

AU Female's Access and Participation Policy

Version No.	Approved By	Approval Date	Effective Date
1.0	President & BOT	October 2024	Fall 2024/2025
SCOPE	This policy applies to:		
	- All AU Students. - AU Academic and Administrative staff - University services, programs, and initiatives		
TERMS, DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS	AU: Australian University or the University.		
POLICY PROVISIONS			

1. AU is committed to ensuring that women have equal opportunities to apply, be accepted, enroll, and thrive in all areas of university life. We actively monitor women's access and participation, and create supportive pathways that encourage more women to join and succeed in higher education.
2. AU is committed to providing access schemes for women, including mentoring opportunities, targeted scholarships, and tailored support services to ensure fair participation in higher education.
3. AU is committed to creating an inclusive environment where women can thrive. The University:
 - 3.1 Guarantee equal access to admission through transparent processes that track women's application and acceptance rates.
 - 3.2 Support women's participation and retention in all programs by monitoring enrollment and progression trends.
 - 3.3 Run targeted outreach with government and private girls' schools to increase female applications in Engineering with annual targets and reporting.
 - 3.4 Foster academic success by ensuring that women have access to mentoring, research opportunities, and leadership pathways.
 - 3.5 Offer flexible academic pathways, such as diploma, bachelor's degrees, and 2+2 programs, which support access for women who need more flexible study options.
 - 3.6 Provide safe and supportive spaces to promote well-being and full participation in university life.
 - 3.7 Regularly review and publish gender-disaggregated data on applications, admissions, enrollments, high achievers and graduations rates.

4. Female Access Schemes:

4.1 Equal Access to Admissions

- Admissions processes are designed to ensure fairness and transparency.
- Gender is never a limiting factor in admission decisions, and participation of female applicants is closely monitored to ensure equality.

4.2 Scholarships and Financial Support

- Dedicated scholarships and bursaries are available for female students.
- Financial support schemes aim to reduce barriers to entry and retention.
- AU Financial Assistance Policy states the rules to administer various financial assistance schemes for students registered in AU's programs of study.
- AU's Student Financial Assistance Committee reviews, on an annual basis, the types, numbers and values of financial assistance schemes offered.

4.3 Mentoring, and Academic Guidance:

4.3.1 Academic Advising: advising at AU is an essential part of the faculty's role in supporting student success. Each student is assigned an academic advisor from within their discipline to provide ongoing guidance throughout their studies. Particular attention is given to advising female students, ensuring they receive the support needed to navigate enrollment, track academic progress, and achieve strong educational outcomes. Academic advising is built on a collaborative relationship between the student and advisor, offering women a trusted source of encouragement, mentorship, and direction during their academic journey.

4.3.2 Tutoring Services: Tutoring Center at AU provides free academic support designed to help students strengthen their understanding of courses and improve performance. Special attention is given to supporting female students, ensuring they have equal opportunities to succeed academically and continue their studies with confidence. Tutoring sessions are arranged through the Office of Student Affairs. In addition, a mentoring list is created each semester, detailing the course name, mentor name, number of students mentored, and total hours of support provided. This record is carefully monitored and followed up by Student Affairs to ensure the quality and effectiveness of tutoring services, also to make sure that at least 10% of female students participate in women's mentoring schemes.

4.3.3 Guidance and skills workshops are provided to strengthen academic confidence and career readiness.

5. Supportive Campus Environment

5.1 Confidential counseling services are available, with a focus on women's well-being.

5.2 Family-friendly provisions, such as flexible study arrangements, are considered to support female students balancing academic and personal responsibilities.

6. Monitoring and Reporting

6.1 AU systematically tracks applications, admissions, and graduation rates by gender.

6.2 Regular reporting ensures accountability and continuous improvement in supporting women's participation.

7. Additional Support for Female Students

7.1 Child-Friendly Lounges: AU has prepared dedicated lounges for students with children, providing a safe and supportive environment that enables female students who are mothers to continue their studies with fewer barriers.

7.2 Flexible Learning Support: Academic departments provide guidance and reasonable flexibility for female students balancing family and academic responsibilities.

8. Support for Female Staff

8.1 Maternity Leave and Return-to-Work Support: AU offers comprehensive maternity leave provisions as per AU Sick, Compassionate, Maternity, Hajj, Professional Development, Study and Well-being Leave Policy, ensuring female staff can balance professional and personal responsibilities without compromising career progression.

8.2 AU Nursery Policy: In accordance with Article 25 of the Kuwait labor law, all AU full-time female employees shall be eligible for the nursery benefit provided by AU.

8.3 Family-Friendly Workplace: Upon return, flexible working arrangements and access to child-friendly lounges help staff reintegrate smoothly.

8.4 Professional Development: AU ensures that female staff on maternity leave are not disadvantaged in career development or promotion pathways.