each scholarship and stipend type and for each individual scholarship and stipend; the total number of accepted students with a special status and (divided into programs) the number and percentage of accepted students with a special status and for different status groups; the number and percentage of accepted Azerbaijani and of accepted international students (KPI); and (divided into different English language test types) the number and percentage of accepted students for different score groups.
- i. For each semester and term, the Office will prepare an *Enrollment Report* that covers the current academic year and the four preceding years. For each of the semesters and terms covered, the report must present information on the number of active students per student type, level (undergraduate and graduate), and degree program. It must also include information on the number and percentage of students per student status category (excluding AS) for the entire University and divided into different levels and programs. Special emphasis must be placed on the number and percentage of retained students (KPI), of students dismissed for academic reasons, and of students voluntarily separating from the University (for the entire University and divided into different levels and programs). It must also indicate the number of visiting students (KPI) and of non-degree students. For each Fall semester, the report must furthermore include the number and percentage of accepted students that enrolled at the University.
- j. For each semester and term, the Office will prepare a *Grade Distribution Report* that covers the current academic year and the four preceding years. For each of these years, and divided into semesters and terms, these reports must present at least the following information: the total number of graded students and the number and percentage of students per letter grade for the entire University (KPI); the total number of graded students and the number and percentage of students per letter grade for each program (including the *General Education Program* and the *EAPP Program*; KPI); the total number of graded students and the number and percentage of students per letter grade for each degree program (including the *General Education Program*), divided into student years of study; the highest numbers of students for the highest (A and A-)

and lowest letter grades (F, FX and FZ) among all teachers (including their respective courses); as well as (divided into degree programs, the *General Education Program* and the *EAPP Program*) the number of students per letter grade for all individual courses (including the respective courses' teachers). The latter must also include the average term GPA for the respective group of students within each letter grade category. The report must furthermore indicate the total number of graded students and the number and percentage of students per letter grade for Master Theses and Capstone Projects (for the entire University and divided into degree programs) as well as the failure rate (KPI) for the entire University and for each degree program (including the *General Education Program*). Information on the highest numbers of students for the highest and lowest letter grades and the number of students per letter grade for courses will only cover the current semester or term.

- k. For each semester and term, the Office will prepare an *Undergraduate Term GPA Report* and a *Graduate Term GPA Report* that cover the current academic year and the four preceding years. For each of the semesters and terms covered, these reports must present at least the following information: the total number of graded students and the average term GPA and the average cumulative GPA for the entire University and for each degree program (including the *General Education Program*, if applicable; KPI); the number and percentage of students per term GPA range and cumulative GPA range for the entire University and for each degree program (including the *General Education Program*); and (for the entire University and divided into degree programs) the average term GPA and the average cumulative GPA for all first-year and all second-year to fourth-year students (*Undergraduate Term GPA Report*), or for all first-year and all second-year students (*Graduate Term GPA Report*).
- l. For each semester and term, the Office will prepare an *EAPP Performance Report* that covers the current academic year and the four preceding years. For each of the semesters and terms covered, the report must present information on the total number of students enrolled, the number of students newly enrolled, and the number of students enrolled that are late to graduate; on the grade distribution (KPI) for each *EAPP* level (for details, see ADA University's *English for Academic and Professional Purposes Regulations*); on the number and percentage of students that graduated on time and those that graduated late (KPI); and on the number and percentage of students dismissed for academic reasons (KPI). For all items, the report must distinguish between students that are/were expected to complete the Program within one semester and within one year.
- m. For each semester and term, the Office will prepare an *Academic Standing Report* that covers the current academic year and the four preceding years. For each of the semesters and terms covered, the report must present information on the total number of students and the number of undergraduate students and of graduate students considered; on the number and percentage of students per academic standing category (KPI) for the entire University and divided into different levels (undergraduate and graduate) and degree programs; on the number and percentage of students in each term GPA and cumulative GPA range for each academic standing category; and on the number and percentage of students per academic standing category for each student semester of study.
- n. For each semester and term, the Office will prepare a *Scholarship Report* that covers the current academic year and the four preceding years. For each of these years, and divided into semesters and terms, these reports must present at least the following information: the total number and percentage of students receiving a scholarship and the number and percentage of students receiving a scholarship per degree program (including the number and percentage of students per scholarship type and individual scholarship); a comparison between the final average cumulative GPA of those students receiving a scholarship and those without a scholarship, divided into scholarship types and individual scholarships (and specifically

indicating those students that received a scholarship based on their entry scores; KPI); the number and percentage of students receiving a scholarship per term GPA range (and differentiating between different scholarships); a comparison of the average term GPA's development between students with and without a scholarship; and the financial resources allocated to scholarships, to each scholarship type and to each individual scholarship.

- o. The Office will prepare an *Exchange Program Report* at the end of each semester and term. The report must cover the current academic year and the four preceding years. For each of these years, and divided into semesters and terms, this report must present at least the following information: the number and percentage of undergraduate students and of graduate students and the total number and percentage of students of ADA University that participated in exchange programs (KPI); the number of incoming undergraduate students and of incoming graduate students and the total number of incoming students (KPI); the number and percentage of outgoing students and of incoming students per level (undergraduate and graduate) and per academic program (KPI); the number of outgoing students and of incoming students per country and per partner institution; and the average cumulative GPA of outgoing students before their participation in the respective exchange program.
- p. The Office will annually prepare a *Graduation Report* that covers the preceding five years. For each of these years, this report must present information on the total number of undergraduate students and of graduate students that graduated from the University; on the number of students that graduated from each of the University's degree programs; on the number and percentage of regular and late graduation (graduation rate; KPI) for the University and for each level (undergraduate and graduate) and program (including the number and percentage of late graduates for each additional semester required); and on the average final cumulative GPA (KPI) per level and program for each of the academic years covered by the report.
- q. For each semester, the Office will prepare a *Course and Faculty Evaluation Report* that covers the current semester and the corresponding Fall or Spring semester of the four preceding years. For each of the semesters covered, the report must (for the entire University and divided into Schools, the *General Education Program* and the *EAPP Program*) present information on the total number of students enrolled in courses after the end of the respective withdrawal period and the number and percentage of student responses to the survey. For each quantitative question (and for the entire University and divided into Schools, the *General Education Program* and the *EAPP Program*) it must indicate the number and percentage for each answer option (KPI). For all qualitative questions combined, and covering the entire University, it must indicate the 5 most frequently mentioned referents (components of the teaching and learning process that students referred to in their comments) and (for each of these referents) a maximum of 10 keywords that students used most frequently to describe the referent in a positive or negative manner (including the number and percentage of responses per keyword). It must additionally include an overview of those referents with which students (in their qualitative responses) were most satisfied and most dissatisfied (including the number and percentage of positive or negative responses for each of these referents; KPI). For each question, the report must furthermore indicate each course with a positive or negative response rate of 50% or more out of an overall response rate (for this question and course) of at least 30%. For these courses, this information must also include the number of enrolled students after the withdrawal period, the name of the teacher, and the development of positive or negative response rates over the previous semesters covered by the report (if the course was offered by the same teacher).
- r. The Office will annually prepare a *Research Report* that covers the current academic year and the four preceding years. For each of these years, the report must (for the entire University and divided into Schools, the *General Education Program* and the *EAPP Program*) present information on the number of publications in different publication categories, namely books

published internationally (KPI); books published nationally; edited books published internationally (KPI); edited books published nationally; articles published in indexed journals (divided into different indexing databases and indicating the average journal impact factor for the respective articles counted; KPI); articles published in non-indexed journals; book articles published internationally (including encyclopedia entries; KPI); book articles published nationally (including encyclopedia entries); contributions to international conferences (KPI); contributions to national conferences; miscellaneous international publications; miscellaneous national publications. For each of these categories, the report must indicate the number of co-authored publications or conference contributions. The report must also include the number of full-time and part-time faculty per School, the *General Education Program* and the *EAPP Program* and the average number of publications per faculty member for each publication category and School (divided into full-time and part-time faculty; co-authored publications are only counted once per School; KPI) as well as the total amount of research time available to the respective group of faculty for one academic year. The report must furthermore enlist all patents obtained (including the recipient of each patent, his/her School, *General Education Program* or *EAPP Program* affiliation, the invention for which the patent was granted, and the name and country of the granting authority). For each School, the *General Education Program* and the *EAPP Program*, the report must also present information on the total number of ongoing research projects and the average number of ongoing research projects per full-time equivalent of faculty (KPI). This information must distinguish between projects that are to be published internationally and nationally (including conference contributions), between different publication formats (including conference contributions), and between individual and collaborative projects. For each School, the *General Education Program* and the *EAPP Program*, the report must moreover present information on the amount of external research funding acquired; on the total amount of funding as well as on the average amount of funding per full-time equivalent of faculty received from the University's *Faculty Research and Development Fund*; and (divided into different publication formats and including conference contributions) on the number of international and of national publications (and on the number of ongoing research projects) that were (are) supported by the *Faculty Research and Development Fund*. This information must be an aggregate of five academic years (including the current year) and present the same aggregate information for each year covered by the report. For each School, the *General Education Program* and the *EAPP Program*, the report must present information on the total amount of rewards as well as on the average amount of rewards per full-time equivalent of faculty received from the University's *Research Reward Program*.

- s. The Office will prepare a *Faculty and Course Planning Report* at the end of each semester (Summer term must be included in the Fall semester report). The report must cover the current academic year and the four preceding years. For each of these years, and divided into semesters and terms, this report must provide information on the student/faculty ratio (KPI) for the entire University and for each School and degree program (including the *General Education Program* and the *EAPP Program*), which is based on the full-time equivalent of all enrolled students divided by the full-time equivalent of faculty. It must also indicate the average number of students per course for the entire University and for each School and degree program (KPI; including the *General Education Program* and the *EAPP Program*). The report must furthermore enlist all courses whose number of enrolled students differed by 20% or more from the envisaged number of participants as well as all courses that were cancelled due to a low number of enrolled students.
- t. The Office will prepare a *Faculty Performance Report* at the end of each academic year. For the respective year, the report must (for the entire University and divided into Schools, the *General Education Program* and the *EAPP Program*) present information on the average percentage of

regular teaching load fulfilled per faculty member (KPI); on the total amount of research time available to faculty and on the number of publications and of ongoing research projects (divided into books and further publications or projects, including conference contributions); as well as on the average number of functions per faculty member fulfilled in service to the University. The report must also (for each faculty member and divided into Schools, the *General Education Program* and the *EAPP Program*) include information on the regular teaching hours and the teaching hours delivered (including the percentage of regular teaching hours delivered and the name of each course taught); on the time allocated for research and on all publications and ongoing research projects; and on further functions fulfilled in service to the University.

- u. The Office will prepare a *Personnel Information Report* at the beginning of each semester. The report must provide information on the total number of personnel and on personnel newly hired during the respective reporting period (the preceding semester; Summer term must be included in the Fall semester report). This information must differentiate between employment categories (faculty or staff) and for each category, between employment types (full-time, part-time, associate, adjunct, visiting), the number and percentage of male and female employees, the number and percentage of Azerbaijani and international (KPI) employees, position(s) of employment, School affiliation (for faculty only) or Office affiliation (for staff only), and highest academic degrees (KPI) earned (including the percentage for each degree). Divided into employment categories, the report must also include information on the number of employees that left the University (KPI) during the respective reporting period.
- v. The Office will prepare a *Graduate Employment and Employability Report* at the end of each academic year. The report must cover the previous academic year and the four preceding years. For each of these years, and differentiating between levels (undergraduate or graduate), the report must include at least the following information: the total number of graduates that obtained a degree from the University during these years; the number and percentage of graduates that were seeking and the number and percentage of graduates that were not seeking employment; the status (employed or unemployed; KPI), type of employment (full-time, part-time, self-employed or internship), and employment sector of those that were seeking employment (including percentages for each of these categories); and the number of graduates that were not seeking employment and are pursuing another degree or are doing military service during the current academic year (including percentages for each of these categories). The report must also present information on feedback received from graduates and from employers on the employability of graduates. The latter must include a general evaluation of the University's graduates (by employers) as well as assessments (by employers and graduates) of their competencies, personal development, preparedness for their new position, and potential suggestions for improvements of the University and its offerings. The report must furthermore include the number and percentage of graduates and of employers that responded to the surveys conducted by the University's Career Services and Alumni Affairs during the current academic year.
- w. Members of the University's senior management may request additional reports from the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation whenever necessary. They may also submit a request for the modification of an existing report. Such requests must be submitted in written form to the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation and state the rationale behind the request. The Office may further consult with the submitting member(s) of the senior management before setting up a new report or implementing modification(s) requested to an existing report.
- x. The Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation is responsible for the comprehensive and transparent presentation of relevant information on the University's website. For this purpose, it must closely cooperate with the Office of IT and Information Services. Further details on the

disclosure of information on the University's website can be found in its *Personal Data Usage and Public Information Policy*.

## **APPENDIX I: DEVELOPMENT AND MODIFICATION OF ACADEMIC QUALITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENTS**

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Appendix I to the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* offers instructions for the development and modification of documents essential to the assessment, enhancement and implementation of academic quality at ADA University. The different types of documents used to ensure academic quality are (1) standards and guidelines, (2) quality assurance policies (including procedures), (3) academic policies (including procedures), (4) regulations, (5) statements, and (6) handbooks.

By providing detailed regulations for the general formal of these types of documents, chapter 1 of Appendix I aims to ensure their university-wide standardization and consistency. The ensuing chapters contain individual policies on the development and modification of specific document types. Chapter 1 accordingly deals with the *structure* of documents, the ensuing chapters with the *process* of their formulation, implementation and adjustment.

### **1. DOCUMENT FORMAT REGULATIONS**

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#### **1. Purpose**

Academic quality and the assurance of academic quality are based on the regular, systematic and comprehensive implementation, evaluation and improvement of existing and the development and implementation of new formal documents as well as on the assessment and enhancement of corresponding outcomes. These documents serve as precise specifications of standards and guidelines, principles and propositions, rules, processes, structures and intended outcomes. The purpose of this regulation is to set forth clear rules for the format of such specifications.

#### **2. Scope and Recommendations**

This regulation applies to all the documents related to academic quality and quality assurance at ADA University.

Any member or group of members of ADA University intending to develop or modify an academic quality or quality assurance document is expected to be thoroughly familiar with this regulation and the respective policy (see chapters 2 to 5 of Appendix I) and to consult widely throughout the process of document development or modification.

#### **3. Definitions**

At ADA University, the following types of documents are used as academic quality and quality assurance specifications:

1. A *Quality Standard* is an established norm that outlines general criteria for excellence.

2. *Quality Guidelines* detail requirements for the implementation and assessment of quality.
3. A *Statement* represents a declaration of fundamental principles.
4. *Policies* are statements of intent. As such, they prescribe a course of action to be taken. A policy statement thus includes a structured approach to and detailed steps for its implementation (*Procedures*).
5. *Regulations* are structured directives describing rules and/or proceedings.
6. *Handbooks* are reference manuals that provide essential and comprehensive information relevant to a specific area and group of members of ADA University.

#### 4. Document Format Rules

- 4.1 All documents must be written in English.
- 4.2 All documents must use clear and unambiguous language and appropriate terminology.
- 4.3 Quality standards and quality guidelines must be written according to the following rules:
  - a. A *quality standard* formulates condensed descriptions of the norms that are intended to inform the implementation, assessment and enhancement of academic quality in the area covered by the standard.
  - b. *Quality guidelines* further specify quality standards. They present a systematic, detailed and comprehensive overview of quality requirements that are equally meant to inform the processes of quality implementation, assessment and enhancement. Guidelines are introduced by a brief delineation of their context and rationale.
- 4.4 The first three parts of a statement, policy, regulation or handbook must be arranged according to the following structure:
  - a. Part 1 clearly formulates the *purpose* of the document (including its context and/or its rationale).
  - b. Part 2 delineates the *scope* and relevant *recommendations*. The scope of a document includes the area it aims to cover and (if applicable) the members of ADA University it directly addresses.
  - c. Part 3 presents a precise formulation of relevant *definitions*.
- 4.5 The subsequent part(s) of a statement, policy, regulation or handbook depend(s) on the respective document type:
  - a. *Statements* put forward fundamental principles applicable to the area covered by the respective statement.
  - b. *Policies* provide precise, systematic, detailed and comprehensive *procedural guidelines*, offering step-by-step instruction for policy implementation.
  - c. *Regulations* define precise rules and/or proceedings applicable to the area covered by the respective regulation.
  - d. *Handbooks* systematically compile and present essential information that allows for a comprehensive overview of the area covered by the handbook. These documents are geared towards a specific group of members of ADA University.
- 4.6 The parts mentioned in 4.5 may also include any further information that those members of ADA University involved in the process of document development or modification deem necessary, provided that it is relevant to the area covered by the respective document. This applies to all of the document types addressed in 4.5.

## 5. Assuring Document Quality

- 5.1 Compliance with ADA University's *Document Format Regulations* must be confirmed by the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation before an academic quality or quality assurance document may be submitted for approval to any decision-making body of ADA University.
- 5.2 Formal adjustments proposed by the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation must be implemented in close cooperation with the document's proposers.

## 2. POLICY ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND MODIFICATION OF ACADEMIC POLICIES

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### 1. Purpose

Academic policies serve to provide explicit and transparent statements of intent relating to academic matters as well as structured guidelines for their implementation (procedures). Since ADA University strives to continuously enhance the quality of its academic structures, processes and outcomes, existing policies and procedures shall be improved regularly, and new policies and procedures shall be developed and implemented. The present policy aims to outline the framework for the development and modification of academic policies and procedures. It is part of ADA University's commitment to academic freedom and to the continuous strategic development of the University.

### 2. Scope and Recommendations

Academic matters cover all issues related to teaching, learning, assessment and research. These include (but are not limited to) degree programs and program objectives, blended and online education, student admission and graduation, student services and support, teacher qualification and evaluation, research development and support, but also the questions of integrity and equity and all questions pertaining to academic quality assurance.

A proposal for a new academic policy or for the modification of an existing academic policy can be initiated and submitted by any (academic or administrative) unit of ADA University, by any group of its faculty and / or staff, or by members of its senior management.

Modifications of academic policies initiated by the Quality Assurance Committee are regulated by ADA University's general *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*.

The development and modification of a policy is a multifarious process that involves a variety of factors and stakeholders. The proposers are expected to consult widely and to address feedback and concerns throughout the entire process. They are also expected to be thoroughly familiar with relevant Quality Standards and Quality Guidelines outlined in ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* and with the University's *Document Format Regulations*.

### 3. Definitions

*Academic Policies* are statements of intent relating to academic matters. As such, they prescribe a course of action to be taken. An academic policy statement thus includes a structured approach to and detailed steps for its implementation (*Procedures*).

*Procedures* pertaining to academic matters define structured approaches to and detailed steps for the implementation of academic policies.

### 4. Development of New Academic Policies

#### 4.1 Initiation of the Development of a New Academic Policy

- a. A proposal for a new academic policy can be initiated by any (academic or administrative) unit, by any group of faculty and / or staff, or by members of the senior management of ADA University.
- b. Before beginning the process of policy development, the policy initiators are required to consult with the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development. This role of initial consultant will be taken over by at least one permanent member of the University Senate that is not involved in the process of policy initiation if the Vice Rector is part of the group of initiators.
- c. The initial consultation will help assess the necessity for the new policy, its potential to enhance academic quality at ADA University, but also potential risks policy developers may face and how these risks can be addressed.
- d. In case the group of initiators does not include faculty, the initial consultation must also ensure that faculty is substantially involved in the process of policy development. Faculty participation will usually consist of at least two faculty members belonging to different Schools of ADA University.

#### 4.2 Preparation of a Proposal for a New Academic Policy

- a. The group of proposers (which consists of all policy initiators and developers) are responsible for the development of the new policy. They will regularly report to the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development in order to ensure a smooth process of policy development (this step becomes redundant if the Vice Rector is part of the group of proposers).
- b. The proposers will develop a first draft of the academic policy, which must describe the precise purpose of the policy, its scope, relevant definitions, potential recommendations and detailed steps for its implementation (including the academic and / or administrative unit or units responsible for the implementation of the new policy). The policy must correspond to relevant Quality Standards and Quality Guidelines outlined in the University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* and also address the issue of diversity.
- c. The proposers will share the first draft of the policy with the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development<sup>3</sup> and with relevant members and (academic and administrative) units of ADA University (such as, but not limited to, Schools and their Deans and faculty, Program Directors, Office of Faculty Affairs and Academic Administration, Office of Admissions and Student Records, Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation, Information Technology Services, ADA Library), all of whom will give initial feedback on the draft (feedback from Schools will consist of one comprehensive report from each School). Policy proposers must ensure that

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<sup>3</sup> Sharing with the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development becomes redundant if (s)he is part of the group of proposers. This also applies to the following parts of this policy.

they share the first draft of the policy (and all subsequent versions) widely and with all stakeholders concerned with the proposed policy. Neglect to do so may result in the rejection of the proposal in later stages of the process.

- d. The proposers will address the feedback received in an adequate manner and develop a revised version of the policy proposal. The proposers are free to adopt or reject feedback. In case of rejection, they must demonstrate good reasons for their decision.
- e. The revised version will go through the same processes as mentioned in 4.2.c and 4.2.d, which will result in a final version of the proposal.
- f. The final version of the proposal will be submitted to the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation, which will ensure that it fully corresponds to relevant Quality Standards and Quality Guidelines set forth in ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* as well as to the formal requirements outlined in its *Document Format Regulations*. Potential adjustments will be implemented in close cooperation with the policy's proposers.
- g. After confirmation by the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation, the proposers will share the final version of the proposal with all the stakeholders referred to in 4.2.c, all of whom will supply feedback letters on the proposal (feedback from Schools will consist of one comprehensive letter from each School). The feedback letter provided by the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development must include a recommendation to the University Senate. This recommendation will be supplied by the initial consultant(s) if the Vice Rector is part of the group of proposers.

#### **4.3 Requirements for a New Academic Policy**

- a. The proposers must demonstrate the necessity for the new policy and its potential to enhance academic quality at ADA University.
- b. Submitted policy proposals must correspond to ADA University's relevant Quality Standards and Quality Guidelines and adhere to the rules outlined in ADA University's *Document Format Regulations*.
- c. The proposal must indicate how the new policy addresses the University's *Equity, Diversity and Non-Discrimination Policy*.
- d. If applicable, proposals must be accompanied by a statement on resources required for the implementation of the policy.
- e. All the feedback letters received from members and stakeholders of ADA University must be added to the policy proposal. In case of rejected feedback, the proposers must attach a statement which details reasons for each rejection made. The proposal must also enclose the recommendation mentioned in 4.2.g.

#### **4.4 Proposal Submission and Approval of a New Academic Policy**

- a. The proposers will submit the final version of the policy proposal (together with all the accompanying documents mentioned in 4.3) to the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development.
- b. The Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development will submit the proposal (together with all the accompanying documents mentioned in 4.3) to the Deans' Council.
- c. At one of its next regular meetings, the Deans' Council will discuss and take a vote on the policy proposal. Policy proposers will be invited in order to present the proposal and address potential questions. Approval by the Deans' Council is granted if the proposal is accepted by the majority of its members.
- d. If approved by the Deans' Council, the policy proposal (together with all the accompanying documents mentioned in 4.3) will be placed on the University Senate's agenda, who will discuss and take a vote on the proposal at one of its next regular meetings. Policy proposers will be

invited in order to present the proposal and address potential questions. Approval by the Senate is granted if the proposal is accepted by a majority as defined in Article 3 of the Senate's By-Laws.

- e. If accepted by the Senate and approved by the Rector, the new policy becomes effective in the academic year following the Senate's approval. It will be published on ADA University's website, be added to the appropriate handbook (such as the *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* or the Academic Catalogue) and be included in the regular review cycle at ADA University. The Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development will provide an electronic copy of the new policy to all members of ADA University.

#### **4.5 Implementation of a New Academic Policy**

- a. Responsibility for the implementation of the new academic policy rests with the academic and / or administrative unit(s) specified in the policy.
- b. In order to ensure full and timely implementation of the new policy, the academic and / or administrative unit(s) responsible for its implementation will report to the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development after each semester of the academic year in which the policy came into effect.
- c. In case of incomplete or delayed policy implementation, the Vice Rector will take appropriate steps in order to ensure full and timely implementation of the policy.

### **5. Modification of Academic Policies**

#### **5.1 Initiation, Preparation and Submission of a Proposal for Policy Modification**

- a. A proposal for the modification of an academic policy can be initiated by any (academic or administrative) unit, by any group of faculty and / or staff, or by members of the senior management of ADA University.
- b. Before beginning the process of policy modification, the initiators are required to consult with the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development about the proposal for policy modification (this step becomes redundant if the Vice Rector is part of the group of initiators).
- c. If applicable, the initial consultation will help determine the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed changes to the academic policy, but also potential risks that may be faced in the process of policy modification and how these risks can be addressed.
- d. In case the group of initiators does not include faculty, the initial consultation must also ensure that faculty is substantially involved in the process of policy development.
- e. The group of proposers (which consists of all policy initiators and developers) are responsible for the development and submission of the policy modification.
- f. The proposers will develop a detailed description of all proposed modifications. All modifications must correspond to relevant Quality Standards and Quality Guidelines set forth in ADA University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* and (if applicable) be aligned with related policies, statements or regulations of the University.
- g. The proposer(s) must consult with the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in order to ensure that their proposal fully corresponds to the Quality Standards and Quality Guidelines mentioned in 5.1.f and to the formal requirements outlined in ADA University's *Document Format Regulations*.
- h. The proposers will share the draft of their proposal with the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development and with all stakeholders of ADA University that are concerned with the respective policy, all of whom will supply feedback letters on the draft (feedback from Schools will consist of one comprehensive report from each School).

- i. After thorough consideration of all feedback received, and after having finalized the proposal, the proposers will submit it to the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development (together with a description of the rationale behind the proposal and all feedback letters received).

## **5.2 Approval and Implementation of Policy Modification**

- a. The Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development will submit the proposal to the Deans' Council (together with the description of the rationale behind the proposal and all feedback letters received). At one of its next regular meetings, the Deans' Council will discuss and take a vote on the proposal. Approval by the Deans' Council is granted if the proposal is accepted by the majority of its members.
- b. If approved by the Deans' Council, the policy proposal (together with the description of the rationale behind the proposal and all feedback letters received) will be placed on the University Senate's agenda, who will discuss and take a vote on the proposal at one of its next regular meetings. Approval by the Senate is granted if the proposal is accepted by a majority as defined in Article 3 of the Senate's By-Laws.
- c. If accepted by the Senate and approved by the Rector, the modification becomes effective in the academic year following the Senate's approval. It will be updated on the University's website and in the respective handbook(s). An electronic copy of the revised policy will be provided to all members of ADA University by the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development.
- d. Responsibility for the implementation of policy modifications rests with the academic and / or administrative unit(s) specified in the policy.

## **6. Suspension of Academic Policies**

### **6.1 Proposal of and Decision on the Suspension of an Academic Policy**

- a. The suspension of an existing academic policy can be proposed by any (academic or administrative) unit, by any group of faculty and / or staff, or by members of the senior management of ADA University. Proposers are expected to consult widely before submitting a proposal for policy suspension.
- b. The proposers must provide a detailed statement on the rationale behind the proposal and attach any document that may support their proposition. Their proposal must also include feedback letters from the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development and further relevant stakeholders mentioned in 4.2.c. Faculty will supply one comprehensive feedback letter for each School. Feedback letters are only required from those stakeholders that are not part of the group of proposers.
- c. After appropriate consideration of the feedback letters received, the group of proposers will decide whether they will uphold, modify or withdraw the proposal.
- d. Modification of the proposal will result in an updated statement on the rationale of the proposal and/or in the compilation of additional supporting documents, all of which must be submitted to the stakeholders mentioned in 6.1.b, who will either uphold or adapt their previous feedback letters. After appropriate consideration of the feedback letters received, the group of proposers will make a final decision on whether they will uphold or withdraw the proposal.
- e. If the proposal is upheld, it will be submitted to the Deans' Council (together with the latest description of the rationale behind the proposal, all the supporting documents compiled, and the latest versions of the feedback letters received). At one of its next regular meetings, the Deans' Council will discuss and take a vote on the proposal of policy suspension. Proposers will be

invited in order to present the proposal and address potential questions. Approval by the Deans' Council is granted if the proposal is accepted by the majority of its members.

- f. If approved by the Deans' Council, the proposal of policy suspension (together with the documents mentioned in 6.1.e) will be submitted to the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development, who will make a recommendation to the University Senate (this recommendation must come from a permanent member of the University Senate that is not involved in the process of policy suspension if the Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development is part of the group of proposers). The proposal will be placed on the Senate's agenda, who will discuss and take a vote on the proposal at one of its next regular meetings. Proposers will be invited in order to present the proposal and address potential questions. Approval by the University Senate is granted if the proposal is accepted by a majority as defined in Article 3 of the Senate's By-Laws. If accepted by the Senate and approved by the Rector, the suspension of the policy will come into effect and be implemented as described in 6.2.

## **6.2 Implementation of the Suspension of an Academic Policy**

- a. Unless otherwise decided by the University Senate, the suspension of the academic policy becomes effective in the academic year following the Senate's decision.
- b. The Vice Rector for Institutional Effectiveness and Development will inform all members of ADA University of the upcoming termination of the academic policy.
- c. Upon its termination, the policy will be removed from the respective handbook(s) and from the list of active policies on the University's website. It will be archived on the website and permanently removed 5 years after its termination.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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**Academic Excellence** is a fundamental guiding principle according to which education and research comply with (or even exceed) high quality standards.

**Academic Freedom** is the right of faculty and students to teach, study and engage in research without undue restrictions. It describes the right of free expression and inquiry that is the prerogative of students as well as of faculty within their respective disciplines.

**Academic Integrity** is a fundamental guiding principle according to which every educational and research activity is to be conducted in an honest, responsible and altogether ethical manner. Most importantly, this principle precludes any kind of cheating and plagiarism as well as the awarding of grades and degrees based on anything else but the performance of students and their attainment of course learning outcomes and program requirements.

The **Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database** serves to collect, organize and keep all the quantitative and qualitative information (raw data) required to assess the University's performance in all the areas relevant to the evaluation and improvement of academic quality.

**Academic Policies** are statements of intent relating to academic matters. As such, they prescribe a course of action to be taken. An academic policy statement thus includes a structured approach to and detailed steps for its implementation (*Procedures*).

**Academic Principles** are fundamental concepts that serve to guide all activities related to education and research.

The **Academic Program** comprises all matters related to ADA University's educational offerings. These matters include degree programs, curricula and courses; outcome images, core competencies and learning outcomes; a General Education framework and credit and degree regulations; as well as regulations ensuring the integrity of the University's degrees.

**Assessment Criteria** delineate precise requirements for the achievement of learning outcomes. These requirements are clearly defined statements of what a student is expected to demonstrate during or at the end of a process of learning in order to have partly or fully achieved a specific learning outcome. They thus provide detailed guidelines for the evaluation of assessment tasks.

The term **Assessment Method** comprises both assessment tasks and assessment types.

**Assessment Tasks** are assignments that serve to determine the level on which students have achieved specific learning outcomes in a course or unit of study.

**Assessment Types** are categories of assignments that serve different purposes during the educational process.

An **Asynchronous Exam** is an assignment that students do not need to complete at the same time and for whose submission students are usually allowed a longer period of time.

**Asynchronous Teaching and Learning** describes constellations in which students engage with specific course content according to their own schedule. This includes recorded lessons during which students are instructed and guided by the teacher, but also various forms of projects and independent or collaborative learning activities during which students engage with a specific topic with little or no support from their teacher. If conducted online, asynchronous teaching and learning requires the use of appropriate communication and/or teaching and learning software.

The **Banner Student Information System (Banner SIS)** is an electronic database of student records and further relevant student information. It is used for data collection, reporting, and for managing day-to-day academic operations at ADA University.

Entire degree programs or individual courses offered in the **Blended (Hybrid)** format combine classroom-based and online teaching and learning activities.

A **Capstone Project** is an independent group study assignment that is to be completed in the second year of a Master degree program.

**Competence** is defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitude. *Core Competencies* are general statements of qualities that a student is expected to demonstrate upon graduation and in future workplaces, and this regardless of a specific degree program.

A **Computer-Based Exam** is a written assignment that students complete using a technical device.

**Contact Hour** or **Class Time** is defined as a specific period of time students spend on activities guided by teaching staff.

**Contract Cheating** represents a breach of academic integrity. It is a form of academic dishonesty in which an assessment task that was supposedly completed by one student (or a group of students) and that has been submitted for evaluation was instead (fully, substantially, or to a significant degree) prepared by a third party. It applies to all cases in which a third party was involved, and this regardless of the third party's relationship to the student (or group of students) and whether the third party received any sort of remuneration from the student (or group of students). It also applies to cases in which someone other than a student sits (or attempts to sit) an exam on behalf of that student.

A **Course** is a unit of teaching and learning (1) that is dedicated to a clearly defined subject, (2) that consists of a coherent and well-structured series of individual sessions, and (3) that usually covers one semester. Courses (as individual teaching and learning units) are part of coherently structured degree programs. They can be taught face-to-face or in a blended or online format.

**Credit** or **Credit Hour** is defined as a quantified means of expressing a specific volume of learning. This volume is composed of clearly defined learning outcomes and of the workload associated with the achievement of these outcomes. Credit hours are not identical to contact hours or with 60-minute hours.

The **Cumulative GPA (CGPA)** indicates a student's overall academic performance in a degree program. It is calculated in the same manner as the *Term Grade Point Average*, but includes all units of study attempted by the time of calculation. Grades from approved transfer courses taken at another institution do not count towards a student's cumulative GPA at ADA University. Neither do units of study evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis. The cumulative GPA only includes the highest grade earned in a repeated course.

The **Curriculum** provides the framework for teaching and learning within a specific degree program. It describes the structured sequence of courses that comprise a degree program and that allows for a gradual progression of learning and for the achievement of program objectives and learning outcomes. It thus encompasses the entire subject matter that is being taught in a program (including the program's content, program objectives and intended learning outcomes), but also instructional and assessment methods as well as learning activities and materials employed to achieve these objectives and outcomes.

**Curriculum Advising and Program Planning (CAPP)** is a tool available in *Banner SIS* that allows for the digital representation of degree program requirements. It enables students as well as academic and administrative staff members to monitor and evaluate a student's progress towards the completion of these requirements.

A **Curriculum Map** indicates in which of its courses the program's learning outcomes are taught and assessed.

**Curriculum Mapping** is a process in which program learning outcomes are specified and sequentially and coherently distributed across the courses of a specific degree program. This process also defines assessment criteria for the evaluation of a student's performance as well as grade descriptions which indicate his/her achievement of specific learning outcomes.

**Data Anonymization** describes a process in which personal data is permanently stripped of all information that may lead to the identification of a data subject.

**Data Management** describes the process of collecting, organizing and keeping relevant quantitative and qualitative information (raw data) systematically, efficiently and securely. Data management forms the basis of a meaningful process of data reporting.

**Data Pseudonymization** requires that personal data is processed in such a manner that it cannot be attributed to a data subject without additional information. Data subjects can still be re-identified by the use of such additional information.

**Data Reporting** describes the practice of processing relevant quantitative and qualitative information (raw data) by translating it into accessible formats and meaningful summaries. Data reporting forms the basis of informed and data-driven assessments and decisions.

A **Data Subject** is an identified or identifiable natural person whose data is gathered and used. The term *Subject* connotes both that the person is *subject to* the processes of data collection and usage *and* that it must (for ethical and legal reasons) be considered as an *active subject* in these processes.

A **Degree Audit** is a formal analysis of a student's progress towards degree completion. It furthermore serves to evaluate whether a student has fulfilled all program requirements before being awarded a degree.

A **Degree Program** is a coherent and structured set of courses, requirements, objectives and learning outcomes, leading to an academic degree at the undergraduate or graduate level.

**Discrimination** describes the differential treatment of individuals based on characteristics such as gender, age, health, race, nationality, ethnicity or cultural affiliation, religion, marital or familial status, sexual

orientation, social origin, or economic circumstances. While *Positive Discrimination* (defined as the preferential treatment of disadvantaged individuals) serves to foster equity and inclusiveness, *Negative Discrimination* (defined as the unfair treatment of individuals based on such characteristics) tends to prevent diversity by excluding specific individuals or groups of individuals from participation.

**Diversity** describes the existence of a variety of characteristics in a group of people. These characteristics may cover differences in gender, age, health, race, nationality, ethnicity or cultural affiliation, religion, marital or familial status, sexual orientation, social origin, or economic circumstances. They may also include differences in competencies, experiences, talent, opinions, beliefs, and personality.

The **English for Academic and Professional Purposes (EAPP) Program** is a non-credit program that serves to prepare undergraduate students for the study of their degree program at ADA University.

**Equity** describes a fundamental guiding principle according to which individuals are to be treated in a manner that is fair and appropriate to their specific circumstances. This implies that no one is (intentionally or unintentionally) discriminated against by being excluded from certain opportunities due to these circumstances. *Equity*, as opposed to *equality*, thus acknowledges differences between individuals and aims at inclusiveness by facilitating access to these opportunities and providing additional support for those that are disadvantaged so that they can develop their full potential.

Entire degree programs or individual courses offered **Face-to-Face** are classroom-based. They make use of the online mode only for additional student support and to share teaching and learning materials.

The **Faculty Research and Development Fund** is a funding mechanism established by ADA University. It is intended to provide a dedicated and uniform source of funding and thus to create incentives for faculty, both standing and new, to pursue research activities and professional development.

Any credit-bearing course can be considered a **Free Elective** if the respective course is not an integral part of a student's degree program. Free Electives can be chosen from any other degree program offered at ADA University.

**Functional Enablers** are courses that aim to develop core study- and work-related skills. Functional Enablers cover IT skills, but also internships and career strategies.

The **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** is a European regulation on the protection of personal data throughout the European Union.

**General Education** encompasses courses offered to all students enrolled in undergraduate degree programs at ADA University. The purpose of the General Education component is to cultivate a well-rounded person in foundational areas such as the Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Quantitative Reasoning; Writing and Information Literacy; and Leadership and Communication.

**Grade Descriptions** provide definitions of grade descriptors. Grade descriptions are based on the level on which learning outcomes are achieved. This level of achievement is indicated by the extent to which assessment criteria are fulfilled. The latter presupposes that learning outcomes and assessment methods are aligned.

**Grade Descriptors** are terms that serve to express a student's level of performance in a specific assessment task, course or unit of study.

**Grade Points** are a numerical equivalent to the Grade Scale Percentage achieved by a student in an assessment task. They furthermore serve to express the overall performance of student in a course or unit of study. As such, they are calculated in the following manner: (1) For each assessment task, grade points are assigned. (2) The grade points for each assessment task are multiplied by its percentage weight (which is the relative contribution of an assessment task to the overall grade of a course or unit of study). (3) The resulting products are added up to produce the final grade assigned to a student in a course or unit of study.

The **Grade Scale Percentage** is a numerical expression of a student's performance in an assessment task.

A **Grading Rubric** is a scoring guide that allows for the precise evaluation of student performance in a specific assignment. It further specifies (subdivides) grade descriptors and thus explicates the achievement of grade scale percentages and the allocation of grade points.

**Graduate Degree Programs** encompass all Master programs offered at ADA University.

**Handbooks** are reference manuals that provide essential and comprehensive information relevant to a specific area and group of members of ADA University.

**Harassment** is a kind of behavior that is unsolicited, unwanted and improper and that causes distress in those that are harassed. Harassing behavior can be of a physical, verbal and/or suggestive nature, and it can occur in person or electronically. It includes (but is not limited to) the misuse of power with the intention of causing harm to others (bullying), actual or attempted intimidation, unsolicited advances, direct insults, and malicious gossip. To be considered harassment, such behavior must either be displayed repeatedly, or it must constitute a single act of a serious nature. Harassment does not include justified decisions, requests, work assignments and assessments of performance by supervisors; disciplinary measures based on the regulations approved by the University; reasonable expressions of opinion and criticism; and interpersonal conflict that does not transgress the limits of what a person may reasonably be expected to tolerate in tense and stressful situations.

**High-Impact Graduates** are graduates who possess all the essential competencies required to become highly efficient professionals and responsible citizens.

The **Impact Factor (IF)** of a journal is the average number of times articles from that journal have been cited in a particular year. This calculation takes into account articles that were published in the two years preceding the year for which the Impact Factor is computed. The Impact Factor is used as an indication of the relative importance of an academic journal within its field.

**Inclusion** describes the ongoing process of practicing equity and promoting diversity. As its outcome, *Inclusiveness* describes a responsive and welcoming environment in which all individuals are supported according to their respective needs and thus have the opportunity to fully participate. Such an environment also values diversity and difference and actively strives to integrate individuals from a multitude of backgrounds and contexts.

**Institutional Purposes** are fundamental objectives and obligations that are to be promoted and fulfilled by the University. They derive from the University's charter, mission and vision. Institutional purposes further specify the University's mission and vision, and they serve to guide all activities at the University.

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** are clearly specified criteria that serve to measure the level of achievement in a certain area. They thus provide evidence of the extent to which pre-defined objectives have been met, missed or surpassed. Key performance indicators can be quantitative or qualitative in nature, providing either numerical or textual information. All information requires interpretation to ensure that it serves as contextualized representation of the performance in a certain area and as meaningful measurement of the achievement of specific objectives.

**Learning Analytics** describes the collection, analysis and usage of data on students and their learning activities with the objective of understanding and improving educational processes and providing effective support to learners. Learning analytics poses new challenges to the ethical and legal usage of data due to the considerably extended scope and amount of data that may be systematically generated and gathered by digital information systems.

**Learning Outcomes** are statements of what a student is expected to know, understand and be able to demonstrate upon the completion of a specific process of learning.

Courses labeled as **Major Core** offer a fundamental understanding of subjects covered by a student's main field of specialization. Major Core courses are a mandatory part of a degree program.

The **Median Impact Factor (MIF)** is the middle (median) value of all journal Impact Factors within a certain field (discipline).

A **Modification** of a degree program may include (but is not limited to) changes in course composition (including the content of individual courses); program objectives and learning outcomes; curriculum structure; the mode of delivery; or in the program's name.

**MyADA** is a centralized portal available to students, faculty and staff that provides access to major electronic services offered at ADA University.

The concept of **Non-Discrimination** prohibits any form of negative discrimination. It allows for (and requires) positive discrimination as far as is necessary to promote and achieve equality, diversity and inclusiveness.

A **Non-Proctored Exam** is an assignment that students complete without being supervised by a teacher or proctor.

Entire degree programs or individual courses offered in the **Online (Distance)** format are based exclusively on remote forms of teaching and learning.

**Online Exams** are assignments that are conducted using the internet. They can be (1) conducted in class or remotely, (2) synchronous or asynchronous, (3) proctored or non-proctored, (4) written (computer-based or paper-based) or oral.

**Outcome Images** are role concepts that serve to guide the entire educational process. They are defined by essential professional and civic competencies that a student should possess upon graduation.

A **Paper-Based Exam** is an assignment that students complete using pen and paper. Paper-based exams can also be conducted remotely.

In accordance with the *Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan On Personal Data* and the European *General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)*, *Data* is defined as “personal data”. **Personal Data** refers to any information that allows, either directly or indirectly, to identify a natural person.

**Policies** are statements of intent. As such, they prescribe a course of action to be taken. A policy statement thus includes a structured approach to and detailed steps for its implementation (*Procedures*).

**Principles of Research** are fundamental concepts that serve to guide the scholarly pursuit and dissemination of knowledge.

**Principles of Teaching and Learning** are fundamental concepts that serve to guide the educational process.

**Procedures** define structured approaches to and detailed steps for the implementation of policies. *Procedures* pertaining to academic matters define structured approaches to and detailed steps for the implementation of academic policies.

A **Proctored Exam** is an assignment that students complete while being supervised by one or several teachers and/or proctors.

**Program Objectives** are general statements of the competencies students are expected to have acquired upon graduation. They are based on essential outcome images and core competencies.

**Quality** is defined as the achievement of excellence. It allows the University to fulfill its purposes as an institution of higher education and research.

**Quality Assurance** describes the regular assessment / evaluation and enhancement / improvement of standards and guidelines, principles and propositions, rules, processes, structures and outcomes. *Quality Assessment* refers to the review of documents *and* of related outcomes. The *Enhancement of Quality* covers the development or modification of documents *as well as* their implementation and the corresponding achievement of intended outcomes.

**Quality Assurance Governance** describes the structure of quality assurance, key actors involved in the process of quality assurance, as well as their respective responsibilities.

**Quality Guidelines** detail requirements for the implementation and assessment of quality.

**Quality Indicators** are clearly defined criteria that allow for the assessment of academic quality and quality assurance documents as well as of their outcomes. The results of these assessments serve to further enhance the quality of documents and outcomes.

A **Quality Review Cycle** is a systematic and comprehensive process of quality assessment that is completed within a predefined timeframe and that is regularly repeated.

A **Quality Standard** is an established norm that outlines general criteria for excellence.

**Regulations** are structured directives describing rules and/or proceedings.

A **Remote Exam** is an assignment that a student completes while being in a location other than the physical classroom and for which the student needs to use the internet.

The **Reporting Period** is the timespan that must be covered by a specific dataset and/or report.

The area **Research** contains major documents that provide the framework for scholarship at ADA University. These include fundamental principles of research; regulations pertaining to the funding of research and of the professional development of faculty; as well as a reward program for excellence in research.

The **Research Reward Program** is a reward mechanism established by ADA University. It is intended to create incentives for faculty to actively and continuously engage in research activities and to reward them for publications that fulfill high international standards.

A **Second Career Track** is an additional course load that students can choose to open up further professional opportunities.

A **Statement** represents a declaration of fundamental principles.

A **Student Transcript** is a standardized document that serves as an official record of a student's performance. It includes all the credits and grades earned by a student for a specific degree program.

A **Synchronous Exam** is an assignment that all students of a course need to complete at the same time and during a designated and limited period of time.

**Synchronous Teaching and Learning** describes constellations in which teachers and students engage with specific course content at the same time. It usually refers to scheduled class time during which activities are guided by the teacher. If conducted online, synchronous teaching and learning requires the use of appropriate communication and/or teaching and learning software.

The area **Teaching, Learning and Assessment** covers major components of the educational process. These include principles that serve to guide the process of teaching and learning at ADA University; rules and proceedings that regulate the assessment of learning; as well as a framework for online and blended teaching, learning and assessment.

**Technical Electives** are courses in advanced topics covered by a student's main field of specialization. Students are offered a range of Technical Electives to choose from.

The **Term Grade Point Average (TGPA)** indicates a student's academic performance during a specific semester or term. It is calculated in the following manner: (1) For each unit of study considered, grade points earned are multiplied by credit hours attempted. (2) The resulting values for all the units of study considered are added up. (3) The resulting sum is then divided by the credit hours attempted that semester or term. The term GPA does not cover units of study evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis, and it only includes the highest grade earned in a repeated course.

**Undergraduate Degree Programs** encompass all Bachelor programs offered at ADA University.

**Workload** is defined as an estimation of the time a student typically needs to complete all learning activities required to achieve expected learning outcomes. Learning activities include lectures and seminars,

projects, practical work and internships, as well as independent study activities and examinations. Workload is therefore not calculated based on contact hours or class time alone.