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**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA**

**LAW DIVISION**

**QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY**

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The American University of Central Asia Law Department is committed to providing high quality legal education. This policy establishes the framework for the Law Department's quality assurance system. Its purpose is to set out quality assurance principles and procedures in accordance with the mission of the American University of Central Asia as well as Law Department's goals, tasks, and learning outcomes. The policy is in line with AUCA Quality Assurance Policy.

**I. PRINCIPLES**

The Policy is based on the following principles:

1.1. The Law Department curriculum enables students to obtain solid grounding in substantive law along with developing practical lawyering skills. The curriculum combines the best of international and national intellectual traditions by focusing on independent, analytical learning, and practical skill building, including excellent communication skills, ability to think in the fast changing world, strong work ethic, critical thinking, reading, and writing as well as problem-solving.

1.2. The Law Department is committed to a cycle of evaluation and improvement as part of the academic planning process. Within this cycle faculty are required to review the content and focus of their courses in line with the Law Department goals, tasks, and learning outcomes; evaluate and reflect on student learning resulting from their teaching practice, curriculum design and approaches to assessment; and make appropriate revisions as required.

1.3. The Law Department recognizes the need for continuous evaluation of the relevance and viability of its programs to ensure that available resources are used to maximum effect.



1.4. The Law Department uses multiple sources of qualitative and quantitative data in the evaluation of its courses, programs and teaching, including feedback from students, parents, graduates, employers, and other stakeholders.

## **II. GOALS, TASKS, AND LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE LAW DEPARTMENT**

### **2.1. Undergraduate Program**

#### **A. Goals and Tasks**

The Law Department aims to prepare students for jobs in international projects and organizations, state bodies, non-governmental organizations, private law firms, and commercial entities. Therefore, the Department is focused on developing general cultural, general professional, and professional competencies of its students in the fields of public international law and commercial law with a goal to prepare a new generation of lawyers who will be active in strengthening the rule of law. At the heart of our program is the combination of the best traditions of liberal American and Central Asian education with an individual approach to each student.

The Law Department pursues the following goals and tasks:

- development of an educational program that meets the demands of domestic and international labor markets with an objective to build and advance cultural, general, and professional competencies of students;
- systematic curriculum renewal and revision of program learning outcomes with involvement of stakeholders, introduction of new courses aimed at developing professional skills of students (“Legal Skills,” “Moot Court,” “Legal Clinic,” courses related to students’ participation in international competitions) as well as updating of educational and methodological materials on a regular basis with the application of innovative methods and educational technologies (electronic courses, electronic library, etc.);
- employment of qualified teachers with international degrees and support for continuous professional development of faculty;
- recruitment of the best applicants through the rigorous selection process (additional admission examinations in English, Mathematics, and essay);
- engaging students in law profession and practice through various research projects, internships, competitions, and study abroad opportunities;
- implementation of the principle of student-centered learning by providing flexible learning pathways with reliance on regular feedback (course evaluation by students and student grievance redress mechanisms) and by supporting students’ autonomy;



- internationalization of the program through building of local, regional, and international partnerships and conclusion of international agreements on academic collaboration with universities and various organizations (student and teacher exchange programs, joint training programs and summer schools);
- regular cooperation with state authorities, non-governmental entities, and commercial organizations (foreign and local) with respect to student internships in order to evaluate the achievement of learning outcomes;
- service to the community via provision of free legal aid and contribution to the development of legal culture and the rule of law by way of conducting research and organizing socially significant events.

## **B. Learning Outcomes**

By the end of undergraduate studies Law Department graduates should achieve the following program learning outcomes:

1. have a comprehensive understanding of laws and legal systems;
2. find, interpret, and apply public and private law norms, conduct legal research, perform legal analysis, and apply professional judgment for solving legal problems;
3. be able to speak and write in an argumentative, logical, and clear way in the legal context, have critical thinking skills, be able to think independently and justify one's position;
4. know how to carry out legal expertise of enacted legislation;
5. conduct academic legal research and have the skills necessary to draft legal documents;
6. understand the values of civil society, the rule of law principle, and legal ethics;
7. use contemporary databases and technologies in the field of law.

## **2.2. LL.M. Program**

### **A. Goals and Tasks**

The LL.M. Program aims to prepare graduates with higher professional education (holders of Bachelor's and Master's degrees) for jobs in international projects and organizations, state bodies, non-governmental organizations, private law firms and commercial entities, including for teaching and research work. It is also concentrated on preparing graduates for Ph.D./S.J.D. programs. The program is focused on developing general professional and professional competencies of its students in international and



business law with a goal to prepare specialists who will be in demand on domestic and international labor markets. At the heart of our Program and University is the combination of the best traditions of liberal American and Central Asian education with an individual approach to each student. The Program pursues the following tasks:

- recruitment of graduates with higher professional education degrees (involving additional entrance examinations in English and interviews);
- development of an educational program that meets the demands of domestic and international labor markets with an objective to advance general scientific and research professional competencies of students in international and business law;
- employment of qualified foreign teachers and teachers with international degrees and support for continuous professional development of faculty on the basis of the University's dual degree programs;
- systematic curriculum renewal and revision of learning outcomes with involvement of stakeholders and partners, introduction of new courses aimed at developing professional, research, and academic skills;
- updating of educational and methodological materials on a regular basis with the use of innovative methods and educational technologies (electronic courses, electronic library, etc.);
- implementation of the principle of student-centered learning by providing flexible learning opportunities and individual learning pathways with reliance on regular feedback and by developing engaged student learning through partnership with students in learning and teaching;
- internationalization of the program via conclusion of international agreements on academic collaboration with universities and various organizations (student and teacher exchange programs, joint training programs, and summer schools);
- regular cooperation with state authorities, non-governmental entities, commercial organizations and foreign universities with respect to student internships in order to evaluate the achievement of learning outcomes;
- students' participation in research projects that are aimed at developing legal culture and advancing the rule of law with involvement of non-governmental organizations and state bodies.

## **B. Learning Outcomes**

The LL.M. Program graduates should achieve the following program learning outcomes:

1. be able to generalize and analyze information critically, which is the basis for independent learning and application of new knowledge and skills;



2. apply professional judgment, perform comparative quality legal analysis, conduct original, in-depth legal research and solve legal problems using advanced methods and technologies, and be able to develop new original ideas in the professional sphere;
3. draft and interpret normative legal acts, carry out legal expertise of drafts of normative legal acts, serve as experts and consultants, and provide qualified legal opinions with regard to specific cases in various fields of law;
4. be able to conduct scientific research with the use of advanced databases and new technologies;
5. teach legal disciplines at a high theoretical and methodological level with reliance on international best practices, use of online resources, and application of the latest forms and methods of teaching;
6. demonstrate active civil position, take initiatives, and implement projects aimed at advancing a welfare state.

### **III. THE QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURE**

The quality assurance process of the Law Department is a multi-layered process involving all relevant stakeholders.

3.1. The Law Department reviews the performance of its programs on an annual basis based on program performance data and any additional strategic measures as determined by the Division Head (including but not limited to the number of enrolled students, their academic progress, etc.). The annual review of performance may require amendments to ensure sustainable development of its programs.

3.2. Course evaluation is developed to review and monitor the course performance. Course evaluation must be assessed using the course evaluation survey of the University and of the Law Division. Peer review may be used to complement the course evaluation survey.

3.3. Professors who teach elective course(s) with consistently low performance below University targets and benchmarks shall be required to provide explanation as to why their course should not be cancelled.

3.4. The Law Department is committed to ensuring that each course is taught in line with the Program goals and learning outcomes. Therefore, faculty members shall be responsible for completing faculty reports which allows them to reflect on the level of

students' achievement of learning outcomes for each course taught during the academic year.

3.5. The Law Department is committed to tracking student progress.

3.6. The Law Department shall administer a survey among students every three to five years for the purpose of quality assurance. Such surveys may be administered more often based on the decision of the Quality Assurance Committee of the Law Department.

3.7. The Law Department shall administer an alumni survey every three to five years. The survey asks program graduates about their employment, further education, and other relevant questions. Such surveys may be administered more often based on the decision of the Quality Assurance Committee.

3.8. All existing Program policies, including but not limited to the Policy on Thesis Projects, Policy on Plagiarism and others, complement the Law Department Quality Assurance Policy.

#### **IV. QUALITY ASSURANCE STRUCTURE**

The Law Department is committed to a comprehensive quality assurance process with involvement of all relevant stakeholders. Therefore, the quality assurance structure consists of three major bodies: the Quality Assurance Committee, International Advisory Committee, and Alumni Board.

##### **4.1. The Quality Assurance Committee**

The Quality Assurance Committee is designed to ensure high standards and to have core faculty members from each subject area check colleagues' syllabi and regularly assess and revise the Program curriculum. The Head of the Law Division is the Chairperson of the Committee. This committee is vital for maintaining high quality program standards and our commitment to academic excellence. The Committee's assessment will apply both to required and elective courses. Crucially, members should help articulate a vision for their area of concentration. This includes making sure we offer relevant courses and that faculty syllabi are in line with program learning outcomes. The Committee has the right to request changes to any course syllabus.

The Quality Assurance Committee is responsible for reviewing and discussing the Law Department goals, learning outcomes, and curriculum on a systematic basis. As part of this process the Quality Assurance Committee shall consider the recommendations of



students, members of the International Advisory Committee, Alumni Board, employers, and other stakeholders. If the Committee adopts changes to the existing Law Department goals, learning outcomes, and curriculum, these changes become effective in the academic year following the one in which they are made. All changes made are published on the AUCA website.

Each Committee concentration group shall have at least one student representative. The Committee may also organize meetings, roundtable discussions, seminars, and other events with practicing lawyers, potential employers, and other stakeholders to ensure that the Program corresponds to the needs of the labor market.

### **Quality Assurance Committee Members for Concentration Tracks:<sup>1</sup>**

#### ***1. Law, Business, and Technology***

*Internal:* Dinara Asanbaeva, Begaiym Esenkulova, Kanykei Kasybekova, and Natalia Alenkina

*External Advisers:* Frank Emmert, Lukasz Gruszczynski, Sultan Khalilov

#### ***2. Human Rights, Law, Politics, and Security***

*Internal:* Elida K. Nogoibaeva, Kamila Mateeva, Saniya Toktogazieva, Dinara Asanbaeva, Begaiym Esenkulova, Bholenath Dutta

*External Advisers:* Leonard Hammer, Lauri Mälksoo

#### ***3. International and Environmental Law***

*Internal:* Elida K. Nogoibaeva, Kamila Mateeva, Saniya Toktogazieva, Begaiym Esenkulova, Kanykei Kasybekova, Aicholpon Jorupbekova, Bholenath Dutta

*External Advisers:* Randall Abate, Paul Solis, Leonard Hammer, Leah Wortham, Jeff Giddings

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<sup>1</sup> The concentrations listed below are effective with respect to the Undergraduate Program and do not pertain to the LL.M. Program.

## **4.2. International Advisory Committee**

The International Advisory Committee's purpose is to provide the overall guidance regarding the Law Department curriculum and feedback on individual courses to ensure that they are in line with international best practices. The International Advisory Committee (upon members' availability) helps monitor the content and structure of each concentration. The Committee members shall be consulted as needed by the members of the Law Department Quality Assurance Committee.

Below is a list of Committee members:

- Frank Emmert, Professor of Law, Executive Director of the Center for International and Comparative Law, Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law, USA;
- Leah Wortham, Columbus School of Law of the Catholic University of America, USA;
- Leonard Hammer, Adjunct Professor of Law, Hebrew University, Israel;
- Jeff Giddings, Professor of Law, Monash University and Director of the Monash-Oakleigh Legal Service, Australia;
- Randall Abate, Professor of Law, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University College of Law;
- Lukasz Gruszczynski, Institute for Legal Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences;
- Paul Solis, Chairman of Ethical Committee, Congress, USA;
- Lauri Mälksoo, Professor of International Law at the University of Tartu, Estonia.

## **4.3. Alumni Board**

The Alumni Board is a body of AUCA Law Department alumni that is committed to helping the Law Department develop and grow in accordance with the University mission. The Board has a right to recommend changes to the existing curriculum and Law Department policies.

## **4.4. Final Review**

Once all courses and programs have been reviewed, they are presented to the Head of the Law Division for final approval.

## **V. THE QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY REVIEW**

The Quality Assurance Committee shall review the Policy every five years. The Committee recommendations for amending the Policy are considered effective upon the





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consent of the Head of the Law Division and majority vote of the Quality Assurance Committee Members.