

## 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.

- a. 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.
  - b. 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).
  - c. 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.
  - d. 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*.
  - e. 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*.