1. Purpose

Quality assurance at ADA University is comprehensive and 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 structures and procedures set forth in this document govern the process of academic quality assurance at the institutional and School level at ADA University.

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

3. Definitions

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

Quality Assurance describes the regular and ongoing assessment (evaluation) and enhancement (improvement) of structures, processes and documents designated to achieve and improve quality as well as of their practical impact and outcomes. While *Quality Assessment* refers to the review of structures, processes and documents and of their impact and outcomes, the *Enhancement of Quality* covers the development and modification of such structures, processes and documents *as well as* their implementation and the corresponding achievement of the intended impact and 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 School-level Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committees, 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 senior management members, by any (academic or administrative) unit, or by any decision-making body (such as the University Senate, Deans' Council or Committee of Faculty Affairs), or academic committee (such as a Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committee) of the University. Proposers are required to 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 amended document comes into effect at the date determined by the Senate.

5. Organizational Structure

5.1 Quality Assurance Committee

a. ADA University shall have a Quality Assurance Committee. This Committee shall consist of the following 18 members, which ensures a wide representation of various and relevant stakeholders:

(1) Vice Rector of Academic Affairs;
(2) Vice Rector of Strategy and Advancement;
(3) Vice Rector for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs;
(4) Vice Rector for Government and External Affairs;
(5) Director of Quality Assurance and Accreditation;
(6) 1 faculty member from each of the University's Schools and from the *Foundation Program* and the *English for Academic and Professional Purposes Program*;
(7) 2 external members from well-reputed institutions of higher education;
(8) 1 undergraduate student representative and 1 graduate student representative.

b. The 5 members mentioned above in (1) to (5) shall be permanent members of the Quality Assurance Committee as long as they hold their respective administrative positions.

c. The 9 members mentioned above in (6) shall be elected by the faculty of their respective Schools or programs 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 of Academic Affairs after consultation with the Quality Assurance Committee and with the selected candidates. They may come from the same or from different institutions of higher education 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 one academic year. The ADA Student Government will elect 2 of its members prior to or at the beginning of each academic year. Undergraduate students are only eligible if they are at least 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. Students convicted of any violation of ADA University's *Honor Code* and/or the *Student Code of Conduct* at any stage of their study career may not become or remain a member of the Quality Assurance Committee.

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 of Academic Affairs. 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 input, feedback and suggestions on specific issues under discussion.

5.2 Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committees

a. Each School of ADA University (and including the *Foundation Program* and the *English for Academic and Professional Purposes Program*) shall have at least one Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committee. Schools may decide to have more than one such Committee to cover different degree programs.

b. Each Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committee shall consist of at least 4 faculty members of the respective School.

c. Schools are recommended to include students in their Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committee(s). The latter may also involve external members.

d. The procedures for the selection of Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committee members shall be specified by each School. The latter are expected to ensure that the composition of these Committees is assessed at regular and reasonable intervals.

e. The School's representative on the Quality Assurance Committee shall be part of its Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committee (or of one of these Committees).

f. If not otherwise stipulated by a School, meetings of the respective Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committee will be chaired by the School's representative on the Quality Assurance Committee.

g. Whenever appropriate, Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committees may invite further members of ADA University to participate in their meetings and to offer input, 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 Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committees, but it shall continuously and substantially support these Committees in their activities.

6. Committee Proceedings

6.1 Quality Assurance Committee

a. Meetings of the Quality Assurance Committee shall 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 July and 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 of Academic Affairs 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 shall 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. Broadly defined, these include (but are not limited to) the evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment; the assessment, development and modification of programs, curricula and courses; and 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, the graduate member of the Committee only on matters related to the graduate student experience at the University.

6.2 Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committees

a. All Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committees shall meet as often as the fulfillment of their duties may require. It is the Chairpersons' responsibility to call meetings whenever necessary. All Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committees are in recess during July and 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 those Committee members present.

c. Decisions by a Committee 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 a Committee'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 Quality Assurance Committee is at the center of the University's quality assurance system.

b. The Committee bases its activities on the University's *Academic Quality Assurance Policy* and on reports and recommendations provided by the Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committees and the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation.

c. To fulfill its responsibilities, the Committee may request additional reports from the Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committees and the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation whenever required.

d. The Quality Assurance Committee has primary responsibility for the quality assessment of the University's offerings and performance in the areas covered by the University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* and by other relevant manuals.

e. The Committee has primary responsibility for the assessment of structures, processes and documents designated to achieve and improve quality at the University.

f. The Committee shall monitor the implementation of such documents as referred to above in 7.1.e.

g. The Quality Assurance Committee is no decision-making body of the University. Its main task within the governing structure of the University is to develop recommendations for the improvement of the University's offerings and performance and of the structures, processes and documents designated to achieve and improve quality. It shall regularly submit these recommendations to the University's major decision-making bodies (Deans' Council and University Senate) for further deliberation.

h. The Committee shall in particular fulfill the following responsibilities:

(1) It shall regularly review the University's *Academic Quality Assurance Policy* and ensure its implementation (see chapter 6.3.e of that policy). It shall develop an assessment plan that covers all relevant areas and items to be evaluated as outlined in chapter 5 of the policy mentioned.

(2) It shall regularly review the current document and ensure its implementation (see chapter 6.3.e of the *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*). It shall make suggestions to the University Senate for the current document's improvement (if any) to facilitate the assessment of the University's quality assurance structures and processes as outlined in chapter 8 below.

(3) It shall oversee the development and/or modification of degree programs (as outlined in chapters 4.3 and 5.1 of the University's *Degree Program Development and Modification Policy*), of curricula and courses (see chapter 4.1 of the *Curriculum and Course Development Policy*), and of learning outcomes (see chapter 4.5 of the *Core Competence and Learning Outcome Specification Policy*).

(4) It shall evaluate the results of the ongoing processes of program monitoring and of the periodic review of programs and assess the implementation of improvements resulting from these processes (see chapters 5.3, 6.2 and 6.3 of the *Degree Program Monitoring and Review Policy*).

(5) It shall evaluate the effectiveness of the University's mechanisms for the development, assessment, improvement and approval of programs and the involvement of students and faculty in these activities (see chapters 7.5 and 7.6 of the *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*).

(6) It shall evaluate the structure and meaningfulness of all the reports prepared by the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation (see chapter 4.3 of the *Data Management and Reporting Regulations*).

(7) It shall assess the implementation of newly developed and of modified documents (see chapters 4.6 and 5.4 of the *Document Development and Modification Regulations*).

(8) It elects the University's Anti-Discrimination Officer (see chapter 5.2 of the *Equity, Diversity and Non-Discrimination Policy*) and its Data Protection Officer (see chapter 4.4 of the *Personal Data Usage and Public Information Policy*).

(9) It shall assess reports received from the Anti-Discrimination Officer (see chapter 5.2 of the *Equity, Diversity and Non-Discrimination Policy*) and from the Data Protection Officer (see chapter 4.4 of the *Personal Data Usage and Public Information Policy*).

(10) It shall support the Anti-Discrimination Officer in the implementation of feedback and suggestions received on the issues of equity, diversity and non-discrimination (see chapter 4.4 of the *Equity, Diversity and Non-Discrimination Policy*).

i. The particular responsibilities of the individual Committee members are as follows:

(1) Any Committee member or members may propose measures to improve the quality of the University's offerings and performance and of relevant structures, processes and documents whenever appropriate.

(2) The Vice Rector of Academic Affairs is responsible to coordinate the workings of the Quality Assurance Committee and to ensure that it successfully fulfills its responsibilities as outlined in this document and in the University's *Academic Quality Assurance Policy*.

(3) The Vice Rector for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs is responsible to support the Committee's 2 student representatives and to ensure that student interests and concerns are adequately represented on the Committee. The Vice Rector is available to students who may submit feedback and suggestions for the improvement of the University's educational offerings. For this purpose, s/he will regularly make students aware of the opportunity to contribute to the process of quality assurance by submitting such feedback and suggestions via the Office of Admissions and Student Records and the ADA Student Government. The Vice Rector furthermore ensures that the results from surveys conducted with students and graduates on their learning experiences at ADA University are thoroughly considered by the Quality Assurance Committee (for details on the reports resulting from these surveys, see the University's *Data Management and Reporting Regulations*).

(4) All Vice Rectors represent the areas they are overseeing. They are responsible to introduce concerns and propositions arising from these areas. They furthermore represent the perspective of the University's leadership and shall ensure that the work of the Committee is aligned with the strategic goals and development of the University.

(5) The Director of Quality Assurance and Accreditation contributes the perspective and interests of internal and external quality assurance. He/she is responsible to ensure that the activities of the Quality Assurance Committee and the Office of Quality Assurance and Accreditation are aligned. The Director furthermore supports the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs in the coordination of the workings of the Committee and is responsible to take and keep the Committee's minutes.

(6) The 9 faculty members represent the perspective and interests of faculty. They are responsible to introduce concerns and propositions made by Schools and their faculty. They shall ensure that faculty interests and suggestions are heard by the Quality Assurance Committee.

(7) The 2 external members are responsible to provide an external perspective and informed advice on the issues discussed by the Quality Assurance Committee and (whenever appropriate) on relevant institutional structures, processes and documents designated to achieve and improve quality.

(8) The 2 student members on the Committee represent the perspective and interests of students. They are responsible to introduce concerns and propositions made by students and the ADA Student Government. They shall closely cooperate with the latter and ensure that student interests and suggestions are heard by the Quality Assurance Committee.

j. In addition to what is outlined above in 7.1.g, the Quality Assurance Committee (represented by its Chair) regularly reports to the Deans' Council and the University Senate on the proceedings and results of the Quality Assurance Committee.

k. The Quality Assurance Committee is accountable to the University Senate. The Committee (represented by its Chair) provides a comprehensive report to the Senate at the end of each academic year, covering the Committee's key activities and accomplishments during that year. This shall include key activities and results of the Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committees (as outlined below in chapter 7.2).

7.2 Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committees

a. The Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committees support the Quality Assurance Committee in the assessment and enhancement of the University's offerings and performance and of the structures, processes and documents designated to achieve and improve quality at the University.

b. More specifically, the Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committees are responsible to assess the offerings and performance of their respective Schools (including the *Foundation Program* and the *English for Academic and Professional Purposes Program*).

c. Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committees shall in particular (and at least) fulfill the following responsibilities:

(1) They shall regularly monitor the programs offered at their respective Schools (including the *Foundation Program* and the *English for Academic and Professional Purposes Program*) as outlined in chapter 5 of the University's *Degree Program Monitoring and Review Policy*. This includes overseeing the implementation of suggestions for improvement resulting from the process of program monitoring.

(2) They shall monitor the implementation of improvement plans resulting from the periodic review of degree programs (as outlined in chapter 6 of the *Degree Program Monitoring and Review Policy*).

(3) They shall monitor the development of program descriptions and course syllabi (see chapter 4.4 of the *Curriculum and Course Development Policy*). They may additionally be allocated the tasks of designing and developing curricula and courses (see chapter 4.1 of the same policy), of specifying core competencies and learning outcomes on the level of programs and courses (see chapter 4.2 of the *Core Competence and Learning Outcome Specification Policy*), and of developing and modifying degree programs (see

chapters 4.3 and 5.1 of the *Degree Program Development and Modification Policy*). This includes the *Foundation Program* (see chapter 4.1 of the *Foundation Program Regulations*) and the *EAPP Program* (see chapter 5.1 of the *English for Academic and Professional Purposes Regulations*).

(4) They shall regularly elicit feedback from students and faculty on the quality of the School's offerings and assess the feedback received.

d. The Chairperson of a Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committee is responsible to take and keep the Committee's minutes.

e. Each Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committee regularly provides reports on the results of its activities to the Quality Assurance Committee. These reports need to include relevant information on the respective School's offerings and performance as well as recommendations for the improvement of the School or University in relevant areas whenever appropriate.

f. It is the responsibility of a School's representative on the Quality Assurance Committee to present the reports mentioned above to the Committee. He/she shall furthermore ensure that relevant information resulting from the meetings of the Committee are passed on to the School's Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committee(s) and to its faculty and administrative members.

g. The respective School's representative on the Quality Assurance Committee shall in general ensure that the work of the School's Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committee(s) is coordinated with the Quality Assurance Committee and that there is smooth and efficient communication between the institutional and the School level.

h. Each Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committee (represented by its Chair) shall provide a comprehensive report to the Quality Assurance Committee at the end of each academic year, covering the Committee's key quality assurance-related activities and accomplishments during that year. The Quality Assurance Committee may make suggestions for the further improvement of each of the Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committee's activities.

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 the Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committees. The Quality Assurance Committee may request the assistance of the Office whenever necessary in order to fulfill its obligations effectively and efficiently.

b. The Office prepares reports that facilitate data-based decision making according to the requirements delineated in the University's *Data Management and Reporting Regulations*. It submits these reports to the Quality Assurance Committee, the Curriculum and Quality Assurance Committees, to the University's decision-making bodies, and to other relevant stakeholders. The Office furthermore gathers select data as outlined in the document mentioned and adds this data to the University's *Academic Performance and Quality Assurance Database*. It monitors the implementation of the requirements outlined in the *Data Management and Reporting Regulations*.

c. The Office develops and improves documents designated to the achievement and enhancement of quality, or it coordinates and supports such activities (see the *Document Development and Modification Regulations*). It assists the Quality Assurance Committee in the identification of potential deficits and gaps in the University's *Academic Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines* and in further manuals. In case the Office is the document owner, it is responsible to keep track of and file documents and ensure their publication and distribution as required by the *Document Development and Modification Regulations* and the *Document Format and Control Regulations*.

d. The Office ensures that the University's quality assurance mechanisms are aligned with relevant international and national frameworks defining standards for academic quality, including the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)* of 2015, and the national *Evaluation Criteria for Institutional Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions* (*Ali təhsil müəssisəsinin institusional akkreditasiyası üzrə qiymətləndirmə meyarları*).

e. The Office ensures that the University's quality assurance mechanisms are coordinated with the standards and requirements of relevant accrediting agencies and thus with ongoing and envisaged accreditation projects.

f. The Office provides information on the frameworks, standards and requirements mentioned above in 7.3.d and 7.3.e to relevant members of the University.

g. The Office coordinates, supervises and realizes all (national and international) accreditation projects at the institutional level. It coordinates, supervises and supports such accreditation projects at the program level.

h. The Office supports Schools and faculty in the design, development, evaluation and improvement of programs, curricula and courses (as outlined in the University's *Degree Program Development and Modification Policy*, its *Curriculum and Course Development Policy*, and its *Core Competence and Learning Outcome Specification Policy*). This includes the definition of learning outcomes and the development of program descriptions and course syllabi. The Office is furthermore responsible to provide and regular review a *Guide to Learning Outcomes* (see chapter 4.6 of the latter policy).

i. The Office supports Schools and faculty in their responsibility to monitor and review programs as outlined in the *Degree Program Monitoring and Review Policy*.

j. The Office supports the further qualification of faculty by offering and/or organizing trainings and workshops in areas relevant to teaching, learning and assessment. It coordinates such activities with the University's Department of Organization and Personnel where appropriate.

k. The Office provides information sessions to the University's students, faculty and staff to promote a wider understanding and endorsement of the University's quality assurance system and its purposes. If required, the Office furthermore supports the organization of trainings for units and members of the University affected by newly developed or modified documents (as outlined in chapters 4.6 and 5.4 of the *Document Development and Modification Regulations*).

l. The Office, in collaboration with the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, regularly communicates relevant activities, developments and results in the areas of quality assurance and accreditation to the ADA University community.

m. The Office, in collaboration with the Office of Marketing and Communications, ensures that relevant data and information on the University's performance is placed on the website (see chapter 5.2 of the *Personal Data Usage and Public Information Policy*).

n. The Office supports the University's Anti-Discrimination Officer and its Data Protection Officer in the fulfillment of their responsibilities, which are outlined in the *Equity, Diversity and Non-Discrimination Policy* and the *Personal Data Usage and Public Information Policy*.

o. The Office needs to ensure that there is an ongoing and substantial involvement of relevant stakeholders in the University's quality assurance and accreditation activities.

p. The Director of Quality Assurance and Accreditation regularly reports to the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs and to the Quality Assurance Committee.

8. Assessment of Quality Assurance Structures and Processes

8.1 Assessing the appropriateness and effectiveness of the University's quality assurance structures and processes is the responsibility of the University Senate.

8.2 The Senate shall furthermore evaluate the annual report received from the Quality Assurance Committee as outlined above in chapter 7.1.k. The Senate reserves the right to make recommendations on the Committee's activities.