

# **Sultan Qaboos University**



## **UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC REGULATIONS**

*Third Edition*

**2005**

FOREWORD BY  
H.E DR. SAUD BIN NASSER AL RIYAMI, PRESIDENT OF THE  
UNIVERSITY

Dear Students,

As we all know, progress and prosperity in today's modern communities are administered by rules and regulations, which aim to identify the rights and responsibilities for each individual in a particular community. Within the University Community, the rules and regulations are also very important for each individual so that they are aware of their rights and obligations. In Sultan Qaboos University, the education process is regulated by rules and provision in four major areas: admission, registration, grading and graduation regulations. Each and every student must read, acknowledge and understand the rules in order to know their rights and responsibilities for the duration of their study. This booklet contains a detailed explanation of the undergraduate academic regulations in Sultan Qaboos University. Reading and abiding by the rules is necessary to avoid any academic difficulties. The University will ensure the enforcement of these rules in a fair and consistent manner.

Dear Colleagues,

This booklet contains the Undergraduate Academic Regulations and is designed in a way to be useful and helpful in accomplishing your duties as lecturers and as academic advisors. We would like to emphasize that the regulations specified in this booklet should be followed. Also, you are required to guide the student toward the appropriate procedures to be followed with respect to academic affairs. Finally I would like to emphasize that all student and lecturers must very carefully read and understand the regulations.

Part Contents Page Introduction to Academic Regulations

**A: Admissions Regulations**

A1. Newly Admitted Students 4 A2. Visiting Students from Other Institutions 4 A3. External Studies 5 A4. Change of Admission (Transfer) 5 A5. Transfer Credit/Advanced Standing 6 A6. Credit Earned Through Challenge Examination 7

**B: Registration Regulations**

B1. Registration 8 B2. Course Load 9 B3. Credit and “Audit Status” 10 B4. Registration in a Major 13 B5. Drop/Add (Change of Registration) 13 B6. Attendance Policy 14 B7. Postponement of Study 15 B8. Withdrawal from the University 15 B9. Readmission After Withdrawal 17

## **C: Grading Regulations**

C1. Course Outlines 18 C2. Evaluation and Grading 19 C3. Grades (With Numeric Value) 20 C4. Grades (Without Numeric Value) 22 C5. Calculation of Grade Point Average (GPA) 24 C6. Progression Standards 25 C7. Repeated Courses 27 C8. Grade Changes 28 C9. Academic Achievement 28 C10. Final Examinations for Courses 29 C11. Academic Misconduct 36

## **D: Graduation Regulations**

D1. Degree Plans 38 D2. Requirements for Graduation 39 D3. Course Substitutions 40 D4. Changes to Degree Plans 40 D5. Duration of Studies 40 D6. Interruption of Studies 41 D7. Residency 41 D8. Classification of Degrees 41

## **Introduction to Academic Regulations**

The primary responsibility for applying these regulations rests with the Deans of Colleges and their delegates. Students are responsible for knowing the regulations and abiding by them. Should difficulties arise in applying these rules, students should consult their course instructor or academic advisors, and if necessary consult the Assistant Dean or the Dean of the College. Students must not appeal to other Offices before the previous steps are completed. The Deanship of Admissions and Registration will monitor the application of these regulations and take appropriate action.

Sultan Qaboos University follows a credit system whereby students progress towards graduation in their College/Major through earning a specific number of credits in each semester which will count towards the total number of credits required for graduation in their particular College. The credit system offers students the chance to pursue their university education in accordance with degree plans, which indicate the study requirements laid down by the University and College and detail the choice of elective courses specified for the Major. Under the credit system, students follow an academic program commensurate with their abilities and potential and responsive to their circumstances.

### **Semester Length**

Sultan Qaboos University follows a semester calendar, with a Fall and Spring semester each of fifteen weeks plus an examination period of two weeks and a Summer semester of seven weeks plus one week for examinations.

An academic Calendar of Events, published in advance of the academic year, will identify any adjustments necessary in light of moveable holidays.

The Summer semester makes available a *limited range of courses* which are either remedial in nature or are needed as pre-requisites or to graduate.

Extensions to any semester by a College are permitted only upon approval of the Academic Council, for reasons related to the degree requirements, and upon advance notification to students.

In some cases activity such as industrial training is scheduled between semesters and is required of all students. This activity must be identified with a course number on the transcript and be listed in the degree plan. All activity in which student performance is evaluated

by the University carries credit and grade.

## **Program of Study**

Before the start of each Academic Year, a *Degree Plan* for that year's intake identifying the courses (and options) required for each degree shall be submitted by the concerned College to the Deanship of Admissions and Registration.

The degree requirements for each incoming cohort will specify the courses, credits and other conditions for graduation. The sequence in which a student completes the studies is determined by official course pre-and co-requisites, by the level of the course, and by the timetable. Normally basic introductory courses and essential pre-requisites will be offered in both the Fall and Spring semesters.

*A typical program of study ( work plan) will be prepared for each degree and major outlining the normal pace of progress towards graduation.*

The courses offered each semester will reflect both the above outline and the actual courses required by students who are progressing more quickly or more slowly on the credit system.

## **Academic Advising**

Following admission to the University, each student shall be assigned an academic Advisor whose role is to:

- a) help the student discover his potential and capabilities
- b) verify the student's choice of courses each semester in accordance with Academic Regulations
- c) assist the student in exploring alternative paths to the degree  
if for any reason the normal pace of the degree is disrupted
- d) advise the student on other matters affecting his studies.

The Advisor must verify a student's proposed registration each semester and help develop a recovery plan for students on academic probation in consultation with the appropriate Assistant Dean. A student may be re-assigned to a new Advisor upon selection/change of Major or may have 2 Advisors in Majors such as Science Education.

## **Degree Verification**

A degree audit system will help the students monitor their progress against the degree requirements. Normally students are evaluated against the requirements in force for the year they were admitted. The Deanship of Admissions and Registration will be responsible for this process.

## **Part A**

### **Admission Regulations**

#### **A1. Newly Admitted Students**

Applications for admission in the undergraduate programs will be entertained after the announcement of the general school results for those applicants who fulfill the general admission requirements. Admission is limited to Omani students but a certain number of seats is available for students from brotherly and friendly countries.

It is possible to consider applicants who completed their general school certificates in the previous year and who have not pursued post school studies or as transfer candidates who have attended recognized international institutions. A limited number of places will be available for each group and selection will be on a competitive basis within each group. General school certificates results will be taken into account along with the results of any further study. A personal statement justifying the application will be required along with other supporting documents as deemed necessary. Transfer applicants may be granted credit for up to one half of the requirements of the program to which they are accepted

#### **A2. Visiting Students From Other Institutions**

Omani and non-Omani students may apply to take credit courses for completion of their degrees at other universities. The home institution must sponsor the candidate in writing and specify the courses to be taken.

Candidates must present an up-to-date transcript proving that they have an overall average equivalent to 2.00 or more on 4-point scale AND a semester average at least as high in their most recent courses. They should also provide proof that they have completed courses equivalent to our pre-requisites.

The minimum credit load should be 3. Housing, allowances or transportation are not provided.

Visiting students are not allowed to attend the summer semester. Omani students who are studying in their final year in other recognized institutions or overseas universities may be able to take some summer semester courses.

Registration may be restricted on the basis of spaces available, previous academic results, etc. All regular academic policies will apply to these "visiting" students.

### **A3. External Studies**

SQU degree candidates may be granted permission to take credit courses at other recognized institutions towards their degree requirements here. Prior to a student's departure the College, in coordination with the Deanship of Admissions and Registration, issues a letter identifying the exact courses and credits that can be taken and their role or equivalence in the degree plan. A maximum of 30 credits or 2 semesters of full time study may be transferred towards graduation in this manner. Approved credits passed with a grade equivalent to a "C" at SQU will be recognized, but the grades obtained will not be recorded or counted in the GPA. The student will be subjected to all the academic rules and regulations of the host institution and is responsible for any fees, travel costs, etc. associated with their studies away. Official Transcripts from the host institution will be required to complete the process.

### **A4. Change of Admission (Transfer)**

Students who were initially admitted to and are registered in a given College or Major program may apply for admission (transfer) to another College or to a different program within their College. *Students can transfer only once during their period of study.*

Admission to a new program of study is subject to certain conditions specified for that program. It is contingent upon available spaces and may not be allowed for some programs.

In order to be considered for transfer, students should have completed 5 courses and earned no less than 14 credits and be able to complete their new degree within the University time limits as detailed under D5: "Duration of Studies".

For completion of transfer requirements, students should consult the College specific requirements see Table 1. (Page 42)

The number of available places in each College will be announced annually during the Fall semester and should not be more than 5% of the number of students admitted in that year.

Normally students in the Intensive English program should not be transferred.

Normally students on academic Probation may not apply for admission (transfer) to another program unless they clear their probation status.

#### **A5. Transfer Credit / Advanced Standing from Recognized Institutions**

Transfer Credit (TC) is credit awarded in course(s) for which the applicant possesses post-secondary qualifications (such as successful completion of a college, university or recognized professional association course). It is awarded after assessment by the appropriate course HoD and course coordinators, it is deemed that the work covered is equivalent in content or objectives to the corresponding course(s) of study at Sultan Qaboos University. In order to be considered for Transfer Credit, the grade earned in the previous institution must be sufficient to ensure continuing progress here at Sultan Qaboos University; thus a minimum 'C' grade equivalent to 2 on a 4 points scale is required.

Credits awarded through this status are counted towards the degree but are not graded.

Transfer Credit is not awarded automatically. The course HoD will evaluate the relevant documentation and may wish to interview and/or test the applicant to validate the documentation.

If a student wishes to register in a course for which he/she has already received transfer credit in order to earn a grade in the course, the original 'TC' will remain valid until the formal withdrawal period ends, after which the grade earned will take precedence.

Advanced Standing applies to new applicants only. If the Transfer Credit assessment totals several courses and indicates an entry level greater than the first semester, the student will be given admission status of Advanced Standing. At Sultan Qaboos University the typical applicant with potential for this status would come from an institution such as the Higher Technical Colleges.

## **A6. Credit Earned Through Challenge Examination**

In a small number of cases, an applicant's academic and/or work history may suggest that he/she has the knowledge and/or skills equivalent to a prescribed course in his/her degree plan. In such cases a student may apply to take a Challenge Examination which is a comprehensive assessment covering all course components and objectives.

The privilege of taking a Challenge Examination must be based on documented academic work or work experience, or upon other demonstration that the requisite knowledge has been acquired. This may include an interview, an oral, or demonstration of practical skills. No supplemental privileges are allowed. A student who earns a grade below 'C' will not be awarded credit and must register in the course.

All grades, including "D" or "F" will be recorded though none will be included in calculating the GPA.

It should be noted that all courses do not necessarily lend themselves to this process.

Challenge examinations must be requested within the first year of study in the student's credit program.

### **English Language**

All incoming students enrolled in degree programs where English is the medium of instruction will be tested on their English language skills in a standardized proficiency examination. Any students who achieve a specified level on this proficiency examination will have the opportunity to take a Challenge Examination. Students who pass this Challenge Examination will be given credits and grades in the language skill courses covered by the examination, as appropriate. All other students will proceed with prescribed course work in language skills.

## **Part B**

### **Registration Regulations**

#### **B1. Registration**

Registration is the process by which a student selects courses according to the guidance of his/her advisor and formally enrolls in those courses. Information regarding the schedule, location and deadlines of the registration period and timetables shall be given to students and advisors in advance of the scheduled registration period.

Students who are out of phase cannot be guaranteed a conflict free schedule of courses in their degree plan.

Students may be prevented from registering in courses or programmes for lack of space, timetable conflicts, incomplete admissions, outstanding book loans or academic or disciplinary sanctions.

Additionally a student 's registration may be affected if:

- specific academic pre-requisites are not met. (Note: students are responsible for ensuring that they have fulfilled the published pre-requisites. Failure to observe this may result in that course registration being withdrawn. The guidance of the advisor should be heeded)
- textbooks have not been returned as required
- conditions based on past performance or disciplinary status have not been met.

Registration shall end on the last working day before classes begin. Late registration up to one week beyond that date shall be permitted only with the approval of the appropriate Dean.

Students registering late may find that available courses are limited. Students who wish to add or drop a course following initial registration should use the Drop/Add form to update their registration form. Drop/Add activity cannot take place before the start of the semester.

The University reserves the right to cancel registration in courses where there is insufficient enrolment. This minimum may vary by College/Department according to the Department's size.

Priority will be given for registration in individual courses where space is limited in the following order:

- students in their final year of study who need access to a required course
- students who need access to courses designated in their Major area of study
- students with the greatest number of credits earned towards the degree

Exceptions to any of these conditions may be made only in unusual individual circumstances approved by the Head of Department (HoD) and the appropriate Assistant Dean with the Deanship of Admissions and Registration.

Normally the duration of the processes for the summer semester shall be half that allowed for the regular semesters.

## **B2. Course Load**

In regular semesters, a student shall normally register in 4-6 courses (15 credits) concurrently or a maximum of 6 courses (18 credits) concurrently. The normal load in a summer semester should be 2 concurrent courses (maximum of 8 credits).

A student's course load status will be extended if the semester GPA on a full course load in the two preceding semesters was at least 3.00, or if the cumulative GPA is at least 3.00. Such a student may register in up to 18 credits.

Students on academic Probation shall be required to reduce their load to a maximum of 12 credits during a regular semester and 6 credits during the summer semester.

In regular semesters, students shall register for a minimum of 9 credits unless it is the student's final semester.

In the summer semester a student must register and maintain a course load of 2 courses (5-8 credits). A student on probation may not exceed 6 credits. A student in a position to graduate at the end of the summer may be exempted from the minimum course/credit level. Normally no student may take more than 8 credits in the summer.

### **B3. Credit and “Audit Status”**

Each course is identified by a unique alphanumeric code that is designated with a specific number of credits.

In some cases a student may have reason to attend classes but formally waive his/her right to evaluation and grading in the course. Such a student is described as having *Audit status* and may not participate in tests, assignments, etc. or in the final examination.

Because of the nature of the course, class size restrictions, space constraints, or possible legal restrictions, permission of the appropriate course HoD is required for registration with Audit status. Students should be aware that Audit status is a privilege, not a right. In most cases, practicals, fieldwork and internships do not lend themselves to the presence of auditors.

Audit and credit status must be declared at the time of registration. A student may not change from Audit to Credit, or Credit to Audit status after the Drop/Add period. A student must fulfill the attendance regulations in order for Audit status in a course to be recorded on his/her transcript.

Some courses are designated as having '0' credit. These courses are recorded on a student's transcript once attendance regulations are confirmed as having been fulfilled.

## **B3.1 Course Definitions**

### **Lecture**

Presentation of theoretical or conceptual material in a formal and generally non-interactive environment. Normally a lecture hour will require about 2 hours related research, reading and follow-up. A ratio of one contact hour to one credit is maintained.

### **Seminar**

Small group presentation of learning material where student research and presentation forms a major portion of course materials and activity. Normal ratio of contact to credit hours is 1:1.

### **Laboratory (Practical)**

Supervised, hands-on application of lecture material or acquisition of skills in a laboratory environment. Normally a ratio of 2 contact hours to 1 credit is maintained. In cases where warranted by the nature of the course material, a ratio of 3:1 or 4:1 may be designated by the HoD in conjunction with the Deanship of Admissions and Registration.

### **Field or Work Placement**

Supervised application of lecture material or acquisition of skills through placement in an existing work setting. The instructor provides overall direction and follow-up, day-to-day supervision is provided by the on-site employer or agency. Ratio of contact to credit hours is 3:1.

### **Tutorial**

Supervised small group interaction that includes problem solving and discussion sessions. Normal ratio of contact to credit hours is 2:1. (Optional work sessions with no credit do not carry a course code).

### **English Language Skill**

Acquisition of proficiency in English language. Ratio of contact to credit hours is 2:1.

## **Studio**

Supervised application of lecture material in a studio setting where students are encouraged to develop individual expression within prescribed areas of instruction. Ratio of contact to credit hours is 2:1.

## **Workshop**

Supervised application of simple machining and forming methods especially bench work and basic machine tools (for example, scribing, sawing, turning, drilling, milling, forging and casting). Ratio of contact to credit hours is 3:1.

## **Internship**

Extended period of time (minimum one semester) in which a student is assigned to a work setting and functions as a quasi-employee. Initial evaluation of performance is carried out by the host institution with the final assessment determined by the University. Short courses may be interspersed with on-site training. Ratio of hours to credits is determined by the department and should be approximately 3:1.

## **Combination Courses**

Presentation of lecture material with immediate application in the practical setting. Since this is presented within a unique course code, integration of lecture and practice is a major feature of the course organization. Ratio of credit to contact hours is determined by adding the ratios within the components. Lecture / Lab (Practical) / Lecture/Seminar / Lecture/Studio / Lecture/ Tutorial / Lecture / Seminar / Practical

#### **B4. Registration in a Major**

Most University degree plans have a choice of Major and / or specialization.

Once students register in such an area of specialization, they follow a particular sequence of major courses. A special average will be calculated on the courses within this area, which are designated as 'Departmental requirements'. This Major average must be maintained at a minimum 2.00 or higher, as prescribed by the Major Department.

In order to designate a Major, a student must fulfill any stated pre-requisite course(s) set by a Department for that version of the degree program.

In order to change a Major, a student must designate a new area of study prior to registration and fulfill the criteria stated above. Changes in Major are dependent upon available vacancies.

Where the number of candidates for Majors exceeds the number of available vacancies, entry will be based on ranking by grades in designated pre-requisite course(s) combined with the overall GPA.

#### **B5. Add/Drop (Change of Registration)**

Students wishing to change their registrations may do so during the first week of scheduled classes with no effect on their transcript. Such changes of registration shall be made through the Drop/Add form.

A student wishing to drop or add a course must have it approved by the Advisor and course Department. Permission may be granted provided there is room in the course and it is within the student's course load maximum.

No courses may be added after the one week period except in unusual individual circumstances approved by the HoD and the appropriate Assistant Dean with the Dean of Admissions and Registration.

A student who wishes to drop (withdraw from) a course between the second week of classes and the end of the half-way point in the course will be given a 'W' grade beside the appropriate course on his/her transcript.

A course dropped after the halfway point will be designated 'F' on the transcript.

During the summer semester, pre-registrations are considered to be official and may only be changed in specified circumstances.

## **B6. Attendance Policy**

It is the student's responsibility to be punctual and to attend all classes. Failure to attend classes without prior approval for whatever reason is considered as part of the percentage missed. *Students bear full responsibility for checking their own attendance record.*

*Course Instructors should keep attendance records.* An "absentee warning notice" will be issued if a student is absent for:

- - more than 10% in courses with less than 75 total contact hours
  - more than 5% in courses with 75 or more total contact hours

An "absentee withdrawal notice" will be issued and the student will be deemed to have withdrawn from the course with an 'FW' grade if a student is absent for:

- more than 20% in courses with less than 75 total contact hours
- more than 15% in courses with 75 to 150 total contact hours
- more than 10% of total contact hours for courses with more than 150 total contact hours.

Absence for Approved (extra-curricular) Activities:

- a student's Instructors and Advisor should be involved in granting permission to participate in extra-curricular activities based on a student's academic performance.
- approval of Instructors should be obtained in advance of the event and the student's College consulted in certain cases.
- A compulsory attendance policy is to be maintained with a balance between granting permission for absences due to

legitimate reasons and taking undue advantage of a flexible policy, particularly by weaker students.

Absences due to late additions of a course during the DROP/ADD period will NOT count toward the absenteeism limits.

### **B7. Postponement of Study**

A student may be allowed to withdraw temporarily from the University by requesting a formal postponement of study, for one semester renewable for a second semester. Postponement may be granted upon approval by the Dean of the College in consultation with the Deanship of Admissions and Registration for reasons of health, family pressures, pregnancy or other compelling circumstances. Supporting documentation from authorities such as Student Affairs, the Counseling & Guidance Centre or the Health Clinic may be required. Extension of postponement beyond two semesters may be granted in exceptional circumstances. Postponement is not normally granted during the first semester.

If a student does not return to the University after the approved period, his/her enrolment shall be withdrawn.

It is the responsibility of the student or his/her family to notify the University of any request for extension.

Subsequent re-admission will be considered on an individual basis. A student may rejoin the University only at the beginning of a semester under the customary procedures for registration.

When a postponement has been approved, special grades of 'OP' will be entered and the date of postponement noted on the transcript.

Postponement will not be granted merely to avoid failing grades.

### **B8. Withdrawal from the University**

Withdrawal from the University may be initiated by the student as a formal, official procedure. In some cases, it may be initiated by the Deanship of Admissions and Registration on behalf of the student. Under specific circumstances mandatory withdrawal may be required by the University for academic or disciplinary reasons according to the pledges signed by students upon their initial registration. The academic provisions requiring withdrawal are specified in B8-2

The disciplinary provisions are in a document from the Deanship of Student Affairs and include:

- Attempts to disrupt the University's cultural, literary and other activities
- Acts that violate honor, dignity, ethics or religious beliefs
- Assault, threat or disrespect against any member of the University community

### **B8-1: Voluntary Withdrawal**

A student contemplating full withdrawal from the University must consult his/her Advisor prior to formalizing his/her decision in order to ensure that all alternatives are considered.

In certain cases the Deanship of Admissions and Registration may act on behalf of the student in completing the withdrawal process. Typically this would occur in cases involving death, serious injury or illness, or formal requests to do so.

It is essential that upon leaving a student completes a Withdrawal Form (available from the Deanship of Admissions and Registration). This form properly documents his/her permanent record at the University.

A student who withdraws from the University will have the notation "Withdrew officially from the University " together with the withdrawal date placed on his/her transcript with a 'W' in each course.

The effective date of withdrawal is the date of approval by the Dean of Admissions and Registration.

### **B8-2: Required Withdrawal**

A student who does not meet the conditions for removal of academic probation shall be required to withdraw from the University. The result of disciplinary action may also lead to required withdrawal.

Upon approval by the Dean of the concerned College or the Dean of Student Affairs as appropriate, and the Vice President, the Dean of Admissions and Registration will issue the notice of withdrawal to the student. In such a case, the student will be awarded a 'W' in each unfinished course and the transcript will be notated According as either :

-Required withdrawal from the University for disciplinary reasons. -Required withdrawal from the University for academic reasons.

### **B8-3: Unofficial Withdrawal**

Students will be considered to have withdrawn unofficially and will be removed from the registration roll if they:

- withdraw de facto by failing to register after initial acceptance, or
- are continuously absent from all courses without notification for more than 20% of the semester, or
- Do not register by the end of the Drop/Add period for two consecutive semesters (the semester of unofficial withdrawal counting as the first).

An unofficially withdrawn student will be awarded 'F' grades and the transcript will be notated "Unofficial withdrawal ".

### **B9: Re-admission after Withdrawal**

A student may be considered for re-admission to their former program on an individual basis. Re-admission is not automatic and will take into consideration the following factors:

- available space in the College program
- number of credits completed to date, with preference given to the highest total
- reason for withdrawal
- Past academic performance.

A student who withdraws normally from the University and remains away for more than two consecutive semesters will not be considered for re-admission.

## **Part C**

### **Grading Regulations**

#### **C1. Course Outlines**

Each course shall have a current course outline for distribution to students at the beginning of classes each semester, included in the course outline must be the following elements:

- course alphanumeric code, title, contact and credit hours, and calendar description
- Instructor's name, office location and office hours for consultation
- statement of objectives
- main topics
- teaching/learning approaches (e.g. labs, case studies, field work, role-playing etc)
- grading scheme (A-F, P/NP etc.)
- schedule of tests, quizzes, papers, assignments etc and the portion of the total grade each is worth
- text(s), additional references and any required materials
- any special conditions or requirements (e.g. attendance, travel, penalties for late assignments etc.)

Where more than one section of a course is taught, the course description and content, objectives, and grading scheme must be consistent across all sections. Other elements are at the discretion of the Instructor and Department.

## **C2. Evaluation and Grading**

Evaluation and grading of student performance shall be based on the Grade Point Average (GPA) system.

A process of formal and continuous evaluation shall enable students to determine their ongoing performance throughout a given course. When summarized and reported as grades, the resulting overview shall enable the University to make consistent decisions regarding students' progress in relation to established standards.

Because courses vary widely in purpose, content, approach and delivery, it follows that the method of evaluating performance in courses should be related to their objectives. By translating the overall achievement of course objectives into a University-wide descriptive grading scale, consistency across Departments and Colleges is achieved.

In other words, the unique requirements of individual courses are comparable to the unique requirements of other courses through the application of the University grading scale. It is thus essential that grade categories are described in terms meaningful to both faculty and students.

### **C2-1 Grading Method**

Normally a final grade in any given course is based on continuous evaluation of course objectives. This implies therefore that assessment is determined more by the fulfillment of stated criteria rather than by solely comparative achievement within a class.

Elements of a course may be scored and assessed in a variety of ways. If percentages are used for any portion of a course, they are used only on a course basis, not within the context of any college-wide method.

In a standard length course there shall be at least three components contributing to the final grade. No single component of a course evaluation may exceed 60% of the final grade. Where there is a final examination, it must account for 40-60% of the final grade.

### **C3. Grades (with Numeric Value)**

Letter grades shall be used to describe the achievement level attained within a particular course. A final semester grade shall be based on continuous assessment throughout the semester as well as a final examination. A final examination is customary but may not be considered necessary in certain types of courses.

#### **C3-1: Grade Descriptions**

The grades (with numeric value) for undergraduate courses are described as follows:

**A** Exceptional performance; all course objectives achieved; objectives met in a consistently outstanding manner.

**B** Very good performance; significantly more than the majority of the course objectives achieved (majority being at least two-thirds); objectives met in a consistently thorough manner.

**C** Satisfactory performance: at least the majority of course objectives achieved; objectives met satisfactorily.

**D** Minimally acceptable performance: less than the majority but more than the minimum required course objectives achieved; objectives met at a minimally acceptable level.

**F** Unacceptable performance: minimum required course objectives not met; objectives not met at a minimally acceptable level; no credit earned.

**FW** Failure to meet the attendance requirement, no credits earned.

**FSP** Failure with Supplemental Privilege

An 'FSP' may be awarded to a student in a course where all portions of the course have been evaluated and one has been failed (usually but not restricted to the final examination), and in the opinion of the Instructor, with the approval of the Head of Department, a second chance at that component will result in a passing grade. It shall not be given to a student whose achievement has been borderline in all components; nor shall it be an automatic award based on any percentage range.

The awarding of an 'FSP' shall be discretionary. It shall occur generally where the course in question is not readily available until a year hence and where the student has completed at least 50% of the credits in his/her degree programme. It shall not be given if the student is already on probation or about to be placed on probation based on current semester performance.

The 'FSP' shall be treated as an 'F' until the grade earned following the supplemental assessment is recorded. The FSP will remain on the transcript but will be replaced in the GPA calculation by the supplemental grade. An 'FSP' shall be cleared as quickly as possible after the examination schedule, but no later than 15 weeks after the end of the examination period (including the summer semester).

Any 'FSP' not cleared within this period shall automatically convert to an 'F' in the semester record. Exceptions due to unusual circumstances will be handled on an individual basis.

A student with an 'FSP' in a course which is pre-requisite to a course he wishes to take shall not be allowed to register in that course until the 'FSP' grade is cleared.

### **C3-2: Attendance**

Students are required to attend classes and attendance will be taken. Absenteeism beyond certain levels will result in a grade of "FW" being awarded that will be calculated like an "F" in the average. The instructor may excuse certain absences.

### C3-3: Grade Scale

Each of the grades described above shall carry a numeric value for the

A	4.0	C+	2.3
A	3.7	C	2.0
B+	3.3	C	1.7
B	3.0	D+	1.3
B	2.7	D	1.0

#### Example

purpose of computing a weighted average on a 4-point scale. These values are described in the table below:

F, FSP, FW, NPW 0.0

### C4. Grades (without Numeric Value)

The following grade designations shall form part of the overall University grading system, but shall not carry numeric value.

#### I (x) -Incomplete

The 'Incomplete' grade shall be used when two basic conditions have been met:

- a) The student has a passing level in the course work which he/she has completed by the end of the course, and
- b) The student has been prevented by circumstances beyond his/her control, such as illness, accident or family emergency, from completing all the course requirements on time.

An 'Incomplete' grade is not intended to give an extension to a student who has completed all elements of a course with failing status, nor is it designated for a student who simply does not complete requirements on time. It is not an option that may be elected by the student.

The Instructor has the prerogative of requiring documentation and/or College approval of the request. The student shall be informed in writing, of the condition(s) for completion, specifying a final submission date as soon as possible and no *later than 15 weeks* after the end of the examination period. The Instructor shall specify to the student and the Dean of Admissions and Registration the grade to which the 'Incomplete' shall revert if the completion date is not met.

Allowable incomplete grades are as follows: I(D), I(D+), I(C-), I(C), I(C+), I(B-), I(B), I(B+), I(A-), I(NP), I(F). Unless a new grade is submitted to the Deanship of Admissions and Registration, that default grade shall replace the 'Incomplete' designation within a period of 15 weeks.

**W -Withdrawn**

A 'W' shall be assigned to a student who withdraws formally from a course within the prescribed deadline after the period of Drop and Add, or if they have withdrawn from the University (see section B8).

**TC -Transfer Credit**

A 'TC' shall be awarded to a student who has been granted credit from elsewhere. These credits shall contribute to the total required for graduation in a particular degree programme, but shall not contribute to the grade point average (see also section A5).

**AU -Audit**

An 'AU' shall designate a course registration with audit status. This status must be declared at the time of registration. (See Also Section B3)

**P/NP -Pass/Not Passed**

A 'P' shall be assigned for a course that is not graded on the A-F scale, but does carry credit value in a degree programme.

**NPW** Failure to meet the attendance requirement, no credits earned

**IP -In Progress**

'IP' shall be assigned in a course such as project, practical or a multi-semester course in which the student is registered, but which is still in progress at the time of grade reporting or transcript production. The 'IP' grade is intended only for use in such circumstances and is not to be confused with Incomplete grade designations.

## **OP -Officially Postponed**

'OP' shall be assigned to a course in which the student is registered when he/she has been officially granted permission to postpone the semester.

## **C5. Calculation of Grade Point Average**

The Grade Point Average (GPA) is a weighted average that summarises each of the two levels of activity: the semester and the cumulative work to date:

- a) the semester GPA is calculated on the courses taken within a given semester,
- b) the cumulative GPA is calculated on all courses taken to date, inclusive of all semesters. This is a single total calculation (not the average of averages).

The semester GPA shall be calculated as follows:

The numeric value of the grade earned in each course is multiplied by the number of credits for that course. This result is called the grade points earned in that course. The sum of the grade points earned in that semester is divided by the total credits attempted during that semester. In these calculations, only courses with numeric value grades are considered. The resultant quotient is the semester Grade Point Average.

The calculation of the cumulative GPA shall be based on all courses taken and all credits attempted to date.

The **total grade points earned** are divided by the total **credits attempted**. In both cases only courses with numeric-value grades are considered. (Please note that in such a computation, 0 (F, FSP, FW) is a numeric value). The resultant quotient is the **Grade Point Average**. The grade designations I(x), W, P, NP, IP, TC, AU and OP are not calculated in this average.

A	4.0	C+	2.3
A	3.7	C	2.0
B+	3.3	C	1.7
B	3.0	D+	1.3
B	2.7	D	1.0

### Example

Course	Credit	Grade	Numeric Grade Points	Value of Grade
ANAT1000	3	A	4.0	12.0
PHYS1002	3	B	3.0	9.0
LANC1001	3	C+	2.3	6.9
ARAB1100	3	F	0.0	0.0

Total credits attempted = 14

Total grade points earned = 27.9

Grade Point Average =  $27.9 / 12 = 2.325 = 2.33$

Total credits earned = 11

#### Notes:

*The average is calculated to 3 decimal places and rounded to 2 using standard rounding rules -that is, 0.5 rounds up.*

At the end of each semester, a semester GPA will be calculated, along with a cumulative GPA which totals all credits attempted and earned to date.

Colleges may use a variety of different averages for various decisions regarding standing and progression as long as these are approved by the Academic Council. Such averages must be descriptively titled other than Grade Point Average: for example, Major Average.

### **C6. Progression Standards**

The progression standards shall be as follows:

- a) A student who achieves a minimum Grade Point Average of 2.00 on both semester and cumulative averages, as well as any required minimum grade(s) in specified course(s), is in Normal status and may proceed without condition in his/her degree programme.
- b) A student who achieves a minimum Grade Point Average of 3.00 on both semester and cumulative averages may be eligible to take credits in excess of the normal course load as defined by the college. Such a student's course load status will be Extended.

c) A Student who achieves a Grade Point Average as described in (ii) below will be placed on Probation. This is an academic status assigned to students who are earning enough grades below 'C' to jeopardize their prospects of graduating. It is a constructive measure to reduce the student's course load to a manageable level until the academic difficulty is resolved. Probation status is determined by the Grade Point Average, with semester and cumulative standards as described below:

i) Although not formally on probation, a student will be advised to take corrective and remedial action on his/her own behalf when the current semester GPA is 1.00 or more, but below 2.00 although the cumulative GPA remains above 2.00. In such a case the student must have a documented interview with his/her advisor before registering for the next semester, and any corrective measures noted. These may include discussion or any of the following:

- reduction of course load
- Postponement of a course to a subsequent semester
- supplementary math, language or study skills courses
- referral to University services (e.g. Student Affairs, Student Counseling Center, Health Clinic) for assistance with personal or health problems

ii) A student shall be placed on probation and required to take remedial action when

- the cumulative GPA falls below 2.00 or
- the cumulative GPA is 2.00 or above but the current semester GPA falls below 1.00 or
- the cumulative GPA is 2.00 or above but the semester GPA is below 2.00 for 2 consecutive semesters.

In such cases the student shall be required to reduce his/her course load to 12 credits or less.

A student on Probation must return to Normal status within three consecutive semesters. A summer semester counts as one of the three semesters if a student registers for a full load (6 credits see B2 ) in that session. A student who completes two consecutive semesters on Probation shall be sent a warning notice reminding him/her of the final remaining semester within which to achieve a cumulative GPA of 2.00. A student who fails to fulfill this condition will be required to formally withdraw from the University. Students on Probation for a second semester must inform their parents or guardians and obtain a signed agreement in order to register.

Students previously on Probation and who return to that status will have 2 not 3 consecutive semesters to achieve Normal status.

### **C7. Repeated Courses.**

A student must repeat any failed course that is required in the degree programme. Where the degree programme identifies choices or substitutes, a student may replace a failed course with one of these. Any course that is repeated must be repeated in its entirety. **A student may only repeat a course in which a passing grade has been earned where the grade is C or below provided it is within 3 semesters.**

In all cases of repeated courses, all grades earned shall appear on the transcript but the most recent grade only shall be used in the calculation of the Grade Point Average (even if it is lower than the original grade).

Passed courses may be repeated once, failed courses twice. Further attempts require special permission.

A student who fails a course more than once should explore other options such as registering in an allowable substitute as approved by the HoD; change of major; or transfer.

## **C8. Grade Changes**

All grades other than 'FSP' and 'Incomplete' and 'IP' shall be considered final once formally submitted to the Dean of Admissions and Registration.

Final grades may be changed only if there has been an error in computation or transcription. In extraordinary and documented circumstances a grade may be revised to an Incomplete. (See Incomplete).

No final grade can be revised by examination or the submission of additional work after the end of the semester.

## **C9. Academic Achievement**

The University shall recognise those students who achieve high academic standing in their programmes on a semester basis (minimum of 12 credits in courses with grades of numeric value) by publishing 2 special lists.

### **C9-1: Deans' List**

Is issued at the end of regular semesters (Fall and Spring) for students achieving the following:

-with "Distinction", a student must achieve a semester GPA of 3.70 or higher with no grade below 'B'.

-with "Honours", a student must achieve a semester GPA of 3.50 or higher with no grade below 'C'.

## **C9-2: Excellent Students' List**

Is issued each year in June for students who, on the *combined* results of consecutive Fall and Spring semesters of one academic year only and while carrying a normal load, achieve the following:

- *Distinction*: Overall GPA between 3.70 and 4.00 with no grade below B, **or**
- *Honours First Class* : Overall GPA between 3.70 and 4.00 with a grade(s) below B, **or**
- *Honours Second Class* : Overall GPA between 3.50 and 4.00 with no grade below C.

The selection criteria are related to, but not identical with those for selecting students who appear on the Deans' List. The classification for excellent students should not be confused with the categories described in Degree Classification that cover a student's entire record upon graduation.

Should the student have an Incomplete (I(x)) course at the end of the semester, he/she will not receive recognition as a member of the Excellent Students list or the Deans' List until such time as the course is completed and the final semester Grade Point Average is determined.

## **C10. Final Examinations For Courses**

At the end of the scheduled teaching period two weeks are set aside for final examinations. A final is different from other assessments in any of the following aspects:

- All course material may be covered rather than a portion or partial accumulation as could be the case in other assessments.
- *weight*. 40% -60% of the total grade.
- *duration*. Up to 3 hours

A final assessment may take a form other than a written final examination: for example, oral presentation, seminar, project demonstration, etc.

The decision to hold a written final examination should be made on a course-by-course basis with no blanket decision imposed upon all courses in a College. If multiple sections of a course exist, a course coordinator should ensure that the final is the same for all sections. For written final examinations, the following conditions apply:

- All examinations will be scheduled within the time period designated for examinations as approved in the University Calendar of Events. No examinations may be scheduled outside that period.
- Any students who have more than two examinations in one day or more than three in two consecutive days may notify their Assistant Dean so that an alternative can be explored. In considering such cases the examination with the highest enrolment must take priority.
- examinations must be scheduled into a secure venue that allows for adequate invigilation

### **C10-1: Invigilation of Examinations**

1. Each College shall name a member of staff to coordinate and oversee the invigilation of examinations. The person will be responsible for assigning invigilators and ensuring that examinations are conducted properly and in respect of these regulations.
2. Invigilators must be staff members of the University.
3. For each examination venue, a Senior Invigilator will be named and responsible for coordinating the invigilation.
4. An appropriate number of Invigilators will be named for each examination. The ratio for written examinations will be one Invigilator for every 10 to 30 candidates, depending on the venue and for practical examinations, one Invigilator for every 5 to 15 candidates, depending on the availability of staff.
5. It is the responsibility of Invigilators to supervise examinations in accordance with the regulations for the conduct and invigilation of examinations.
6. Invigilators who suspect that breaches of examination regulations have occurred will inform the Senior Invigilator. He will warn the candidate, who shall normally be permitted to complete the examination. Before the candidate is allowed to leave the examination room, the Senior Invigilator must ensure that an Incident Report Form is completed containing all necessary signatures. The Senior Invigilator should then submit the report to the person in charge of Invigilation for the College for immediate review and action by the Assistant Dean.

7. Invigilators will not admit candidates to the examination later than half an hour (30 minutes) after the start of the examination, or allow candidates to leave the examination room during the first half-hour from the start of the examination. Thereafter candidates who need to leave the examination room temporarily must be accompanied by an Invigilator. Candidates may not leave during the last fifteen minutes of an examination.
8. Except with the permission of the Senior Invigilator, no persons other than the candidates and the Invigilators are allowed in examination venues.
9. Students must be instructed to bring their University I.D. cards to the examination. Without it, they may be prevented from sitting for the examination.
10. The Senior Invigilator may require a candidate to leave the examination room if his/her conduct is disturbing other candidates. A report form should be completed and submitted to the proper authority (see 6 above).
11. Candidates and Invigilators are not allowed to bring radio pagers or mobile telephones into the examination room. Smoking, eating or drinking are strictly forbidden in examination venues.
12. An Invigilator should not leave the examination venue unless a substitute is provided. 13. Invigilators must not answer any question directly or indirectly related to the subject material of the examination.

### **C10-2: Conduct of Candidates**

1. Candidates are forbidden to take into the examination venue any unauthorized book, manuscript, notes or any means, including electronic calculators, whereby they may improperly obtain assistance during the examination. Any such materials must be left with an Invigilator for return when the candidate leaves the examination venue. The Department concerned will inform candidates in writing in advance of any exception to these regulations for particular examinations. Reference to permitted material or equipment will be printed at the head of the examination question paper.
2. Candidates must sit in the places designated for their particular examination.
3. Candidates must not use any means whatever to obtain, directly or indirectly, assistance in their work, or give or attempt to give, directly or indirectly, assistance to any other candidate.
4. The impersonation of examination candidates is prohibited. Before the start and for the duration of any examination, the

- candidates must place their I. D. cards on the top right hand corner of the desk, face up, for inspection by the Invigilators.
5. Candidates must not remove from the examination room any answer books or other items of examination stationery except for non-returnable question papers. Candidates are required to hand their scripts, including any rough work, to the Invigilators before leaving the examination venue. Once candidates turn in their work and leave, they will not be permitted to return.
  6. Candidates must not indulge in any behavior, which may disturb other candidates, or in any form of conduct, which may disrupt the smooth progress of an examination.
  7. Candidates should complete their work in pen, and should use only blue or black ink unless instructed otherwise.
  8. Candidates must observe the examination regulations and obey any instructions given by the Invigilators.
  9. Any suspected breach of the examination Regulations will be investigated and may lead to disciplinary action.

### **C10-3 Breach of Examination Regulations**

All forms of academic dishonesty are considered as very serious offences within the University, and any student who commits such an offence risks punishment through a range of sanctions from failure in the course to a requirement to withdraw from the University.

### **C10-4 Grade Appeal**

Students have the right to appeal against grades that they obtain in any course within 30 days from the official announcement of the results. The appeal shall proceed strictly as follows. The appeal shall first be made to the Instructor concerned. If the Instructor rejects the appeal, the student shall have the right to appeal to the Head of the Department. This appeal must be made in writing. The Head of the Department shall then form an *ad hoc* committee to consider the

## Part D

### Graduation Regulations

#### D1. Degree Plans

Requirements for completing a degree shall be stated for each year of entry (Cohort) as the total number of credits needed with specific instructions regarding University, College, Major, Minor and Specification Programme credits, Elective and other specific requirements.

Degree requirements are classified into three groups:

##### a) University Requirements

All degree plans include the following University Requirements:

- 3 credits in Arabic Language
- 2 credits in Oman and Islamic Civilization
- 1 credit in Contemporary Omani Society
- A minimum of 6 credits in English Language
- A minimum of 6 credits in General Elective courses.

General Electives are standard regular courses offered by any College in the University which the student may freely choose to take (subject to fulfilling pre-requisite requirements), but which do not form part of his or her College or Specialization requirements and electives. They may not be restricted to a subset of courses at the College level. The courses chosen should not duplicate others already taken. It is recommended that electives be taken early in a student's academic programme.

##### b) College Requirements

These are courses required of *all students in a particular College*, and may fall into two categories:

- Courses that must be successfully completed by all students as part of all degree plans for their College.
- Elective courses specified by the College, from which the student may make a selection according to any stated guidelines.

### **c) Major Requirements**

These are courses required for the Major and may fall into two categories

- Courses which must be completed by all students as part of the degree plan for their Major.
- Elective courses specified for the Major, from which the student may make a selection according to any stated guidelines.

Only credits earned in courses which fall within the degree plan for the Major shall be counted towards the total required for a degree. A **graduation grade point average** is calculated based on the said credits. Students who apply to change their specialization may therefore not be able to count all credits previously earned as part of their new degree plan. No more than 10% of the total credits in a degree plan may be graded Pass/Not Passed. The degree requirements specified when a student is admitted to his degree programme shall remain in effect until the degree is completed. The duration of a degree programme shall be stated in credits which, given normal scheduling patterns, can be completed within a customary number of years. A maximum time limit of four additional regular semesters beyond the norm may be imposed.

### **D2. Requirements for Graduation**

In order to qualify for graduation, students shall

- have completed the curriculum requirements of their degree programmes with a minimum graduation of 2.00, and
- have fulfilled any additional requirements specified by the degree plan
- Students with outstanding debt to the University, such as library or equipment loans etc. will not be given their degree until such time as these are cleared.

### **D3. Course Substitutions**

In exceptional circumstances a Dean, in consultation with the Department Head, may allow a student to fulfill a program requirement with course substitutions. Such a substitution must be approved in consultation with the Dean of Admissions and Registration.

### **D4. Changes to Degree Plans**

Every effort is made to maintain the program of study described in the degree plan. However changing circumstances may require a revision/change to that degree plan. Any such changes must be approved in consultation with the Dean of Admissions and Registration and will be communicated in writing through publications, registration, and course outlines, and are binding on students in terms of graduation requirements. Students repeating a failed course are bound by any revision to course content, credits, or hours made to that course.

### **D5. Duration of Studies**

#### **a) Maximum duration**

Once having begun a program of study, students are expected to complete their degrees within a reasonable time frame. This is defined in the tables below

Table 1: Arabic Language medium Degrees

Total Credit	Usual Duration	Maximum duration for SQU scholarship
120-130	4 years	5 years
Above 130	5 years	6 years

Table 2: English Language medium Degrees

Total Credit	Usual Duration	Maximum duration for SQU scholarship
120-130	4.5 years	5.5 years
Above 130	5.5 years	6.5 years
Clinical Program (MD) College of Medicine	3 years	4 years

As the College of Medicine and Health Sciences has two different programs, the pre-clinical (120 credits, B.Sc. health sciences) and the Clinical program (MD), these programs are independent of each other and the maximum period in each program will apply.

Any exceptions will be considered on an individual basis.

#### **D6. Interruption of Studies**

A student who, having begun a program of study, subsequently delays studies in that program must have any credits earned to date evaluated upon his/her return by the HoD in order to determine their relevancy to the current curriculum. Such a student may have to take credits from a more recent version of the degree plan.

#### **D7. Residency**

At least 50% of the total credits required for the degree must be earned at Sultan Qaboos University. Students must take the majority of courses normally offered in the final semesters of degree plans at Sultan Qaboos University.

#### **D8. Classification of Degrees**

Degrees awarded shall be classified based on the graduation grade point average earned on all courses within the degree plan according to the following scheme for their final cumulative or graduating Grade Point Average:

3.75 -4.00 Distinction with Honours

3.30 -3.74 Distinction

2.75 -3.29 Very Good

2.30 -2.74 Good

2.00 -2.29

