



Haigazian University

Quality Assurance Handbook

2026

Introduction

As the University's primary reference for institutional standards and effectiveness, this Policy Handbook establishes a comprehensive quality assurance framework for Haigazian University (HU) to ensure excellence, accountability, and continuous improvement across academic and administrative functions, in alignment with the University's mission, core values, and local cultural context. It promotes evidence-informed decision-making through the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), using defined indicators (e.g., graduate employability and research productivity) to support monitoring, improvement, as well as systematic and rigorous documentation of quality-related processes and outcomes.

The Handbook covers core areas including cyclical program review and Assurance of Learning (AoL), responsible and ethical integration of AI and digital literacy through faculty and staff development, meaningful student participation in governance, and financial sustainability measures that protect accessibility and equity. It also establishes clear criteria and review cycles to ensure quality and accountability in academic, research, and community partnerships.

Informed by internationally recognized quality assurance principles and tailored to HU's institutional realities, the Handbook also provides guidance when specific situations are not explicitly addressed. In such cases, the closest applicable policy shall be applied, and the outcomes and evidence generated shall be used to refine the Handbook over time, ensuring continued relevance, clarity, and effectiveness.

It is important to note that a comprehensive QA Handbook is typically built as an integrated architecture of multiple components (e.g., Definitions and shared terminology, domain policy statements, governance/decision rights, supporting procedures and tools) so that it can be both complete and operational. Because quality assurance must fit an institution's context and is not implemented in a single "one-size-fits-all" way, the final set of components and how they are arranged should be determined by the University's senior administration in line with HU's mission and governance model.

Accordingly, this present working document is intentionally limited to policy statements classified by institutional domains. To make the Handbook operational, one of the most critical additions is a Governance and Roles with Decision Rights section that specifies: who owns which policy areas (Board/President, Academic Affairs, Deans, committees, QAU), who approves, who implements, who monitors, and who can grant exceptions—because robust academic governance and clear delegations are widely treated as foundational to credible quality assurance and self-assurance. In parallel, the Handbook should be supported by SOPs that translate policy commitments into step-by-step processes (timelines, responsible parties, required records/evidence), enabling consistent implementation and auditable follow-through

1. Purpose and Scope

- **1.1** These Quality Assurance (QA) Policies establish the principles, structures, and processes through which Haigazian University (HU) assures and continuously enhances the quality of its academic and administrative activities.
- **1.2** The policies apply to all academic programs, support services, research activities, and administrative units of the University, and guide internal QA processes as well as interactions with national regulatory ⁽¹⁾ and external ⁽²⁾ quality assurance bodies.
- **1.3** The Quality Assurance system upholds principles of accountability and continuous enhancement, ensuring HU's compliance with national regulations and alignment with pertinent international higher education standards, thereby fostering a sustained culture of quality improvement.

2. Mission, Vision, and Institutional Purposes

- **2.1** HU's mission and vision shall guide all academic and administrative policies, strategic priorities, and resource allocations.
- **2.2** The mission and vision shall be formally reviewed at least every five (5) years or following major evaluation cycles, whichever occurs first.
- **2.3** Mission and vision reviews shall be participatory and evidence-informed, involving all relevant and appropriate stakeholders ⁽³⁾
- **2.4** Measurable indicators shall be used to assess alignment between the mission and institutional performance, provided these indicators are feasible to measure and supported by accessible, reliable data—including, but not limited to, graduate employability, research productivity, community engagement, and student success.
- **2.5** All policies and procedures must embody HU's commitment to educational excellence, respect for diversity, interfaith dialogue, and the recognition and thoughtful integration of local cultural heritage, with sensitivity to its complexity and diverse interpretations.

⁽¹⁾ The main national regulatory oversight in Lebanon comes from MEHE's DGHE with support from advisory councils and committees.

⁽²⁾ External quality assurance (including accreditation) may be pursued at the discretion of the University's Board of Trustees and President, encompassing both formal mandatory accreditations and voluntary additional quality audits or certifications

⁽³⁾ Stakeholders involve the Board of Trustees, President, the Cabinet, Academic Units (chairs, coordinators, and faculty), Staff, Students, Alumni, and relevant Community Representatives

3. Governance and Quality Assurance System

3.1 Institutional Governance

- **3.1.1** The University maintains a well-defined, ethical, and codified governance structure that clearly delineates the roles, responsibilities, and jurisdictions of the Board of Trustees, the President, senior administrative officials, academic units, faculty members, staff, and student representatives.
- **3.1.2** Mechanisms for conflict resolution and public accountability shall be integrated into governance structures and communicated to all stakeholders.
- **3.1.3** Decision-making processes shall be: (a) Conducted in accordance with HU's vision, mission, values, and governance structure; and (b) Transparent, documented, and encouraging participatory engagement with appropriate stakeholders, while respecting institutional priorities.
- **3.1.4** A formal governance review shall be conducted at least every three (3) years, incorporating appropriate stakeholder feedback to improve effectiveness and accountability.

3.2 Quality Assurance Unit (QAU)

- **3.2.1** The Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) is established as a permanent, non-academic unit reporting directly to HU's President to ensure institutional autonomy and authority. The President appoints the QAU Coordinator and its members.
- **3.2.2** The QAU serves as the central coordinating body for internal quality assurance and continuous improvement university-wide. Its mandate is to uphold institutional accountability and promote a pervasive culture of quality enhancement.
- **3.2.3** Under the President's supervision, the QAU shall: (a) Develop and oversee the implementation of institutional QA policies and procedures; (b) Coordinate the collection, analysis, and reporting of institutional data, in collaboration with relevant academic and administrative units (including the use of systems like LOGOS); (c) Support and facilitate program-level and institutional self-assessment and periodic reviews; and (d) Provide guidance, capacity-building, and training for QA-related activities to faculty and staff, in alignment with Section 9.2.4.
- **3.2.4** The QAU shall produce an annual Institutional Quality Report (including an executive summary of key institutional findings), consolidating major audit/evaluation results, identified risks, prioritized improvement actions, and progress updates. The Report shall be submitted to the President and, through the President, to the Board of Trustees, to ensure a consistent feedback loop at the executive and governance levels.

4. Strategic Planning, Evaluation, and Information Management

4.1 Strategic Planning

- **4.1.1** The University shall maintain a strategic plan articulating short- and long-term objectives, measurable outcomes, and key performance indicators (KPIs).

- **4.1.2** Strategic planning shall be evidence-informed, participatory, and aligned with the mission, national higher education policy, and relevant international standards.
- **4.1.3** The strategic plan shall be reviewed and updated typically every five years to respond to evolving internal and external contexts.

4.2 Evaluation and Performance Monitoring

- **4.2.1** Institutional data shall be systematically collected, verified, and analyzed within a shared responsibility framework: (a) operational data owners/units ensure accuracy, completeness, and timely submission of data within their scope; and (b) the QAU coordinates institutional-level analysis, interpretation, and reporting with relevant departments and administrative units.
- **4.2.2** KPIs and dashboards derived from data management and related information systems shall monitor institutional performance in teaching, research, community engagement, and student services.
- **4.2.3** Findings from internal and external evaluations shall be shared with relevant units to ensure transparency and institutional learning and used to develop and monitor actionable improvement plans, thus closing the feedback loop.
- **4.2.4** Internal quality audits shall typically be conducted annually, with results informing strategic and operational decisions.

4.3 Information and Data Systems

- **4.3.1** Quality-related data shall be maintained in secure and reliable systems (e.g., LOGOS, DMS, and others), with clear responsibilities for data entry, verification, reporting, and sharing.
- **4.3.2** Data analytics may be utilized, in line with ethical and data-protection standards, to detect early risks (e.g., student attrition, program underperformance) and support predictive and preventive quality improvement.
- **4.3.3** Data management shall comply with applicable regulations on privacy, confidentiality, and information security.

5. Academic Programs and Standards

5.1 Program Design and Approval

- **5.1.1** All academic programs must: (a) Align with the University's mission and strategic plan and priorities; (b) Comply with the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), Directorate General of Higher Education (DGHE), and relevant accreditation bodies, as applicable; and (c) Demonstrate responsiveness to labor market needs, societal priorities, and locally grounded principles of sustainability that reflect the University's cultural legacy, community values, as well as local and regional ecological context.
- **5.1.2** Each program shall define: (a) Program-level learning outcomes consistent with national and international academic standards, degree benchmarks, and qualification frameworks; (b) An Assurance

of Learning (AoL) plan detailing how student learning outcomes will be achieved, measured, monitored, and improved; and (c) Standardized (4) assessment rubrics or criteria for key program evaluations.

- **5.1.3** Experiential, inquiry-based, practice-oriented, and innovative learning opportunities—including internships, projects, service learning, competitions, and AI-enhanced or digital/blended learning modalities—shall be embedded across curricula where appropriate.

5.2 Program Monitoring and Periodic Review

- **5.2.1** All programs shall undergo ongoing monitoring and cyclical review every five years, with review intensity informed by risk assessments and performance indicators.
- **5.2.2** Program reviews shall include: (a) A program-level Self-Assessment Report (SAR) documenting strengths, areas for improvement, and actionable plans; (b) Evidence on student achievement, graduate employability, research output (where applicable), and stakeholder feedback; (c) Benchmarking against relevant national and international frameworks; and (d) Active involvement of student representatives to provide constructive feedback and ensure programs meet learner needs.
- **5.2.3** External reviewers and/or examiners shall participate in periodic program reviews. The format and specific context of the review and the reviewers' roles, selection criteria, and terms of reference shall be clearly defined and documented by the QAU, ensuring independence, objectivity, and demonstrable benefit to University programs.
- **5.2.4** Recommendations from program reviews shall lead to concrete, time-bound improvement plans, monitored by the program faculty and QAU, with clear mechanisms for accountability and follow-up. Consequences and escalation for non-compliance shall be handled through the institutional corrective action process (see Section 11.4).

5.3 Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

- **5.3.1** Teaching and learning shall be diverse, respecting students' differences, with emphasis on being student-centered and evidence-informed. This approach integrates innovative pedagogies in line with the program design.
- **5.3.2** Every course syllabus must include the following elements: (a) Clearly articulated course learning outcomes aligned with the relevant program and emphasis learning outcomes; (b) Assessment methods, instruments, and criteria; (c) Course topics, structured for students' achievement of learning outcomes; (d) Instructional models and learning experiences, designed for students' achievement of learning outcomes; (e) Course-specific policies, schemes, and expectations; and (f) Assessment moderation procedures, including (as applicable) peer review of major assessments, calibration of grading, and/or grade moderation processes to support fairness, consistency, and reliability.
- **5.3.3** Assessment of students shall adhere to the following principles: (a) Be valid, reliable, fair, and equitable, respecting the considerations of academic integrity; (b) Support learning through timely, constructive feedback; and (c) Ensure that all assessment-related communication to students and relevant stakeholders is transparent and effective.

- **5.3.4** Course evaluations shall be administered systematically. Aggregated findings shall be: (a) Discussed at the department/program level; (b) Used to design and monitor action plans for improvement; and (c) A key piece of evidence required for the Program-level Self-Assessment Report (SAR) during the cyclical program review.
- **5.3.5** The University shall ensure ongoing support for teaching quality through (a) Peer-Supported Activities: Utilizing peer observation, mentoring schemes, and other peer-supported activities to foster reflective practice among faculty; and (b) Targeted Training: Providing ongoing faculty training in pedagogical innovation and student-centered teaching, and effective assessment.
- **5.3.6** Faculty members shall participate in continuous professional development (CPD) aligned with teaching quality, assessment, student support, and responsible technology integration. The QAU, in coordination with relevant units, shall monitor CPD participation, completion, and evidence of impact on teaching and learning quality.
- **5.3.7** Faculty training in AI literacy and digital pedagogy shall be mandatory for effective and responsible integration of technology in teaching and assessment. The QAU shall define implementation timelines and minimum expectations in coordination with academic units, and monitor completion through documented records.

6. Student Admission, Experience, and Support

6.1 Admission and Diversity

- **6.1.1** Admissions and student support policies shall promote diversity, inclusivity, and intercultural and interfaith dialogue, consistent with the University's mission and cultural values.
- **6.1.2** Transparent admission criteria and procedures shall be published and applied consistently across all programs.

6.2 Student Voice and Participation

- **6.2.1** Student representation on all non-confidential major councils and institutional standing committees shall be supported to ensure meaningful student participation in institutional decision-making.
- **6.2.2** Student feedback mechanisms—including surveys, focus groups, and consultative forums—shall be used to inform decision-making and quality improvement at course, program, and institutional levels.
- **6.2.3** Student satisfaction surveys shall be administered at least annually. Results shall be: (a) Reported internally through appropriate channels; (b) Used to develop and monitor improvement plans; and (c) Integrated into institutional dashboards where relevant.

6.3 Student Support and Progression

- **6.3.1** Academic advising (focused on course selection, program requirements, and progression planning) shall operate within a coordinated framework to support student progression toward timely graduation.

- **6.3.2** Counseling, mental health, and career services shall operate within a coordinated framework to support student employability and overall well-being. Where appropriate, the University shall establish documented referral pathways and/or service agreements with licensed external professionals and providers to strengthen mental health and wellness support, particularly for specialized needs
- **6.3.3** Support services shall extend to international and exchange students (incoming and outgoing), including (as applicable) orientation, academic advising, course registration and progression support, credit recognition/transfer guidance, and timely communication of relevant academic, administrative, and legal requirements.
- **6.3.4** The University shall integrate digital and virtual exchange programs into the curriculum where feasible. This integration aims to promote intercultural learning and dialogue, making international experiences accessible and inclusive for all students, independent of physical mobility.
- **6.3.5** Student facilities, libraries, laboratories, and e-learning platforms shall: (a) Meet appropriate quality and safety standards; and (b) Comply with recognized international accessibility standards.

6.4 Grievances and Appeals

- **6.4.1** Student grievances (academic and non-academic) shall be handled through documented procedures that specify steps, responsible offices, and timelines.
- **6.4.2** Students shall be informed of grievance and appeal procedures at admission and through accessible communication channels, reinforcing transparency and fairness.

7. Research, Innovation, and Ethical Conduct

7.1 Regulatory and Ethical Compliance

- **7.1.1** All research activities must comply with national regulations, including the National Council for Scientific Research (CNRS)⁽⁴⁾ requirements, with institutional ethical standards, and the University's Research Handbook.
- **7.1.2** The University Research Board (URB) shall have a clearly defined composition, responsibilities, and review processes, including criteria for ethical approval and monitoring of research activities.
- **7.1.3** Faculty and students shall receive regular training in: (a) Research integrity, responsible conduct of research, and avoidance of misconduct; and (b) AI ethics and responsible use of digital tools in research.

7.2 Performance, Collaboration, and Impact

- **7.2.1** Research performance shall be monitored annually using KPIs such as publications, research grants, patents, and creative outputs, as applicable.
- **7.2.2** The University shall promote interdisciplinary and collaborative research, and various forms of action research, including student participation in research projects and innovation initiatives.
- **7.2.3** Research impact shall be assessed with reference to the following dimensions: (a) Societal contribution and relevance; (b) Visibility and recognition at national, regional, and international levels; and (c) Innovation and knowledge transfer.

⁽⁴⁾ The National Council for Scientific Research in Lebanon (CNRS-L) is the country's highest public institution dedicated to scientific research and policy. It plays a central role in shaping Lebanon's research agenda, funding academic projects, and managing specialized national research centers

8. Partnerships and Community Mission

8.1 Partnerships and Collaboration

- **8.1.1** All local and cross-border partnerships – Academic, Research & Innovation, and Community & Employability – shall be established based on documented approval processes and clear strategic criteria that assess mutual benefit, alignment with the University's mission, and the partner's caliber and financial viability.
- **8.1.2** HU shall maintain structured partnership review cycles with clear criteria to evaluate the effectiveness, quality, and mutual benefit of collaborations.

8.2 Community and Social Mission

- **8.2.1** Community engagement, service learning, and outreach programs shall be integrated into institutional planning and program design where relevant, contributing to societal development and the University's social mission.

9. Recruitment, Promotion, and Performance Review

9.1 Staff HR Policies and Faculty Affairs Fairness

- **9.1.1** Human Resources (HR) policies shall ensure equity, fairness, transparency, and consistency in staff recruitment, appointment, role classification, workload allocation, performance management, and grievance handling.
- **9.1.2** Faculty recruitment, appointment, promotion, workload, and grievance procedures shall be governed through the University's academic governance and leadership (e.g., Deans and relevant faculty committees as applicable), clearly documented in official faculty-related documents, reviewed regularly, and aligned with institutional values, equity commitments, and national regulations.

9.2 Performance and Development

- **9.2.1** Annual performance evaluations shall be conducted using predefined and communicated criteria that include contributions to quality enhancement: (a) faculty evaluations led by Deans/academic leadership structures and considering teaching, research, and service; and (b) staff evaluations led by HR and considering role performance, service delivery, and institutional contributions.
- **9.2.2** HR development plans for staff shall include: (a) succession planning and leadership development; (b) talent retention strategies; and (c) structured opportunities for professional growth.
- **9.2.3** Professional development programs for staff shall: (a) enhance AI and digital literacy; and (b) promote QA awareness and participation in quality-related activities.

- **9.2.4** Regular training sessions and communication campaigns shall be conducted to ensure staff and faculty awareness of QA policies, procedures, and their roles within the quality culture, coordinated by the QAU with: (a) HR for staff, and (b) Deans/academic leadership structures for faculty.

10. Funding and Financial Sustainability

10.1 Sustainability and Mission Alignment

- **10.1.1** The University shall pursue financial sustainability while safeguarding its mission, academic standards, and unwavering commitment to accessibility.
- **10.1.2** Financial planning and resource management, including the setting and use of tuition and fee revenues, shall explicitly support the ability to recruit and retain high-caliber faculty and staff through competitive compensation, benefits, and support for their professional growth

10.2 Financial Stewardship and Transparency

- **10.2.1** Financial data and budgetary information relevant to governance and accountability shall be reported transparently to the Board of Trustees and relevant internal stakeholders.

10.3 Strategic Investment

- **10.3.1** The Strategic University Fund shall prioritize investments in areas directly supporting the academic mission and quality enhancement: (a) Professional development for faculty and staff (including support for research, conferences, and advanced training); (b) Innovative teaching and learning initiatives; (c) Educational technologies and digital infrastructure; and (d) Facilities that support research, student services, and community engagement.

10.4 Accessibility and Equity

- **10.4.1** Cost-sharing models—including public–private partnerships (PPPs), scholarships, and financial aid—shall operationalize the University’s commitments to accessibility and equity by reducing financial barriers for students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

10.5 Performance-Based Funding (PBF)

- **10.5.1** Where feasible and consistent with the University’s mission and commitment to accessibility, the University may implement Performance-Based Funding (PBF) or performance-informed resource allocation mechanisms tied to transparent indicators such as student success, employability, research productivity, and measurable quality enhancement outcomes.
- **10.5.2** Any PBF model shall include documented safeguards to mitigate unintended inequities across programs/units and shall be reviewed periodically to ensure alignment with institutional priorities and values.

11. Policy Implementation, Review, and Version Control

- **11.1** The QAU shall coordinate a biennial review of all QA policies, integrating internal evidence and feedback as well as relevant external developments and stakeholder input.
- **11.2** Findings from the annual Institutional Quality Report (see Section 3.2.4) shall be used to strengthen institutional learning and improvement planning. The QAU shall ensure that key institutional quality themes (from audits, evaluations, and major evidence sources) are shared through appropriate channels with University leadership and relevant academic units.
- **11.3** A tracking system, using well designated platforms shall record QA policy versions, revision dates, responsible owners, implementation milestones, progress status, and associated evidence.
- **11.4** Non-compliance with institutional QA policies and procedures shall result in time-bound corrective action plans with clear responsibilities and follow-up dates. Corrective actions shall be monitored by the President's Office, in coordination with the QAU and relevant units, with escalation pathways for repeated non-compliance.