



## The American University of Kurdistan Policy of Student Retention & Success

Policy Number: AS041  
Effective Date: November 30, 2023

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### I. INTRODUCTION

- a. **Authority:** The Board of Trustees (herein referred to as “Board”) at The American University of Kurdistan (herein referred to as “AUK” or “University”) is authorized to establish rules and regulations to govern and operate the University and its programs.
- b. **Purpose:** This policy aims to outline AUK’s commitment and strategy to improving Student retention according to evidence-based principles aligned with the institutional and college-level strategic plans.
- c. **Scope:** This policy applies to all University employees and Students.

### II. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. **Responsible Executive:** Provost
- b. **Responsible Administrator:** Director of ARD
- c. **Responsible Office:** ARD
- d. **Policy Contact:** Director of ARD

### III. DEFINITION

**Student Retention:** Rate that measures the percentage of Students who continue their studies from the freshman year to the sophomore and later years.

**Student Success:** The Student's achievement in academic, level of engagement, contribution to campus activities, acquisition of skills and professional dispositions, persistence to graduation and post-graduate performance.

**Student Experience:** The holistic, University experience, curricular as well as co- and extra-curricular that a Student faces throughout their academic life at AUK.

### IV. POLICY STATEMENT

The American University of Kurdistan is committed to supporting the success of all its Students and proactively working to enrich their University experiences with the aim of persistence to graduation through various retention strategies.

### V. POLICY PRINCIPLES

- The University Administration, College Deans, Chairs, and academic and administrative Student support offices will establish a cooperative and action-oriented commitment to ensuring that AUK Students have a high-quality Student experience.
- Students' successful retention and transition to upper levels of study is the collective responsibility of all academic and administrative units at AUK.
- Retention strategies will be integrated into the University's, Colleges', and Departments' strategic plans and action items, along with targets and accountability measures; these strategies will be measured, monitored, evaluated, and continually assessed to ensure success.
- Student retention will be supported across the entire Student learning journey from matriculation to graduation.
- Students will attend orientation sessions to understand the University's systems and procedures, study plans, learning environments, and Student support structures.
- Student retention strategies must focus on all Students' success rather than solely on "at-risk" Students.
- Learning is a social experience, and the University must design community-building opportunities to ensure optimum levels of engagement.
- Faculty, Student advisors, college managers, and the staff of support service units will make maximum use of the intervention software and other tools to monitor Students' progress and refer any cases to the appropriate resources.
- The implementation of the intervention software and other tools will facilitate the identification of at-risk Students from various demographics including:
  - First-year Students.
  - Students with heavy work commitments and/or family responsibilities.
  - Students with financial problems.
  - Students enrolled in courses with high attrition rates.
  - Students with English language difficulties.
  - Students experiencing socialization issues due to cultural or ethnic differences.
  - Students under probationary status.
  - Students should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning process and actively seek assistance as needed.

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- Academic and career advice is essential to support Student success and improve retention.
- Student data will be provided as appropriate to those in a Student's support network in order to make informed decisions about individuals and the collective demographic.
- AUK will ethically compile, link and analyze Student enrollment, performance, and systems data to enhance the understanding of Students' needs and improve Student success.

### **VI. POLICY PROCEDURES**

The Provost is responsible for the following:

- Setting and monitoring the retention targets.
- Working with Colleges and administrative units to create, develop, and support university-wide retention initiatives.

Colleges are responsible for the following:

- Developing, executing, and evaluating classroom teaching methodologies to ensure that they are designed to assist Students in becoming confident, fully engaged, and socially aware learners.
- Providing appropriate academic advice to help Students develop attainable academic goals and the required strategies for reaching them.
- Providing learning experiences and high-quality teaching responsive to Students with diverse learning needs.
- Implementing university-wide programs that ensure degree completion after 8 semesters of bachelor's courses (10 for Students in the Architectural Engineering Program).
- Providing personalized academic advising for all Students.
- Providing faculty trainings in advising.
- Utilizing data from the intervention software to support and evaluate interventions.

Administrative staff is responsible for the following:

- Working with academic departments to set measurable plans, strategies, and initiatives that enhance Student retention and success; these plans, strategies, and initiatives must have measurable deliverables.
- Monitoring retention trends across all study programs at all levels to identify all demographic characteristics or any other variables.
- Preparing regular reports on Student retention data and trends for strategic decision-making/planning.
- Actively supporting new Student orientation processes.
- Enhancing communication with Students to ensure their awareness of university services, policies, and procedures.

Students are responsible for the following:

- Taking accountability for their learning process.
- Attending classes and completing assignments as required; participating in class discussions; maintaining academic standards; and meeting with their advisors at least once per semester.

**VII. POLICY HISTORY**

- a. **Approved by:** Board of Trustees
- b. **Adopted:** November 30, 2023