

A'Sharqiyah University Policy

eLearning Policy

Policy name	eLearning Policy		
Policy number	AC0023		
Contact Person	eLearning Director		
Approval Authority	Board of Trustees		
Date first approved	18 March 2021	Last substantive review	
Policy Review Cycle	12 months from approval, then every 2 years	Next review	2022

1. Definitions

Terms / Abbreviations	Definition
ASU	A'Sharqiyah University
VC	Vice Chancellor
A&R	Admission and Registration
QAA	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Department
LRC	Library & Resources Center
CLFS	Center for Language and Foundation Studies
IT	Information Technology Services Department

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set the rules and regulations that govern the University eLearning presence. This policy applies to all courses offered online by ASU and applies to all electronic or written materials produced by ASU staff or students. The policy defines procedures, roles, and responsibilities to all involved parties to ensure that the most conducive, effective and

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efficient implementation of ASU eLearning environment allows students and academics to enjoy and benefit from the eLearning services provided by ASU.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all ASU students, academic, non-academic staff and subcontracted entities or individuals.

This policy is not an extension to other ASU policies; however, it inherits the contents of ASU Academic Integrity Policy (AC0009) and utilizes materials from other ASU policies.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1. ASU eLearning must represent and reflect ASU mission, vision, values, and culture.
- 4.2. This policy provides rules of engagement, guidelines and protocols for all courses or programs that are delivered online through the ASU eLearning platform. The policy also applies to all documents and electronic materials that are presented by ASU staff. This policy should be the reference point for:
 - 4.2.1. Curriculum design for any course that requires any digital presence.
 - 4.2.2. Periodical reviews of all courses that are delivered either as blended or distance.
 - 4.2.3. Building the university eLearning platform including learning technologies.
 - 4.2.4. Building and improving the university distance and blended learning capacity.
 - 4.2.5. Integration of tools and technologies to the eLearning platform to enhance the learning and teaching process.
 - 4.2.6. Prior approval of the VC and the eLearning department is required for any faculty, department, or unit to contract with private or public bodies to design, produce or reproduce contents for eLearning delivery.
 - 4.2.7. All materials produced by ASU full-time, part-time, agents or subcontractors are deemed as property of ASU. This is consistent with the Sultanate of Oman Intellectual property law (Royal Decree 131/2008).
- 4.3. This policy should first be reviewed after 12 months from the approval date, then every 24 months to ensure that the policy remains current.

5. Key Stakeholders

ASU colleges, departments, offices, centers and students.

6. Procedures and Guidance

6.1. Best practices

- 6.1.1. ASU strives to maintain high-quality communication through measured means to its eLearning mediums presence that includes gathering, publishing, archiving, and the maintenance of its contents.
- 6.1.2. Faculty should build on the previous course materials to gradually build a solid course presence.

6.2. Contents:

- 6.2.1. Must be engaging, flexible, accurate, up-to-date, useful, reliable, with high integrity.
- 6.2.2. Must be suitable for the target audience.
- 6.2.3. Must unambiguously represent ASU's reputations, mission, values, and image.
- 6.2.4. Must adhere to QAA standards.

6.3. Plagiarism

The accepted similarity index is as follows:

- 6.3.1. Academics, non-academic and sub-contracted staff: maximum of 15% similarity index (not from the same source).
- 6.3.2. Students' produced materials: maximum of 22% similarity index (not from the same source).
- 6.3.3. Plagiarized materials will be prosecuted as stated on the Academic Integrity Policy (AC0009).

6.4. Accountability**6.4.1. The eLearning department**

- 6.4.1.1. Proposes technologies and tools to be integrated to enhance the effectiveness of the eLearning platform.
- 6.4.1.2. Provide support, consultation, training, and academic services to build ASU eLearning capacity.
- 6.4.1.3. Along with faculty set the modality of the eLearning courses, technologies, and techniques to be incorporated once the course is approved for eLearning delivery.
- 6.4.1.4. Develop tools and gather data from faculty to better assess and improve ASU eLearning capacity.
- 6.4.1.5. Verify with IT services that the eLearning platform and other related technologies are integrated in a way that makes eLearning flexible, useful, and easy to use.
- 6.4.1.6. Along with DVCAAR and deans agree to the assessment strategies for eLearning.

6.4.2. Colleges and CLFS

- 6.4.2.1. Must verify with relevant departments or authorities that all course listed as blended-course or distance-course has been through the appropriate review procedures.
- 6.4.2.2. Must ensure that their associated courses and delivered materials are suitable for eLearning delivery and are plagiarism-free.
- 6.4.2.3. Must ensure that all programs delivered by their departments are periodically reviewed to ensure sustainability and competitiveness of the programs.
- 6.4.2.4. Must clearly state the portion of eLearning materials if the course is blended and not distant.
- 6.4.2.5. Must submit to the eLearning Department an audit form (appendix 1) that illustrate the eLearning activities developed for eLearning, teaching and assessment.

6.4.3. IT services

- 6.4.3.1. IT is the responsible department that maintains and manage all eLearning platform's components, including archiving, upgrading and servicing.
- 6.4.3.2. Must ensure that all relevant technologies identified by the eLearning Department and deans are facilitated and maintained.

- 6.4.3.3. In coordination with the eLearning department, the IT department must ensure that Moodle data is backed up regularly, and the backup should be stored electronically in a safe place.
- 6.4.3.4. Must ensure that at least one year (3 semesters) of Moodle data is available for academics through a locally hosted Moodle.
- 6.4.3.5. Must ensure that the synchronization between A&R, Logsis and Moodle databases are always current and maintained.
- 6.4.3.6. Manages all students, academics and other users accounts, including, activation, deactivation, privacy and servicing.
- 6.4.3.7. As the technology owners, provides technical support to students and academics, in particular accounts, licenses, machines, logins, and other technical issues.
- 6.4.3.8. Must advertise a mobile number, email, and other forms of communication where students and academics can get instant technical support.
- 6.4.3.9. In coordination with colleges and A&R, the IT must ensure that courses are created and faculty are enrolled in their Moodle courses 14 days before the semester start.
- 6.4.3.10. Should run the synchronization between A&R and Moodle database daily to help students access their courses' materials.
- 6.4.3.11. Must protect ASU eLearning platform components, students, and staff against all known cyber-threats.
- 6.4.3.12. IT services must have a comprehensive audit incident reporting and response system, that provides a full description of any incident that needs to be investigated.

6.4.4. Library & Resources Center (LRC)

- 6.4.4.1. Must ensure that all eLearning academic resources are current and accessible remotely as well for both staff and students.
- 6.4.4.2. Should work closely with eLearning and academic departments to ensure that available resources are linked with their relative courses in Moodle.

6.4.5. Risk Management

All involved parties must ensure that risks and threats associated with the eLearning are acknowledged and protective measures are in place to contain and nullify the impact of the threats where possible. In particular:

6.4.5.1. Technical Infrastructure risks:

Availability and resilience of our eLearning services are of paramount importance, hence, IT services should ensure that:

- 6.4.5.1.1. eLearning services must always be current and regularly updated and reviewed.
- 6.4.5.1.2. The eLearning platform must be resilient and supported by a standby-backup server that take-over immediately if the main server is down.
- 6.4.5.1.3. The eLearning services must be accessible via alternative means if the main communication medium is down.

6.4.5.2. Copyright risks:

- 6.4.5.2.1. IT services must ensure that a Digital Right management system is in place to protect the copyrights and licenses agreement and to eliminate the risk of ASU being prosecuted or penalized. In particular illegitimate use of the services or unlicensed software.
- 6.4.5.2.2. Colleges must ensure that any materials that are not developed by ASU should be properly referenced, and permission is granted from the publisher or copyright owner before they are used

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6.4.5.3. Content Quality risks:

- 6.4.5.3.1. Extensive eLearning workshops should be designed by the eLearning department to ensure that faculty' eLearning capacity are current in a way that helps them to produce effective, efficient and engaging contents.
- 6.4.5.3.2. Colleges should work closely with the eLearning department to ensure that the produced quality meets the expected standards.

6.4.5.4. Market risks:

- 6.4.5.4.1. Contents produced must be of high quality and matches the global current trends in the subject domain.

6.4.5.5. Privacy and confidentiality Risks:

- 6.4.5.5.1. IT services must have measures are in place to eliminate/mediate threats associated with privacy, confidentiality and integrity violations, and cyber-attacks.
- 6.4.5.5.2. Colleges must strive to protect students and academics well-being while teaching and learning online.
- 6.4.5.5.3. eLearning services components should be secured using Secure Socket layers and/or any type of cryptography when handling personal and financial data.

7. References

- Pittard, V. (2004). Evidence for e-learning policy. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, 13(2), 181-194. DOI: 10.1080/14759390400200179
- Brown, M., Anderson, B., & Murray, F. (2007, December). E-learning policy issues: Global trends, themes and tensions. In *ICT: Providing choices for learners and learning. Proceedings fascilite Singapore 2007*.
- Kelly, B., Phipps, L., & Swift, E. (2004). Developing a holistic approach for e-learning accessibility. *Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology/La revue canadienne de l'apprentissage et de la technologie*, 30(3).

Appendix 1:

Department: Management Information Systems **Semester:** Fall 2020

Course code/ semester	Department	Number of students	Standard assignment submission	Turnitin assignment submission	MCQ	T/F	Short answers	feedback	Survey	Forum	Live sessions via TEAMS	Online Midterm exam	Online Final exam
MIFS401	MIS	40	2	3	2	0	2	1	1	6	Yes	Yes	Yes