

## 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>1</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 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

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<sup>1</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.

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.