

AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
Guidelines, Policies and Procedures

Policy Name	Policy on Responding to Disruptions of Academic Programming
Policy Number	042
Approved by	Academic Council
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Contact	Provost's Office

1.0 SCOPE

- 1.1 For the purpose of this policy, a disruption occurs when academic activities are substantially interrupted or impeded as a result of any event or circumstance, which is beyond the reasonable control of the University and includes, but is not limited to, civil disorder, protests, strikes, fire, natural disasters, epidemics or other similar causes and constitutes a situation by which the University declares that academic programming is being disrupted by reason of *force majeure*.
- 1.2 The foremost priority in responding to crisis situations is the safety of Aga Khan University students, faculty, and staff.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Academic Activity: Includes any work subject to evaluation or necessary for a student to meet the requirements of a course or programme of study.
- 2.3 Substantial Disruption: In determining whether an interruption or an impediment is substantial, the following factors shall be considered:
- 2.3.1 The duration and point in the term or semester in which the disruption occurred.
 - 2.3.2 The availability of physical and instructional resources.
 - 2.3.3 The impact on the attendance of students, members of faculty, and other necessary participants.
 - 2.3.4 The impact of timing and sequence of evaluations such as examinations, clinicals, rotations, assignments, presentations, etc.
- 2.4 *Force Majeure*: The Aga Khan University shall not be held responsible for continuance of any class lecture, seminar, tutorial, laboratory, clinical, rotation, examinations or any other course of instruction, which may not be completed as a result of any event or circumstance, which is beyond the reasonable control of the University and includes, but is not limited to, civil disorder, protests, strikes, fire, natural disasters, epidemics or other similar causes.

3.0 POLICY

The governing principles of this policy are (i) Academic Integrity and (ii) Fairness to Students.

3.1 Academic Integrity

In the event of a disruption, the primary obligation of the University is to ensure the academic integrity of all programmes. No dilution of standards normally expected of students should be permitted and there should be as little diminution as possible in the instructional or supervisory support given to students.

3.2 Fairness to Students

3.2.1 Students who do not participate in academic activities because they are unable to do so owing to the nature of the disruption are entitled to:

- Immunity from penalty.
- To reasonable alternative access to materials covered in their absence.
- To reasonable extensions of deadlines.
- To such other remedy as Academic Council deems necessary and consistent with the principle of academic integrity.

3.2.2 Such remedies shall not alter the academic standards associated with the missed activity, nor shall it relieve the student of the responsibility for mastering materials covered.

3.2.3 The availability of a remedy under this policy does not guarantee students the same learning experience that they would have received in the absence of a disruption.

4.0 MEMBERSHIP

4.1 The following University officials will constitute the membership of the Provost's Committee Responding to Disruptions of Academic Programming [Provost's Response Committee]:

- Provost and Vice President, Academic (Chair)
- Vice Provost, Student Affairs and Services
- Vice Provost, Asia and UK *
- Vice Provost, East Africa *
- University Registrar

* Determined by the location of the crisis.

4.2 The Provost, at his/her discretion or as necessary, may assign a Vice Provost to act as the chair of the Committee.

5.0 PROCEDURES

5.1 Communication and Dissemination of Information

5.1.1 When a disruption appears imminent:

- The Provost shall inform the President who will be responsible for informing the members of the Board of Trustees.
- The Provost's Response Committee shall ensure that the normal informational channels, including the AKU webpages, are alerted so that applicable University policies and decisions will be reported widely and accurately.
- The Provost's Response Committee shall ensure that appropriate notices are posted to remind or notify students, staff, faculty, President's Executive Committee, deans, members of Academic Council and President's Council to ensure that this information is disseminated speedily.
- A summary of this policy shall be prepared which can be circulated widely and posted on the University's website in the event of a disruption.

5.1.2 When a disruption occurs, the Provost's Response Committee shall declare so and request that:

- The Public Affairs Office use best efforts to inform and update relevant external bodies about the disruption.
- University officers use best efforts to have externally imposed deadlines extended, especially where the lack of transcripts or the unavailability of letters of recommendation would impose a hardship on current students.
- The University Librarian disseminate information about the impact of the disruption on access to collections and services as early and as frequently as possible via print and email notices, messages on websites, and other means.
- The Quality, Teaching and Learning Network (QTL_net) will provide information to the deans regarding the support available to enable online teaching and learning, when appropriate.
- Any adjustment of deadlines be announced widely, including on the University's webpages.

5.1.3 When a disruption ends, the Provost's Response Committee shall declare so and shall give notice to students, staff, faculty, President's Executive Committee, deans, members of Academic Council and President's Council.

5.2 Short Disruptions

5.2.1 Disruptions of academic activities of six or fewer days will be governed by normal academic regulations.

5.2.2 In the case of such brief disruptions, individual faculty are in the best position to determine, in the first instance, the extent to which their courses, seminars, graduate supervision, labs, clinicals etc. have been affected by a disruption and what remedial action is required.

5.2.3 If, in the opinion of a dean or programme director, remedial action ought to include rescheduling in order to preserve course integrity, then this shall be done in consultation with the Office of the Registrar.

5.3 Long Disruptions

5.3.1 Whereas the Provost's Response Committee has been monitoring the situation at the outset of a disruption, on an indication that the disruption will last more than six days, on the seventh day of a disruption, the Committee shall receive a report from the

- University Registrar, in consultation with the deans of the applicable academic unit(s), on the possible impact of the disruption.
- 5.3.2 In the event a disruption continues for seven or more days, the University Librarian, Chief Information Officer, the Director of Safety and Security, and the Head of Public Affairs, shall be added to the membership of the Provost's Response Committee for disruption-related issues and shall remain members for the duration of the disruption.
- 5.3.3 The Chair of the Provost's Response Committee may at his/her discretion, add members to the Committee deemed appropriate for informing the situation.
- 5.3.4 If one or more weeks of instructional time are lost in semester courses, the Provost's Response Committee shall presume the need for a modification of the teaching term or any associated changes, including examination scheduling.
- 5.3.5 For the duration of the disruption, the Provost, as the Chair of Academic Council, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders, may implement new and/or allow alterations and exceptions to academic policies and Hostel Rules to meet crisis situations.
- Any new policies or alterations and exceptions to existing policies will only be valid for the duration of the crisis.
 - Any new policies or alterations and exceptions to existing policies must maintain compliance with the regulations of relevant professional and accreditation bodies.
 - After the disruption has ended, the Provost will provide a report to Academic Council on the actions taken under this section.
- 5.3.6 The Provost's Response Committee shall oversee the process of directing and implementing the necessary remedial action. In cases where substantial amounts of instructional time have been lost due to a disruption, the Provost's Response Committee shall:
- On the seventh day of a disruption, the Provost's Response Committee shall announce that all courses will require substantial remedial action and shall notify the deans of the appropriate academic units.
 - The Provost's Response Committee shall approve all remedial action, including:
 - The authority to extend a semester / term and to authorize the rescheduling of examinations which have been disrupted, in order to preserve academic integrity. Implementation of changes to the academic calendar will be organized centrally by the Office of the Registrar in consultation with the appropriate deans.
- 5.3.7 If a disruption continues to a point where no feasible remedy consistent with the principle of academic integrity is available, then, the Provost's Response Committee shall, after consultation with the President's Executive Committee, have the authority to determine that the academic session be abandoned and that credit not be given for the course(s).

ADDENDUM

This excerpt is an extension to Policy # 42: 'Responding to Disruptions of Academic Programming' to include situations that indirectly but significantly impact University Programming. This includes but is not limited to the conductance of University admission tests which are a pre-requisite for admissions to University Programmes.

This policy extension allows the University to retake or redo the necessary pre requisite processes in extra ordinary situations or extenuating circumstances, when a disruption occurs or where activities are substantially interrupted or impeded as a result of any event or circumstance, which is beyond the reasonable control of the University and includes, but is not limited to, unauthorized and/or illegal acts, inter alia, leaking of legacy exams, civil disorder, protests, strikes, fire, natural disasters, epidemics, endemics, pandemics or other causes, which constitute a situation/circumstance by which the University declares the relevant activity or part thereof, null and void ab initio.

Developed by: University Registrar

Approved by: Provost

Dated: August 7, 2023