



The British University in Egypt

# Quality Assurance Manual

## Key Policy Information:

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## 1. Introduction

The Quality Assurance Manual is the operational document supporting the Quality Assurance Policy, which provides key information on the accreditation, regulatory and validation authorities in Egypt and the UK, the University's governance of quality and standards, and the University's Annual Quality Assurance and Enhancement Cycle.

The manual collates practical information from Academic Services, Student Services, Student Affairs and the Office of the Provost, including as appendices all approved regulations, policies, procedures and protocols for the assurance of academic quality and students' educational experience. The manual is structured into three major sections that broadly reflect the student journey.

### 1.1 Governance of quality assurance

The University's quality and academic standards are scrutinised by and comply with all legal obligations and regulatory requirements of the following three bodies. Additional internal quality assurance structures and safe-guards are also listed:

#### 1.2 Egyptian Supreme Council of Universities

This is the designated official entity in Egypt for recognition and equivalence of academic qualifications and degrees awarded by universities and institutes that are not subject to Universities Organisation Law No.49 (1972) or foreign Higher Educational Institutes.

The Supreme Council of Universities has accredited the University since its establishment in 2005 and approves external members of all Faculty Councils (Article 40 of the above law).

Accreditation necessitates engagement with its discipline-specific Sectoral Committees, comprised of subject-discipline experts, and adherence to institutional, faculty and programme (for postgraduate programmes) by-laws that it approves.

#### 1.3 Egyptian National Authority for Quality Assurance & Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE)

NAQAAE publishes the Egyptian National Academic Reference Standards (NARS) for all subjects and programmes, and the Egyptian National Qualifications Framework.

While accreditation is optional, NAQAAE accredits a growing proportion of the University's faculties and programmes, with accreditation providing further external assurance of the quality of provision, maintenance of academic standards and enhancement planning.

#### 1.4 UK validating partners

UK validating partners validate over 80% of the University's programmes, and require the upholding of the UK Quality Code, Condition of Registration from Office for Students (OfS), Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), Higher Education Credit Framework, Subject Benchmarks and UG/PG Characteristics Statements in the University's delivery of 'dual-degree' awards.

UK validating partnership agreements, validation and revalidation records, reports and other documents are held securely in both relevant faculties and centrally in Academic Services. In addition, hard copies of the University, Faculty and (in the case of postgraduate provision) programme by-laws are archived in the care of the President's Advisor. NAQAAE data and records are kept centrally by a dedicated member of Arabic-speaking staff and the Head of Quality and Accreditation, with copies held securely in Faculty Archive and Control Rooms.

Through the quality assurance processes and procedures of the UK validating partners, including programme validation, periodic/annual review, engagement of link tutors and external examiners, and co-chairing of Examination Boards, review curriculum through annual programme and module changes, the expectations of the UK's Quality Assurance Agency and Office for Students are addressed.

### **1.5 Quality assurance governance committees**

The University Council is ultimately responsible for institutional governance of quality and standards. In the governance of quality and standards, the University Council is reported to directly by the University Teaching and Learning Committee and the Postgraduate Studies Committee.

The quality and standards governance work of these University-level committees is informed Faculty-level committees, including the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee and the Staff Student Liaison Committee, both reporting to Faculty Council, which reports directly into the University Teaching and Learning Committee.

Other Faculty-level committees provide assurance on quality and standards to the University Teaching and Learning Committee: the Student Experience Committee, Staff Academic Development Committee, Library Committee and Preparatory Year Committee.

### **1.6 Quality assurance governance responsibilities**

Maintenance of the quality and standards of the undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision is the overall responsibility of the Provost and Senior Vice-President (Teaching and Learning) and the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice President for Research and Enterprise respectively.

These two institutional-level leaders are supported by teams that comprise senior leadership, academic and administrative roles covering learning, teaching, supervision and assessment; academic, registry and student services; dual-degree (Egyptian and UK) quality and accreditation; and staff academic development.

Each Faculty has a Vice-Dean for Teaching and Learning, Vice-Dean for Research and Postgraduate Studies, Head of Quality, and the support of a Senior Assistant Registrar. Each of these roles sustain aspects of quality assurance and enhancement, and carry responsibility for ensuring the high standard of the University's provision

Faculties invite student representatives to attend Faculty-level committees (Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee and Staff Student Liaison Committee) to ensure the students' voice is part of quality assurance processes and students are engaged with any decision making.

## **2. Admissions, Enrolment and Induction**

- 2.1 The British University in Egypt is committed to providing a professional admissions and enrolment service that is supported by fair and transparent admission policies and processes. This underpins the delivery of academic excellence by setting clear standards for entry that are applied fairly and consistently.
- 2.2 The University's procedure for student admissions and enrolment applies to all applicants and entrants.
- 2.3 The University Council delegates the authority to admit applicants to programmes at the University to the Director of Admissions, and the Director of Academic Services is responsible

for student enrolment. Deans have the authority to make decisions about student admissions and enrolment in accordance with selection and eligibility criteria.

- 2.4 The University's admission requirements are published on the University's website and fully comply with the regulations set by the Egyptian Council of Private Universities. Tuition Fees for Egyptian and non-Egyptian applicants are also published online.
- 2.5 Admission to the University is selective, with priority given to applicants with top scores in a range of pre-University educational systems: GCSE/IGCSE, American Diploma, Arab Certificate, Egyptian Thanaweya Amma and International Certificates.
- 2.6 Limited entry with advanced standing (recognition of prior learning/module exemption) is permitted by the Supreme Council of Universities on first registration or internal transfer only.
- 2.7 All applicants, except for those holding international high school certificates, complete either the University's English Test (LinguaSkill of Cambridge Assessment English) on campus or submit a valid academic IELTS certificate with an appropriate minimum score<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.8 The admissions process concludes with confirmation of offer, acceptance and registration, which then enables enrolment by Academic Services as the central professional service department responsible for the student journey from enrolment to graduation.
- 2.9 When a student is enrolled with the University, they are automatically enrolled on the Egyptian Higher Education system.
- 2.10 Most programmes recruit students onto a September/Semester 1 start. A second semester enrolment is possible for a small number of UG and PG programmes. All *continuing* students re-enrol in Semester 1 of each academic year.

### 3. Student induction, information, advice and guidance

- 3.1 The induction programme for new entrants is designed to enable successful applicants to make a smooth transition from applicant to student, fully prepared and supported to gain optimum benefit from their educational experience from enrolment to graduation.
- 3.2 A range of policies, procedures and protocols ensure students are supported to benefit fully from their experience at the University in terms of academic learning and personal and professional development<sup>2</sup>, including:
  - 3.2.1 ***The Student Charter (Appendix 1)***: produced by Student Services and co-signed by the University's President and Vice Chancellor and the Students Union President, it outlines what students can expect from the University and what the University expects from them, fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment for all members of the University community.
  - 3.2.2 ***The Student Representation Policy (Appendix 2)*** outlines the ways in which students can participate in the University's governance and decision-making. Student representatives sit on Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees and Staff Student Liaison Committees to ensure student engagement in evaluation of their learning

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<sup>1</sup> The language of instruction and assessment for all modules is English. Exemptions require University Council approval, and are outlined in Programme Specifications. Exemptions to teach students on the UK degree track in any other language but English requires approval by the relevant UK validating partner.

<sup>2</sup> Academic Services offers student-centred information, advice and guidance on the University's academic regulations, policies and procedures, while Student Services provides appropriate support for students with disabilities, specific learning difficulties, long-term illness and mental health challenges. The Students' Union, and student activities, clubs and societies, provide opportunities for students to develop their non-academic life at the University, and support progression by enhancing students' sense of belonging.

experience, quality assurance and in shaping our academic provision and its governance are critical.

- 3.2.3 ***Fitness to Study Procedure (Appendix 3)***: this is applied post-enrolment as necessary, and is designed to support students facing challenges studying or participating in life at the University (applicants may also choose to self-declare a disability, specific learning difficulty, long-term illness or mental health challenge). Wherever possible action is taken to identify the issues involved and support available to the student which may help them to overcome those difficulties.
- 3.2.4 ***Fitness to Practice Procedure (Appendix 4)***: this is concerned with ensuring students have the skills, knowledge and character to carry out their profession safely and effectively. Where a student's professional behaviour falls below expected standards and/or where their health raises a serious or persistent concern, wherever possible, action will be taken to identify the issues involved and to identify support available to the student which may help them to overcome those difficulties.
- 3.2.5 ***Early Identification of At-Risk Students and Support of Weak Students Protocol (Appendix 5)***: this ensures such students are identified early and supported appropriately.
- 3.2.6 ***Personal Academic Tutor Policy (Appendix 6)***: this is designed to encourage student transition into higher education and for the duration of study, building confidence, aspiration and resilience through engagement and response, and optimising engagement, retention and progression.
- 3.2.7 ***Reasonable Adjustments (Accommodations) Procedure (Appendix 7)***: this aims to remove or reduce a disadvantage related to a student's disability, specific learning difficulty or long-term condition, such as revision of a learning space or provision of assistive technology;
- 3.2.8 ***Impaired Performance Procedure (Appendix 8)***: this ensures no academic detriment for students who experience a temporary/short-term unexpected or significant disruption to their ability to study and/or be assessed;
- 3.2.9 ***Student Attendance Policy (Appendix 9)***: this makes clear expectations of attendance and participation for students to benefit fully from their university experience and details an incremental system of absence flagging and other measures in cases of poor attendance.
- 3.2.10 ***Bullying and Harassment Summary and Policy (Appendix 10)***: this is in place to ensure the University is a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. Bullying and harassment are defined in the policy as unacceptable behaviours that will not be tolerated on campus, and reports are taken seriously and investigated promptly.

## 4. The Annual Quality Assurance and Enhancement Cycle

The University's Annual Quality Assurance and Enhancement Cycle is laid out in the Academic Calendar and in documentation of the annual flow of business through Faculty and University committees. It encompasses the following institutional processes and practices:

### 4.1 Annual Programme Review

- 4.1.1 The Annual Programme Review (APR) is a comprehensive and mandatory process for all programmes, providing a cyclical method of quality assurance, improvement and enhancement, and enabling analysis, reflection, identification of trends, good practice and issues arising. The APR dataset comprises reliable and longitudinal statistical information, and the APR's scrutiny, report and response cycle covers the following key programme areas:
- student recruitment (including entry qualifications and English Language proficiency);
  - student progression and achievement (attendance and engagement, 'at risk' support and the efficacy of re-sit opportunities);
  - teaching, learning and assessment (award classification distribution, feedback quality and physical/digital learning resources);
  - staffing (qualification and expertise, professional development and workload).
- 4.1.2 APR action plans, actions taken and progress made are considered at both mid-year and at the end of the annual process, with actions noted as completed and/or outstanding issues continued over into the next academic period.
- 4.1.3 APR data and documentation also enable meaningful dialogue with and response to External Examiners and UK validating partners on issues they have identified as requiring improvement or enhancement.

## 5. Periodic review of UK validated programmes

- 5.1 The periodic review process applies to programmes validated by one of our UK validating partners, and is designed to assure quality and standards, and enhance provision.
- 5.2 The periodic review cycle of our UK validating partners is usually five years and is aligned with the Egyptian Supreme Council of Universities approval cycle.
- 5.3 Programme data and documents for periodic reviews include: information on the academic rationale; alignment with institutional strategic direction; market appeal and recruitment; engagement with regulatory bodies and external expertise; programme structure and management; teaching, learning and assessment strategies; career preparation and graduate opportunities; student support and guidance; learning resources; and student engagement.
- 5.4 The UK validating partners' periodic review processes enhance provision and ensure a supportive and effective learning environment is maintained by providing externalised 'critical friend' input to the programme team.
- 5.5 At the end of a satisfactory periodic review cycle, with iteration as necessary, the UK validating partner provides the University with a revalidation certificate, thus closing the cycle and confirming that the academic standards of the programme is consistent with FHEQ or SCQF (for BUE's Nursing faculty) and the learning and teaching experience of students aligns with the UK's OfS Conditions of Registration.

## 6. Supreme Council of Universities' accreditation cycle

- 6.1 The Supreme Council of Universities' re-accreditation and major change interval is typically four to five years (according to the sectoral guidelines), following the first graduating cohort.
- 6.2 The annual Programme/Module Changes cycle takes place annually in Semester 2, with *permissible* changes approved by the University Teaching and Learning Committee before sign-off by University Council and submission to the Supreme Council of Universities.
- 6.3 Proposed minor and/or major changes are categorised in alignment with relevant Supreme Council of Universities and NAQAAE frameworks, re-accreditation cycles and discipline-specific sectorial recommendations prior to submission. These Egyptian frameworks are applicable to all programmes, whether UK validated or not.
- 6.4 The Office of the Provost provides detailed guidance and mapping matrices, and requires that all proposed revisions to module/programme specifications undergo careful scrutiny, external bench-marking, and consultation with staff, students and the UK validating partner (if any) to ensure structural coherence and continuous improvement.
- 6.5 Minor changes, *permissible annually on approval*, include:
  - additions to indicative module content.
  - additions to a module's reference/reading list.
- 6.6 Major change proposals, *permissible only upon graduation of the first cohort, with major changes subsequently not permitted annually but rather at Supreme Council of Universities/NAQAAE re-accreditation*, include:
  - revisions to programme or module Learning Outcomes;
  - changes to programme structure through creation of new modules or amendments to existing modules;
  - changes to sequencing of module delivery either within a study year or between levels;
  - introduction of a different type of assessment or assessment strategy;
  - changes to the faculty or programme by-laws;
- 6.7 Proposed major changes are scheduled with regard for the UK validating partner's revalidation cycle, framework and requirements.

## 7. Quality assurance and approval of new programme proposals

- 7.1 Proposals for new programmes are subject to detailed and deliberative evaluation, benchmarking, alignment with national and international standards, including compliance with the legal and regulatory requirements of the Supreme Council of Universities, NAQAAE and the UK validating partner's requirements as appropriate.
- 7.2 ***New programme proposals*** are expected to demonstrate academic rigour, relevance to industry and professional needs, potential for student success and clear routes to employment, and evidence of market share market share in relation to competitors

**(Appendix 11).** This aims to ensure programmes remain relevant, impactful, and responsive to the dynamic needs of students, society, and the global academic community.

- 7.3 Where programmes are closed and ‘taught out’, care is taken by programme teams of students’ educational and pastoral experience.

## 8. External Examiners

- 8.1 External contribution to quality assurance and enhancement is a significant and valued part of how the University ensures and evidences the high standard of its education provision, embedding fair and consistently operated teaching and assessment practices and aligning with the requirements of both the UK and Egyptian higher education sectors.
- 8.2 The core role of External Examiners is to ensure that academic standards set for programmes are appropriate for the awards, or award elements, and are compliant with the requirements of the Egyptian regulatory and quality authorities (as set out by the Supreme Council of Universities and NAQAAE);
- 8.3 for UK validated provision, comparable to UK standards (by reference to UK subject benchmarks, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, institutional programme specifications, and other relevant information).
- 8.4 For Egyptian track programmes, External Examiners are appointed by the Office of the Provost. For UK validated programmes, they are appointed by the relevant UK validating partner.
- 8.5 External Examiners review and approve all draft examination papers and assignment briefs, model answers and marking schemes.
- 8.6 They are provided with an agreed sample of assessed student work across a range of results, reaching a judgement on the standards and consistency of internal marking, and providing general advice on programme content, academic standards, balance and structure, degree schemes and assessment processes.
- 8.7 As full members of Programme Examination Boards, External Examiners are actively involved in consideration of module marks and the award of credit and/or awards.
- 8.8 Programme teams respond to External Examiners’ reports on issues identified as requiring improvement or enhancement through ongoing dialogue, written responses to annual reports, and in the relevant section of the Annual Programme Review documents.

## 9. Teaching and Learning

- 9.1 ***The Teaching, Learning and Student Experience sub-Strategy 2023-28 (Appendix 12)*** is designed to ensure the University’s students each receive an excellent education and have an outstanding student experience.
- 9.2 Its mission to “ensure continued development of an empowered and engaged community of lifelong learners and well-rounded citizens, with outstanding knowledge, skills and abilities that support them throughout their careers” is underpinned by following four core teaching and learning principles:
- **active:** students actively engage in teaching and learning activities

- **applied:** problems and activities provide a stimulus in a 'learning by doing' culture
- **social:** students interact regularly with staff and peers
- **inclusive:** teaching and learning is designed to be inclusive and accessible to all.

- 9.3 High-calibre teaching and teaching support staff are appointed in accordance with the University's Staff-Student Ratios (SSRs informed by Supreme Council of Universities' expectations of teaching responsibilities), workload models, and qualification and skills expectations of the Supreme Council of Universities and the UK validating partners.
- 9.4 The annual recruitment and selection process is supplemented by recruitment and selection activities throughout the year based on the changing needs of the University.
- 9.5 The University assures the effectiveness of its teaching staff through rigorous selection, annual personal and professional objective setting, with ongoing and end of year performance review, and student feedback via anonymized module evaluation and through Faculty Staff Student Liaison Committees.
- 9.6 Teaching staff (Lecturers, Assistant Lecturers, Associate Professors and Professors) are focused on the quality, relevance and impact of students' learning experiences, and engage their students in active practice-based and professionalised learning that includes work-related activities (internships, shadowing and placements, collaborations with community or charitable sectors), engagement with overseas study and/or partnership projects online, extra-curricular social events, and study trips to regional institutions, etc.
- 9.7 Teaching Assistants (including Assistant Lecturers and Demonstrators) provide support to Module Leaders in the delivery and assessment of their modules. These staff are expected to pursue their postgraduate studies leading to a doctorate, which in turn enables them to embark on an academic teaching and research career.
- 9.8 Professional services staff, including those in Academic Services, Student Services and the Library, play crucial roles in guiding students throughout their academic journey, providing collective and personalised assistance, and facilitating their overall development.
- 9.9 All levels of academic staff are inducted on appointment to ensure that they are familiar with the University and the Faculty's policies, processes and practices; developed through a CPD programme that includes student-centred approaches to teaching, peer observation, technology-enhanced learning and reflective practice; and provided with academic development sessions co-delivered with UK validating partner Link Tutors.
- 9.10 Explicit support for applications for fellowship certification from Advance HE has ramped up with the University's International Membership of Advance HE from late 2023, enabling establishment of a powerful community of practice through mentoring and sharing of good practice.
- 9.11 The University's annual Teaching and Learning Symposium provides opportunity to consider innovations and challenges in higher education and celebrate exceptional student-centred learning and support.
- 9.12 Programmed teaching time, contact time, office hours, independent unsupervised preparation and study time (combined as 'notional learning time') are explained, qualified and quantified to students.
- 9.13 At all levels of study, including the transitional Preparatory Year, the University's expectations of active participation, personal responsibility for learning, and incremental

development of learner autonomy is reiterated, and reflected in structural scaffolding of academic programmes to enable satisfactory progression and achievement.

- 9.14 The University provides a comprehensive range of general and discipline-specific learning resources, specialist facilities and equipment, and digital learning platforms to support students' academic endeavours. Physical learning environments, including classrooms, lecture theatres, laboratories, and study spaces, are equipped with adaptive technologies and appropriate furnishings to accommodate students with diverse abilities and learning preferences. Social learning spaces, such as the Student Hub, student lounges, Library study group spaces, and online forums, promote a sense of community and collaboration among students from diverse backgrounds.
- 9.15 Although the Supreme Council of Universities does not permit online programmes *per se*, a range of virtual and blended teaching activities have been integrated in the e-Learning platform where useful to students. An *Online Events Codes of Conduct* has been developed to support online safety and provide guidance on appropriate online behaviour (*Appendix 13*).

## 10. Assessment

- 10.1 The purpose of assessment is to measure students' learning, skills and understanding.
- 10.2 Formative assessment and feedback helps students to reflect on their learning, and to recognise and enhance their achievement. Summative assessment enables students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the objectives of their programme and achieved the required standard.
- 10.3 The University's ***Undergraduate and Postgraduate Academic Regulations (Appendix 14 and 15 respectively)*** are aligned with the regulatory framework of Egypt, as stipulated by the Egyptian Supreme Council of Universities and the Ministry of Higher Education.
- 10.4 These regulations provide comprehensive detail of the principles and practices of assessment at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, which include information on moderation, treatment of borderline marks, progression and trailing modules, compensation, re-assessment, assessment of practice placements, the process for late submission, the content of examination papers, and examination scheduling, and are supplemented by the University's ***Design and Review of Examinations Guidance (Appendix 16)***.
- 10.5 The University's ***Examination Protocol (Appendix 17)*** lays out the rules for pre-examination processes, preparation of the examination schedule, the examination period and invigilation, exam incident procedures, and includes the ***Students' Code of Conduct in Examination Halls (Appendix 18)***.
- 10.6 Student performance is considered in two stages, initially on a module-by-module basis at the Module Examination Board, and subsequently by considering the overall student performance for each academic session at the Programme Examination Board.
- 10.7 Responsibilities, membership, and quoracy of Module/Programme Examination Boards is detailed in the Academic Regulations. Programme Exam Boards are typically co-chaired by Deans and the senior representative of the UKVP as appropriate. External Examiners are members and provide additional external assurance that assessment

regulations are fair and consistently applied in the classification of awards.

- 10.8 Successful completion of programmes validated by one of the University's UK validating partners, in accordance with the relevant UK and Egyptian award regulations, are granted a dual degree, with two award classifications and two award certificates and transcripts.
- 10.9 UK awards and classifications are calculated according to UK validating partner requirements, which issues that certificate and transcript.
- 10.10 Egyptian track awards and classifications are determined according to the relevant regulations, and the certificate and transcript are issued by the University.

## 11. Academic Misconduct Procedure

- 11.1 ***The Academic Misconduct Procedure (Appendix 19)*** applies to every student enrolled and registered with the University.
- 11.2 In Egypt, Academic Misconduct is subject to national law and Supreme Council of Universities regulation. The procedure provides a definition of university misconduct (academic and non-academic), the former covering cheating and/or inappropriate behaviour during examinations, <https://www.bue.edu.eg/academic-services/academic-regulations-bue> gaining assessment advantage by unfair means, fabrication or falsification of data, contract cheating, plagiarism, and unauthorised, undeclared or otherwise inappropriate use of Generative Artificial Intelligence tools where this is explicitly disallowed.
- 11.3 Students are coached on academic integrity, both from an avoidance of penalty and fairness perspective, and the University provides an online Coursework Submission and Statement of Academic Honesty form for all assessment submissions.
- 11.4 The procedure details investigation of allegations of academic misconduct, membership and responsibilities of the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel, the penalties for Academic Misconduct, and the route to Appeal against the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel outcome.
- 11.5 The University's Legal Department may decide to refer student(s) demonstrating repeated academic misconduct offences and/or making unsubstantiated allegations of bias to the Faculty's Disciplinary Committee, chaired by the Dean (this is the process for all Disciplinary Committee referrals).

## 12. Academic Appeal Procedure

- 12.1 ***The Academic Appeal Procedure (Appendix 20)*** applies to every student enrolled and registered with the University. The University's Academic Appeal procedure permits students to request a review of an academic decision, including a decision made by a Programme Examination Board, Impaired Performance Panel or Academic Misconduct Panel.
- 12.2 The Academic Appeal Procedure includes details of the grounds for appeal, timescales and deadlines, the requirement for clear and appropriate evidence, and for new evidence in the case of an appeal against a decision made by the Impaired Performance or Academic Misconduct Panel.

- 12.3 The Academic Appeals Procedures also defines the membership and responsibilities of the Academic Appeal Review Panel and University Committee, and the range of possible outcomes.

## 13. Student Complaints

- 13.1 **The Student Complaints Procedure (Appendix 21)** allows students to express dissatisfaction about the University's action, inaction or standards of academic, administrative or other service.
- 13.2 The procedure is clear and fair, with detailed timelines through which matters are dealt with efficiently, and any actions expedited.
- 13.3 The principle of 'no detriment' applies where appropriate, as we recognise the student has a right to legitimate and evidenced investigation, mitigation, appeal or complaint. The same principle ensures that illegitimate, duplicitous or vexatious use of the University's policies and procedures by students may become the subject of disciplinary investigation.

## 14. Appendices

1. The Student Charter (Appendix 1)
2. The Student Representation Policy (Appendix 2)
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