

Decision of the FIBAA Accreditation and Certification Committee



5th Meeting on March 23, 2022

INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Project Number: 19/107
Higher Education Institution: Beirut Arab University
Location: Beirut, Lebanon
Type of Accreditation: re-accreditation

The FIBAA Accreditation and Certification Committee has taken the following decisions:

According to § 7 (6) in conjunction with § 10 (2) of the FIBAA General Terms and Conditions within the framework of procedures for the award of the FIBAA Quality Seal for Institutional Accreditation: Strategic Management from February 1, 2016 the HEI is re-accredited under conditions.

Period of Accreditation: April 12, 2021 until April 11, 2029.

Condition 1:

The University as part of the future strategy combines strategic objectives and goals with qualitatively and quantitatively measurable performance indicators (KPIs) relating to management, networks, teaching and learning, research and capacity for future change and clearly integrates annual operational planning with the institutional strategic planning process (see chapter I).

Condition 2:

The University will develop and use a professional SWOT analysis that examines the real strengths and weaknesses and identifies the opportunities and risks / threats (see chapter V).

Proof of meeting these conditions is to be submitted by December 22, 2022.

The FIBAA Quality Seal is awarded.

Assessment Report

**Institutional Accreditation:
Strategic Management**

Beirut Arab University, Lebanon



FIBAA

A. Accreditation Procedure

A contract for the institutional re-accreditation in the area “Strategic Management” was made between FIBAA and the Beirut Arab University, Lebanon (BAU) on, September 26, 2019. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the initial accreditation period (April 13, 2015 until April 12, 2021) was provisionally extended until: April 12, 2022. On September 9, 2021, BAU submitted a self-evaluation report including appendices to prove that the criteria for Institutional Accreditation: Strategic Management are met.

At the same time, FIBAA appointed a review panel. The HEI agreed the chosen experts. The panel consisted of:

Prof. Dr. Joerg Freiling (Chair)

University of Bremen, Germany

(Full Professor for Small and Medium-sized Businesses, Business Start-ups and Entrepreneurship, Chair in Small Business & Entrepreneurship)

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Ronald Glasberg

SRH Berlin, University of Applied Sciences, Berlin, Germany

(Professor of International Strategic Management)

Prof. Dr. Jamal Maalouf

Lebanese American University, Byblos, Lebanon

(Assistant Professor of Management)

Prof. Dr. Kristina Steinbiss

ESB Business School, University of Applied Sciences, Reutlingen, Germany

(Professor of Business Administration with focus on Marketing)

Maik Oneshkow

FedEx Express Germany GmbH, Frankfurt, Germany

(Manager Clearance & Brokerage OPS Frankfurt Airport)

Nadja Kolibacz

Technical University (TU) Berlin, Germany

(Student of Renewable Energy Systems (M.Sc.),

Completed: International Business Management (B.A.),

Energy Engineering and Process (B.Sc.))

FIBAA project manager:

Dr. Birger Hendriks

The assessment is based on the self-evaluation report, amended by further documents, requested by the panel, and an online conference. The online conference took place on November 8 to 10, 2021 via the video conferencing tool Zoom. At the end of the online conference, the panel gave brief feedback on its impressions to representatives of the University.

The assessment report based on this was delivered to the HEI for comments on February 19, 2022. On February 25, 2022, the HEI sent comments on the accreditation report to FIBAA that have been considered in the assessment report.

B. Summary

The Beirut Arab University (BAU) is a private, non-profit, and non-denominational Lebanese institution of higher education offering undergraduate and graduate degree programmes in Lebanon. BAU's main campus is situated in Beirut. Moreover, BAU has two campuses in Debbieh (Mount Lebanon governorate) and in the Bekaa region as well as one branch in Tripoli.

The University has formulated clear and comprehensible strategic objectives based on its mission and vision. BAU is targeting students who are looking for quality education at affordable tuition fees.

The panel supports BAU's strategic objectives that relate to all relevant areas of its activities as a university, in particular higher education and training, scientific research, engagement for the public, strategic cooperation with other universities and institutions at national and international level and diversifying financial resources. These objectives are part of BAU's Strategy 2013 – 2020. BAU presented its self-evaluation report (SER) based on this strategy because work is still in progress on the new strategy for 2020 to 2030.

BAU's strategic objectives and processes for the further development of its activities are reflected in key performance indicators (KPIs) against which institutional performance is measured. It reacts to new and changing requirements of its stakeholders and to new opportunities and risks, and regularly monitors the effectiveness of its activities. However, the panel takes the view that the KPIs do not allow in all cases to measure the effectiveness of actions clearly and reliably. Also, in the panel's opinion the University must combine in its future strategy strategic objectives and goals with qualitatively and quantitatively measurable performance indicators (KPIs) and clearly integrate annual operational planning with the institutional strategic planning process.

BAU has established and defined various bodies, academic and administrative Councils and Committees as well as offices and centres for its administration and support services. The tasks and competencies of all involved bodies and functions are clearly and transparently regulated. The University management and self-governing structures are functional and effective.

BAU has a quality assurance system (QAS) with a quality management (QM) in place. Based on the Quality Manual responsible for keeping the QAS functioning are the Quality Assurance Committee at University level and the Quality Assurance Committees at the level of each Faculty as well as the Dean for Academic Development & Quality.

The panel welcomes that BAU encourages community service. Staff of the University participate in a range of community-oriented activities in areas such as environmental issues and ecology, medical treatment and consultancy services.

The panel also welcomes that the list of cooperating international universities includes institutions that have a good reputation and open future chances for students and staff exchange. However, the panel also has the view, that BAU should clarify the criteria for selecting partner universities and networks.

BAU has a plausible and coherent portfolio of study programmes, which reflect current and conceivable future developments in the respective discipline, as well as demands of (prospective) students and the labour market.

The panel appreciates that BAU identifies research themes that the University should focus on, identifies new fields of research and takes them into account in the further development of its research strategy. The panel recommends BAU for the future defining clear directions by agreeing a set of realistic, achievable and measurable targets for the next five years.

The panel welcomes that BAU conducts SWOT analyses. However, the analysis is only based on satisfaction rates of students and staff and possibly other stakeholders. This kind of SWOT analysis does in most cases not allow to find out all real weaknesses.

C. Panel Recommendation

According to § 7 (3) in conjunction with § 10 (2) of the “Special Conditions for awarding the FIBAA Quality Seal for the Institutional Accreditation: Strategic Management”, the Beirut Arab University (BAU) is re-accredited under the following conditions:

Condition 1:

The University as part of the future strategy combines strategic objectives and goals with qualitatively and quantitatively measurable performance indicators (KPIs) relating to management, networks, teaching and learning, research and capacity for future change and clearly integrates annual operational planning with the institutional strategic planning process (see chapter I).

Condition 2:

The University will develop and use a professional SWOT analysis that examines the real strengths and weaknesses and identifies the opportunities and risks / threats (see chapter V).

Proof of meeting these conditions is to be submitted by December 22, 2022.

Period of Accreditation: April 12, 2021 until April 11, 2029.

The panel members identified areas that could be further developed. The panel recommends:

- for assessments and SWOT analyses also involving persons or bodies who are unbiased (e.g. advisory boards) (see chapter I),
- finding a reasonable balance between participation of stakeholders and clear decision-making processes (see chapter I),
- checking whether it can be effective reducing the scope of graduate programmes and clustering programmes rather than diversifying (see chapter III),

- for the future defining clear directions by agreeing a set of realistic, achievable and measurable targets of research for the next five years (see chapter IV),
- publishing its quality assurance reports (see chapter V),
- for the structural change-management developing roadmaps and defining milestones as well as prioritising the change projects.

There are criteria that exceed the quality requirements:

- Societal impact (see chapter I),
- Partners (see chapter II).

Institutional Background

Beirut Arab University (BAU), founded in 1960, is a private non-profit institution for higher education. In the same year BAU started with one main campus in the capital Beirut with two faculties, the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Law. One year later, the Faculty of Commerce was launched. In 1962, the University established the Faculty of Architectural Engineering, in 1975, the Faculty of Engineering was added. One year later, in 1976, the Faculty of Science was established. In 1986, the University launched the Faculty of Pharmacy. Due to the unstable political situation, the launching of another two faculties came only nine years later, in 1995; both the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Dentistry were added.

In 2005, the Faculty of Nursing became the tenth Faculty at BAU. It was reformed to become the Faculty of Health Sciences in 2007, which includes the majors of Nursing, Medical Laboratory Technology, Physical Therapy, and Nutrition & Dietetics.

With now ten faculties, BAU offers 37 undergraduate and 67 postgraduate programmes across a broad range of fields for currently 7,322 undergraduate students and 1,718 graduate and postgraduate students from Lebanon and the region, in total 9,040 students (as of 2021).

In 2006, BAU established a new site (33 kilometers south of Beirut) in Debbieh, to be an extension of Beirut campus. Currently, this site encompasses the Faculties of Architecture-Design and Built Environment, Engineering, Science and Business Administration. In 2009 a Research Centre for Environment and Development was established in a new branch in the Bekaa region (45 km east of Beirut). In 2010, a new BAU branch was established in Tripoli (88 kilometers north of Beirut), which now accommodates five Faculties: Business Administration, Architecture-Design and Built Environment, Engineering, Science, and Health Sciences.

Today, BAU is one of 41 higher education institutions in Lebanon, 40 of them are private universities, one is a public university. Moreover, there are five university institutes and colleges as well as one university institute for religious studies in Lebanon. The sector of private universities is supervised by the Directorate General of Higher Education (DGHE) within the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE). The Lebanese higher educational system follows in several parts the Bologna Process since 2014, after adopting the new “Higher Education Law 285” including the Bachelor, Master and Doctoral study structure. The main law regulating the private sector was passed in 1961 and modernised in 1996.

BAU as a private university is independent from government and largely autonomous in terms of budget and financing, organizational planning, establishing management structures as well as arranging teaching and learning, based on the 1961 law and the current Higher Education Law 285. University and academic staff members are free to determine the contents and processes of research and to define research projects. Researchers are not bound to any directives from the government.

Moreover, BAU established community service centres such as the “Digital Fabrication Laboratory” at the Faculty of Architecture-Design & Built Environment to be the first of its kind in the region. The “Legal Clinic” is a specialized unit in practical training at the Faculty of Law & Political Science, aiming to spread legal culture in society and provide free legal services

and consultations to groups in need. The Faculty of Science launched in 2018 the “Centre of Applied Statistics” to serve BAU and non-BAU communities in terms of data and statistical analysis. The Faculty of Business Administration has established a “Trading Room for Teaching & Research”. The American Heart Association (AHA) certified the Faculty of Health Sciences at BAU as a centre that provides Basic Life Support (BLS). The Center for Consultation and Studies serves the community through conducting analyses of drugs, supplements and other testing analyses of soil and constructive materials. In 2017, BAU launched Beirut Arab University Healthcare Centre (BAUHC) for students, staff, and community in line with the BAU strategy, which provides the community with the highest standards of medical care for acute and chronic illnesses at affordable prices.

0. Basic Data and Information

Statistical overview of the BAU:

| | |
|--|--|
| | Beirut Arab University (BAU) P.O. Box: 11 50 20 Riad El Solh, 11072809 Beirut, Lebanon |
| Legal status of the HEI: | Private (non-profit) University, state accredited by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Lebanon since 1961 |
| Year of foundation: | 1960 |
| Number of academic staff: | <p>Full-time academic staff</p> <p>Professors 37</p> <p>Associate professors 56</p> <p>Assistant professors 91</p> <p>Senior lecturers 8</p> <p>Lecturers 26</p> <p>Total 218</p> <p>Part-time academic staff 389</p> |
| Number of non-academic staff: | <p>Faculties 214</p> <p>Central campus Beirut and faculties 558</p> |
| Number visiting lecturers (not employed at the institution): | 46 |
| Number of degree programmes offered: | Undergraduate programmes: 37 Graduate programmes: 67 |
| Number of degree-seeking students enrolled: | Undergraduate students: 7,322 Graduate and Postgraduate students: 1,718 Total: 9,040 |

During the last five years the number of students developed as follows:

Number of undergraduate students

| Faculty | 2017-2018 | 2018-2019 | 2019-2020 | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Human Sciences | 157 | 158 | 167 | 205 | 245 |
| Law and Political Science | 225 | 222 | 236 | 253 | 258 |
| Business Administration | 1233 | 1122 | 1107 | 1069 | 1013 |
| Architecture – Design & Built Environment | 981 | 938 | 850 | 740 | 678 |
| Engineering | 2938 | 2554 | 2192 | 1910 | 1717 |
| Science | 523 | 525 | 527 | 580 | 801 |
| Pharmacy | 475 | 503 | 511 | 554 | 590 |
| Medicine | 521 | 574 | 566 | 608 | 611 |
| Dentistry | 353 | 403 | 401 | 406 | 421 |
| Health Sciences | 612 | 669 | 741 | 830 | 925 |
| First-year students | 89 | 71 | 84 | 51 | 63 |
| Total | 8107 | 7739 | 7382 | 7206 | 7322 |

Number of graduates who completed their degrees:

| Year | Number |
|-------------|---------------|
| 2016 | 2164 |
| 2017 | 2078 |
| 2018 | 1889 |
| 2019 | 1962 |
| 2020 | 1970 |
| 2021 | 1718 |

BAU's management structure and functions are described by its by-laws. They consist of the following councils and decision-making levels¹:

University Board of Trustees, University Council, President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary General, Deans' Board, Deans, University Committees, and various councils of Faculties and

¹ See also Annex 1 "BAU Organizational Structure"

Departments are the main governance and decision-making bodies of the University. All are integrated into decision-making processes and have the following responsibilities:

University Board of Trustees (UBT)

The University Board of Trustees is consisting of the Chairman of Wakf Al-Bir Wal Ihsan (a non-profit Lebanese social organisation that founded the University), three members from Wakf Al-Bir Wal Ihsan, the President of the University, the Secretary General, as well as three other members from outside the University. UBT is the highest decision-making body at the University and is concerned mainly with policymaking. The Board has legal authority for overall control of the University, appoints the BAU President as well as the Deans and approves the annual budget.

University Council (UC)

The University Council consists of University President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary General, Deans, two members from Wakf Al-Bir Wal Ihsan. Representatives from the administrative or academic staff may be invited to attend the Council meetings without having the right to vote. The University Council is the main key operational decision-maker in the University.

University President

The BAU President is selected by the University Board of Trustees, from three nominees. Administrative experience and academic qualifications are criteria for appointment, for a period of four years subject to renewal. He / she is the University's representative and is responsible for the development of strategic planning and leading the University to accomplish its mission. In addition, BAU's President follows the performance of Faculties, University administrative units, University centers, and others. Moreover, the President submits to the University Council, at the end of each academic year, an annual report to be approved and then presented to the University Board of Trustees.

Vice-President for Tripoli Branch Affairs

The Vice-President for Tripoli branch affairs is appointed to manage all the academic and non-academic affairs of the branch.

Vice-President for Medical Sciences

The Vice-President for Medical Sciences coordinates educational, research and community services among the Medical Faculties.

The University Secretary General

The Secretary General, in coordination with BAU president, supervises the organisation, planning, designing of the different policies related to BAU's annual budget, preservation of assets and strategic planning. The Secretary General has as assistants: director of student affairs, director of financial affairs, director of human resources, director of services and utilities, director of public relations, director of purchasing, director of engineering affairs, director of student activities and director of graduate studies.

The Deans Board

The Deans Board, under the chair of BAU President, discusses the academic affairs, Faculties' affairs, the academic staff member affairs, student affairs, scientific research and postgraduate studies affairs, and other University issues.

The Faculty Council

The Faculty Council is responsible for maintaining a high standard of teaching and learning, research, and serving Lebanese society. Faculty Council includes departments' chairs, academic staff, external professional members, Faculty registrar and students' representatives.

The Faculty Deans

Deans are responsible for managing their Faculty according to the University rules and regulations as well as for supervising the academic and administrative affairs. They are also responsible for the enhancement of Faculty programmes and curricula.

The Dean of Academic Development & Quality

The Dean of Academic Development & Quality reports to the President and is responsible for managing a comprehensive institutional development to include quality assurance, University network, strategic planning and academic development, which includes:

- Giving advice on issues and strategies relating to overall University development
- Performing other related duties assigned by the President
- Implementing effective managing methods of communication
- Ensuring dynamic processes in Faculties' advisory committees
- Ensuring the operation of quality assurance in the University
- Supporting the Faculties in programme accreditation and maintenance
- Following up the process of institutional accreditation.
- Supporting Faculties' network, nationally and internationally
- Supporting partnerships with other universities and organisations.

The Dean of Student Affairs

The Dean of Student Affairs supervises the students' affairs administration and student activities administration, in accordance with the objectives and rules of the University. Moreover, the Dean of Students' Affairs presents a report to the BAU President at the end of each academic year on the assigned tasks.

The Dean of Graduate Studies and Research

The Dean of Graduate Studies and Research reports to the President and serves as a member of the University "Scientific Research Committee" and the University "Graduate Studies Committee," and as a member of the "University Council."

The Department Councils

BAU's Faculties are subdivided in departments; each has its own internal procedures, regulations and council. The department council is responsible for maintaining a high standard of teaching and learning, research, and serving Lebanese society.

Due to the enhancement of the University responsibilities in education, research and community services, the University President, according to the University policy, has decided to establish committees comprising academic, administrative and technical personnel. The main objectives of these committees are to discuss specified relevant issues and to raise suggestions to the higher levels of decision-making.

There is an Advisory Committee in each Faculty and at the University level. Representative examples are:

- Students' Affairs Committee
- Educational Programmes Committee
- Quality Assurance Committee
- Scientific Research Committee
- Libraries Committee
- Laboratories Committee
- Clinical Titles Committee
- Academic Staff Promotion Committee
- Strategy Committee
- Students' Financial Aids Committee
- Financial Affairs Committee
- Planning Committee
- Disaster and Risk Management Committee
- Engineering and Building Affairs Committee.

All of these committees have different constitutions opening the opportunity for diverse groups and stakeholders to participate.

Due to the social and economic crisis, in addition to the unstable political situation in Lebanon, and since BAU is a non-profit institution for higher education it still works within a "middle-class" of Lebanese society and other Arab nationalities. Parents aspire their children would acquire a high-quality education in BAU where almost all the University programmes have earned "International Programme Accreditation". BAU seeks to meet the diverse needs of students, local and regional market requirements of the different professions.

The main target group for BAU are potential students who are looking for quality education at affordable tuition fees. BAU works on reviews and feedback coming from internal and external stakeholders. BAU measures the satisfaction of stakeholders about the performance of its graduates through the Faculties' advisory committees and the involvement of stakeholders in SWOT analyses.

In addition, BAU is addressing institutions and organisations abroad by promoting internationalisation and facilitating the mobility of academic staff, non-academic staff and students through international projects like ERASMUS+.

BAU as an educational institution is classified as a non-profit organisation. According to BAU's Management the budget amounts to about 85 million US \$ per year. The essential sources of funds include the following:

- Student Tuition Fees: These include tuition fees and all other types of administrative fees that contribute to about 90 % of the University income. The tuition covers undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate programmes, intensive English, and remedial courses. This income component has decreased during the last years because BAU for competition reasons had to reduce the individual student tuition fees. Therefore, the expenditures had to be cut.
- BAU's Medical Services with dental clinics belonging to the Faculty of Dentistry, the nutrition and dietetics clinic, and physical therapy clinic at the Faculty of Health

Sciences. In addition, the BAU Health Care Centre (BAUHC) launched in 2017 serves the BAU community and the surrounding area of the University.

- Consultancy services, laboratory testing and experimentation, drugs analysis, cement tests, arbitration and legal counselling, and training courses.
- Governmental funds and support for the scientific research projects at BAU such as those coming from The National Council for Scientific Research (CNRS).
- Philanthropic funding mainly from donating bodies for establishing buildings, facilities at BAU (Human Rights Centre, Rifaat Nemer Trading Room, BAU's Tripoli branch, Entrepreneurial centre in Tripoli branch) and for students' tuition fees.
- Funding from the European Union (EU) through "Tempus" Projects and "Erasmus Mundus" since 2012 until 2015 and from the "Erasmus+" since 2015 until now. In the framework of these projects, the EU has partly funded the establishment of the Centre for Entrepreneurship (CFE) in Beirut site, the International Relations Office (IRO), the Quality Assurance Centre (QAC), in addition to purchasing some video conferencing equipment, which are currently in use for BAU activities.
- BAU invested in the banking market seeking additional revenue opportunities. These revenues cover the expenses of the University events (student activities, workshops).

I. Management

BAU works based on its mission and vision. It has developed a mission statement as well as visions and strategic objectives that are published among others in the by-laws for study programmes². Hence, based on promoting integrity, diversity, accountability, respect, social responsibility, and creativity as core values, BAU is focused on offering high-quality educational programmes, excellence in research, intellectual inquiry, critical analysis and creative thinking.

Mission:

BAU has been committed, since its establishment in 1960, to offer outstanding educational programmes and to provide an embracing environment for academic creativity and the development of leadership skills, instilling the concept of social responsibility, while respecting diversity and multicultural understanding. The University promotes a stimulating academic atmosphere for its academic staff to ensure excellence in research and the dissemination of its outcomes to address community needs, both nationally and internationally. BAU relies on the contribution of the University expertise to sustainable development of the local community, while being engaged with its alumni.

Vision:

According to its vision BAU wishes to position itself as a leading higher education institution belonging to the top universities in the region, with a global perspective that generates multicultural leaders equipped with competence and insightfulness for the development and progress of the society.

Strategy:

According to and based on its mission and vision BAU defined and launched the University “Strategy 2013 – 2020” that had been elaborated in an extensive internal process. There, it defined based on its Vision and Mission Strategic Objectives, Core Values as well as Strategic Areas for the future development. When doing this BAU took into consideration the participation of its internal and external stakeholders in the enhancement process. In addition, the degree of their satisfaction about the performance was measured to ensure the proper execution of the action plans under each strategic objective.

Strategic Objectives:

As part of the Strategy 2013 – 2020 BAU developed strategic objectives. To achieve mission and to approach its vision, the strategic objectives were designed in alignment with both and measured with performance indicators.

The strategic objectives consider all the statements displayed in the mission. Under each strategic area, a set of strategic objectives were structured to be achieved within the timeframe allocated for each one of them. Accordingly, the strategic objectives as illustrated in the Strategy are mission based. The governance system is the core of driving all the policies and procedures to achieve BAU mission at all levels. Other objectives are the following ones:

- to provide high-quality education and training

² As of 2021.

- to offer a supportive environment for academic staff
- to contribute significantly to the advancement of research
- to enhance academic and student services
- to enrich university life for all students
- to stimulate public engagement
- to instil in graduates the competencies that satisfy job-market needs
- to strengthen academic cooperation and relations at national and international level
- to diversify financial resources.

These strategic objectives have been put into practice as follows:

Restructuring the Governance System as a major objective has been achieved. All Faculty councils and Faculties' advisory committees include a diverse body of stakeholders. The constitution of councils and committees has been approved by the University administration. The contribution of stakeholders is maintained by seeking their feedback and suggestions for continuous enhancement. The degree of their satisfaction and their opinions in achievements was discussed in the formal meetings. They participate in curricular enhancement, graduates' competencies to fit for purpose regarding community and job market needs. In addition, they assist the offered internships inside and outside Lebanon by direct contact or through their networks. The University administration supports all the procedures for their participation.

BAU strives to continuously improve its study programmes and education aiming at providing high-quality training. BAU involves internal and external stakeholders, such as alumni, particularly in designing new programmes, enhancing the experiential learning programmes. Students are participating in different committees in addition to the satisfaction surveys.

For BAU its academic staff is the pivot of the University's strategic planning process. It provides its academic staff with research environment and supports them to publish books and articles in top ranked journals and to participate effectively in international reputable conferences. Moreover, BAU issued six indexed journals covering different scientific disciplines. The promotion criteria for the academic staff were upgraded according to the latest international benchmarks in this regard.

The academic staff's intellectual freedom is highly considered to promote their creativity in finding solutions for their community. BAU seeks satisfaction of the academic staff regarding their promotion criteria, performance evaluation, teaching and learning facilities, and research. Their feedback is important for enhancement and development processes of BAU.

BAU aims to promote an internationalisation culture, to facilitate mobility of staff and students, and to support international multidisciplinary research. Moreover, BAU assists the communication of the students with different international bodies by using its networks and it supports the students' needs in this regard in preparation and submission of their documents to the concerned body.

Furthermore, BAU is expanding its network on international level through different and diverse mechanisms including bilateral agreements with international institutions to share best practices as well as research collaboration; international projects such as "ERASMUS+" projects and through BAU membership in international organisations.

BAU seeks to organize international conferences, workshops and other international activities that help BAU to exchange thoughts and new innovative ideas. As indicated in its Strategy, BAU aims to facilitate the mobility of international staff and students in different fields in order to acquire new skills and knowledge and to strengthen the academic system at BAU.

Resources Management

Based on its Strategy 2013-2020 BAU aimed at managing the maximum use of its resources in governance and administration, education, research and community services and promoting its national and international relations activities. Thus, BAU strives to appoint high caliber academic staff through modifying the selection criteria to employ the best applicants. In addition, the non-academic staff are selected based on specific criteria to ensure their fitness for the assigned jobs. BAU observes diversity of its staff regarding nationalities and gender. Accordingly, there is no discrimination at either the administrative or the academic level.

Regarding the physical resources, BAU investigates its resources annually based on planning and taking the feedback from the University community to upgrade its resources. Different laboratories and study halls have been upgraded or constructed. IT facilities are continuously upgraded according to its Strategy even before COVID-19 pandemic and the need of expanding the online activities in teaching, learning and assessment. BAU established its Health Care Centre to introduce medical services to BAU and its surrounding community.

Budget preparation is a systematic procedure that follows-up the strategic planning process. It facilitates considering the continuous revision of the percentage allocated for education, research, facilities, new buildings, health services and other expenses. For the medium plan, BAU considers making use of different approaches beside students' fees such as incomes from its centers or participation in national or international research or community projects. The departmental budgets are the fundamental units of the academic budget of the institution. Each department budget submitted every spring semester, then adjusted and approved by Faculty council and eventually by the University administration. The final budget approved by the University Board of Trustees each year.

In the strategy, certain actions are considered to increase fund-raising Initiatives, such as attracting research funding and other grants to the University, highlighting the role of University centres in fund-raising and providing a financial report for each centre/programme/research project.

Diversifying financial resources

The strategic goal of diversifying the financial resources is important for reducing the dependency on tuition fees paid by students. One of the several actions and achievement was a financial strategy evaluation. Another action was setting up a plan for financial needs, which has not been achieved yet. But in this context the volatile political and economic situation of the whole country hindered a full success.

BAU's key issues considered in the execution of the financial strategy are the following

- Long-term viability and matching the resources with objectives
- Objectives, resources and infrastructure are in an appropriate balance
- Ensuring that the teaching strategy is financially viable

- Managing the financial contribution of research
 - Setting financial objectives for income generation, including investment
 - Measuring and following-up on the financial performance
 - Maintaining the balance of resources, objectives and achievability
 - Revising the budget and applying effective internal measures.

BAU is currently exploring the possibility of adopting and implementing the enterprise concept, thus planning to establish an industrial or commercial corporation that would provide financial revenues to BAU other than the tuition fees of its students. BAU is also planning to construct a university hospital provided with the latest equipment and technology, which will not only serve the community, but will also support the training of the medical students and at the same time will provide BAU with an additional source of income. BAU has established a “Centre for Entrepreneurship” aiming to foster young BAU entrepreneurs with new innovative ideas that can be sources for financial support to young students or graduates.

Moreover, BAU introduced new investment projects, exploring a wide range of fund-raising modalities. BAU invests in the banking market seeking additional revenue opportunities. In addition, BAU has taken actions in establishing centres, which assist the University in different directions based on their missions and objectives. The activities and initiatives to build up these centres can generate additional sources of income for the University.

Decision-Making Procedures

BAU’s organisational structure includes specialized committees, boards and offices at the University level³, which facilitate the decision-making process. This process starts by raising issues and suggestions from the departments’ councils, Faculty council and committees to be discussed further and acted upon. According to BAU⁴, the departments’ councils and committees in each Faculty as well as the participation of the academic staff in the University’s committees facilitates decision-making processes.

At Faculty level, decision-making starts when issues are proposed to the departments and then to the Faculty committees to be discussed. The heads of the departments and committees then raise the proposals to the dean then submitted to the Faculty Council for further discussion. Moreover, members of the academic staff have the right to raise comments and questions in the department council. The Dean, being a liaison between the Faculty and BAU’s administration, raises the Faculty’s proposals to BAU’s higher levels for discussion according to rules and regulations.

At University level, all issues and suggestions are further discussed in the relevant University specialized committee, and then forwarded to the Deans’ Board for further discussion. The President then raises the issues discussed to the University Council to take decision. Issues are discussed at the University Council, and then forwarded, according to the University policy, to the highest authorized decision-maker, the University Board of Trustees, for final ratification before implementation.

BAU’s management system follows certain management principles:

Division of work or responsibilities, teamwork responsibility, authority and accountability, transparency, justice-based management, balance between centralization and

³ See above chapter Basic Data and Information

⁴ See self-evaluation report (SER) p 32.

decentralisation are the essential principles, which manage all activities of the University. It includes committees that originate to back-up the management regarding policies and procedures at the academic and administrative level. Clear and well-structured job descriptions ensure a proper execution of all tasks.

BAU enjoys unity of command, unity of direction, equity and stability. The Secretary General is the executive officer to whom all non-academic directors report. The Human Resources administration is responsible for development and reviewing job description for all positions. Non-academic staff are selected and promoted based on qualifications. Rules and procedures ensure reliable and predictable compliance to bylaws. Moreover, BAU has established a committee responsible for creating and reviewing policies and procedures. BAU is also using an internal audit unit, to evaluate the performance of administrative and financial sectors at the University. In 2013, BAU created new administrative positions to improve the workflow and to upgrade the administrative process. Defining job descriptions to these posts will pave the way to adopt innovation procedures in this direction. Moreover, Human Resources (HR) administration at BAU has prepared job descriptions for different administrative units, to adjust the line of responsibility and to facilitate the internal auditing of each unit.

BAU administration considers continuous review of the following issues:

- BAU continuously monitors the performance of both academic and non-academic staff to ensure that their qualifications and capabilities fit the positions' requirements. Accordingly, the selection criteria for academic staff members were evaluated and updated.
- Promotion and evaluation rules of academic staff were discussed in the committee, assigned by the University, and formally approved by the Board of Trustees.
- Supporting further development of academic and non-academic staff, BAU encourages their participation in "Erasmus+" programmes and facilitates all the procedural work.
- BAU adopted the policy of involving students in councils and committees.

Measuring of achievements

In its self-evaluation report (SER) and during the online conference BAU presented to the panel overviews of further actions that have been taken for putting the strategic objectives into practice and measuring them as well as the achievements with key point indicators (KPI). BAU developed different KPIs for the different fields such as teaching and learning workshops, students' surveys, research projects of students and assessment reports from international accrediting bodies. In some parts the University could reach progress, such as the following examples:

In research the publications of academic staff were more than doubled between 2015 and 2019. Also, the quality of publications was enhanced as far as the number of publications in indexed journals are concerned. Interdisciplinary research between Faculties developed from zero (2015) to 21 (2018) and 15 (2019).

Relating to the quality of education the University measured the level of satisfaction of students and academic staff. As far as this reached with various aspects at least 70 % the University seemed to be content with the results.

Taking stock related to each strategic objective and goal is completed by a SWOT analysis in the self evaluation report. The SWOT analyses assist the design of the strategy and the operational process in collaboration with Faculties and administrative departments. Also, BAU assesses the questions how strategic objectives are translated into action and how the University translates its strategy into the design and further development of operational processes as strengths. These questions are addressed to students, staff, and external stakeholders about their satisfaction. However, the SWOT analyses do not set out weaknesses that BAU is seeking to address and areas it wishes to improve.

According to BAU, the different councils and committees met regularly to follow-up the execution of the strategic objectives, to review the policies of execution and to modify them when there is a need.

BAU established a dynamic internal system to monitor and evaluate the internal academic and administrative performance. The quality assurance process is active at all institutional levels including the ongoing evaluation of Faculty programmes and curricula. The results of the quality assurance procedures are collected, analyzed and used for enhancement of performance at all levels.

Qualitatively and quantitatively measurable KPIs (identified by the panel and valid for all chapters)

The action planning elements of the strategic stocktaking and planning did not specify the resources allocated to each planned action to enable implementation transparently and effectively. Also, the strategic planning and taking stock did specify “key performance indicators (KPIs)” but in several cases⁵ not those against which institutional performance could be measured. Insofar, the KPIs were not measurable and precise.

Moreover, statements about financial stability, financial liquidity or financial efficiency are lacking, also statements about risk management. The University did not describe an annual operational or business planning process which should be formally integrated with the institutional strategic planning process. This can make it more difficult to effectively monitor developments such as faculty performance against institutional objectives.

New “Strategy 2020 – 2030”

During the online conference and with a PowerPoint presentation, BAU described its concept of a new “Strategy 2020 – 2030”. Under the leadership of the President the Strategy Committee had the central coordination for elaborating the new Strategy as well as for monitoring it. Moreover, ten other committees are involved into the preparatory discussions. It is planned, that the new strategy will be assessed on a yearly basis.

BAU presented as a modified vision: “To be distinguished for excellence in education, research, innovation and be of benefit to our society”. Also, it has developed a changed mission: “We are committed to offering outstanding learning experiences and high-quality research. We are keen on reviving and sustaining our networks nationally and internationally. We stimulate creativity and innovation while instilling the concept of leadership and resilience to empower the community.”

BAU wants to follow the values sustainability, resilience, wisdom, creativity, excellence and humanity

⁵ For examples see below “Assessment”.

Based on its vision and mission the University will focus on the following topics and objectives:

1. Sustainable University
 - Supporting transformation to a digital environment
 - Addressing UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)
 - Embedding resilience in our challenges
 - Ensuring and maintaining financial stability
 - Promoting the facilities and services of our campuses
2. Outstanding learning experiences
 - Maintaining the quality of the educational programs
 - Diversifying and updating methods of teaching, learning, and assessment
 - Providing a creative learning and supportive environment
 - Adopting a flexible mixed learning model for the benefit of our students
3. Inspiring People
 - Attracting, developing, and retaining excellent academic and non-academic staff
 - Attracting and retaining enthusiastic students
 - Maintaining the culture of professional development and practice
 - Empowering our students to be creative and innovative
4. Strengthening Research
 - Increasing the quality, quantity and impact of our research
 - Supporting active researchers
 - Engaging research with business, industry, and community
 - Marketing our research findings and updates to the community
5. Building Engagement
 - Building a close network with alumni
 - Strengthening relationships with the job market
 - Building engagement on the national and international levels
 - Maintaining adherence to social responsibility

Also BAU added qualitative and quantitative key performance indicators KPIs against which it wants to measure the developments of the relevant objectives. For the objective “inspiring people” BAU mentioned KPIs such as: examples of involvement of students in research, industry and business, professional development (workshops, seminars), marketing campaigns (statistics and participants), students’ records and achievements, statistics of student diversity, including marginal and disabled groups and others.

In the context of this presentation the President mentioned during the online conference that BAU wanted to finalise the new strategy in 2022.

When commenting on this report BAU took the view that its new strategy was completed regrading all core elements including the KPIs. Some minor modifications may occur during the execution of the new strategy. BAU also mentioned in its comments actions that have been taken until February 2022 based on the new objectives 2, 3 and 5 (see above).

Assessment

BAU has a sustained experience with its strategy plans that have been developed for the periods 2007 – 2012 and afterwards for 2013 – 2020. These strategies have been based on the mission and vision as well as on early defined strategic objectives. The panel noted that BAU actively translates these strategic objectives into action.

The panel welcomes that BAU presented an overview of a stock-taking process and its KPIs and achievements. All these documents provided analysis of the University's internal and external environment as well as of planning and organisational development. This includes the University's endeavours to continuously improve especially education and research and to strive for diversification in finance, portfolio growth, infrastructure development and progress towards accreditation.

The panel was impressed by the working processes at various levels that allow intensive participation of internal and external stakeholders. In this context the panel noted that under the leadership of the President the management as well as academic and administrative staff are highly motivated to further develop BAU's different areas of work and objectives.

The panel welcomes that the University management pursues a policy of decentralisation in terms of giving the Faculties power and autonomy up to a certain level. The panel supports this orientation and the formally constituted Faculty Councils as well as the policy of participating faculty and students in the different committees. However, as already in the last FIBAA Assessment Report about the Institutional Accreditation of BAU (from 2015) mentioned BAU's attempt to include all stakeholders in almost all decisions in a various way seems quite a challenge on the pace of change in the university. Therefore, the panel recommends again, finding a reasonable balance between participation of stakeholders and clear decision-making processes.

BAU realistically assesses its position in the market-place and its environment (external and internal stakeholders) and detects chances. It has derived clear strategic objectives and processes for further development of its activities, which are reflected in key performance indicators (KPIs) against which institutional performance is measured. It reacts to new and changing requirements of its stakeholders and to new chances and it regularly monitors the effectiveness of its activities. However, the panel has the view that sub-goals and KPIs do not allow in all cases to measure the effectiveness of actions clearly and reliably. Three examples: (1) BAU wants to "facilitate students' mobility and cooperation"⁶. An appropriate KPI for respective achievements could be the numbers of outgoing and incoming students per year. But BAU describes the achievement as "The awareness among students about student exchange ... has been raised.". The KPI includes as evidence "Flyers, advertisement...". (2) Important KPIs for measuring the success of "Excellence in Education" could be several criteria such as graduation rates (percentage of graduating students per cohort and time), course success rates (completion rates per course) and persistence rates (persistence of students on to the following semester). But BAU does not use these success rates as KPIs. (3) BAU wants to foster the role of its Quality Assurance Center which is useful. As KPI for measuring a success is mentioned: "Percentage of satisfaction (survey)". Satisfaction is an important KPI, but it would be preferable first to define the (sub-)goal and afterwards to measure in addition the success of a Quality Assurance Center, such as the

⁶ See BAU Strategy 2013-2020 "Excellence in Education" p. 7.

quality of students surveys, external examining, operational plans, benchmarking and action plans.

Also, while Deans and heads will interpret the strategic goals on behalf of their Faculty or Department, and set local objectives, there did not appear to be the annual operational or business planning process formally integrated with the institutional strategic planning process. The panel believes that this does not enable the management to effectively monitor faculty performance against institutional objectives.

The panel welcomes that BAU developed a new Strategy for the period 2020 to 2030. However, for the panel it is to be regretted that BAU for the accreditation procedure at hand elaborated its self-evaluation report based on the strategy 2013 to 2020 and presented the new strategy only as a short outline during the online conference. The panel was not able to assess BAU's strategic management related to the new strategy based on the PowerPoint presentation during the online conference. Apart from this it takes the view that at a first glance the new objectives open interesting perspectives although they are in some parts not clearly identifiable and measurable as examples of the new KPI's show.

After all the panel recommends the following **condition**:

The University as part of the future strategy combines strategic objectives and goals with qualitatively and quantitatively measurable performance indicators (KPIs) relating to management, networks, teaching and learning, research and capacity for future change and clearly integrates annual operational planning with the institutional strategic planning process.

The panel welcomes that BAU actively conducts SWOT analyses on a regular basis and uses them as part of a monitoring process. It was encouraged to hear that the SWOT analysis process has enabled BAU to benefit from organisational self-learning. However, as the University in many cases derives the assessments from measuring the satisfaction of students, faculty or other stakeholders, it is not guaranteed that the assessed actions or processes have necessarily a sufficient quality (see also condition in chapter V). The panel recommends the University for assessment and SWOT analyses also involving persons or bodies who are unbiased (e.g. advisory boards).

As far as the panel can see and rely on the figures that BAU has presented the University provides the necessary resources for the implementation of its strategy, particularly for innovations, and distributes them adequately. The panel notes the high dependency on tuition fees for income and that this is a challenging area for BAU in spite of other sources that BAU is receiving money from. Therefore, the panel welcomes the President's endeavours to diversify the income sources and encourages the ideas to obtain external funding.

The panel welcomes that BAU encourages community service. It notes that staff of the University participate in a range of community-oriented activities in areas such as environmental issues and ecology, medical treatment and consultancy services. Also BAU stimulates public engagement of staff and students.

| Quality requirements | Exceptional | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements |
|-------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| I. MANAGEMENT | | | | |
| I 1. Strategic objectives | | | | Condition |
| I 2. Taken measures | | | X | |
| I 3. Development of processes | | | X | |
| I 4. Decision-making | | | X | |
| I 5. Management system | | | X | |
| I 6 Societal impacts | X | | | |
| I 7. Resources | | | X | |

II. Networks

One of the strategic objectives and goals of BAU is to strengthen academic cooperation and relations at regional, national and international level and includes interaction with other academic institutions, with the alumni network Alumni & Friends, the public and other organisations as mentioned in in the Strategy of 2013-2020.

BAU is expanding its network on the international level through different and diverse mechanisms including bilateral agreements with international institutions. It aims to facilitate the mobility of international staff and students in different fields and to share best practices as well as research collaboration via international projects. BAU is participating in European “ERASMUS+” projects, at present for example with the following universities: Atatürk University (Turkey), Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (Lithuania) and University of Santiago De Compostela (Spain).

Moreover, the bilateral agreements may open opportunities for internships abroad.

During the last few years BAU signed more than 40 bilateral cooperation agreements with national and international universities from different countries such as France, Italy, Turkey, USA, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom and Germany. The list of universities is available on the BAU website⁷. These agreements enable the collaborating parties to establish academic exchanges of academic staff, researchers, experts and students.

The mobility projects are in line with the BAU strategy. Mobility of students and academic and non-academic staff is promoted for giving them the chance to gather learning and research experiences overseas. Moreover, BAU has gained experience for the procedures of credit transfer between the “ECTS” and the “American credit hour system.”

As already mentioned above⁸, BAU stakeholders participate in the advisory committees and in different councils. In this context, BAU stakeholders help update the educational programmes, assist in various forms of fund-raising and elaborating projects of research.

As far as selecting partner organisations is concerned, BAU in line with its strategic objectives strives to enhance its relations at national, regional and international level and

⁷ <https://www.bau.edu.lb/International-Relations-Office/International-Agreements>

⁸ See chapter I.

selects partners that have similar priorities and interests. This includes higher education institutions, public authorities, business and industry, syndicates and orders, national and international associations. Also, BAU seeks to participate in projects that are funded by third parties, in particular from the EU.

When commenting on the draft of this report BAU added that the University chooses partners with objectives in common, priorities and benefits. As far as higher education institutions are concerned it takes into account their reputation, research interests, common programme, joint and dual degrees and previous cooperation. When it comes to public authorities, business, industry, Erasmus+ projects and NGOs: Relevant for BAU's faculties and majors are criteria such as common interests, project funding and problem solving, community services and the possibility of internships for students. Moreover BAU wants to enhance its visibility with cooperation.

Strengthening the Alumni & Friends network as a strategy serves to build a strong relationship with BAU's graduates based on cooperation and confidence. Therefore, current and future participation of alumni in international BAU networks and activities are promoted. Lectures by and workshops with alumni are organised. Key alumni are members in Faculty advisory committees.

BAU aims to promote internally a culture of internationalisation to make the University recognized at the international level and to support international multidisciplinary research.

BAU maintains its networks through conducting and evaluating the annual reports⁹, organising national and international seminars, workshops, maintaining the annual organisation of BAU's Job Fair, continually assessing the national and international projects, and posting BAU's latest news for the public on BAU's website.

Apart from organising conferences, workshops and other events on different scientific and administrative subjects in cooperation with partner institutions BAU focusses on funded projects including "Tempus," "Erasmus Mundus," and "Erasmus+." This allows capacity building as well as mobility for faculty and students. Beyond these criteria for cooperation BAU has not defined selection criteria that are basis for deciding upon cooperation with a university or other organisations.

Assessment of effectiveness

BAU deliberates the outcomes of its network activities through the regular meetings of the various University committees and councils. BAU assesses the outcomes of its networking activities by analysing the impact of these activities on the relevant sectors. Surveys were conducted to get feedback from academic and non-academic staff and students regarding the benefit of international projects. BAU also evaluates all agreements with different parties according to specific standards, guidelines and criteria to keep/terminate agreements. If a collaboration is not effective corrective actions may become necessary.

Furthermore, BAU evaluates the national and international projects through regular reports according to the quality plan of each project, especially the European projects, through regular monitoring reports. Corrective measures are taken to achieve the outcomes of the relevant project. BAU holds meetings with the concerned partners to evaluate the status of the projects and activities to propose potential corrective actions (if needed).

⁹ <https://www.bau.edu.lb/Annual-Report>

Finally, in its Strategy 2013 – 2020 on the field “Enhancing International Relations” BAU defined several goals of widening international cooperation and networking including KPIs for measuring development and success. This is even more relevant because in the FIBAA Assessment Report from 2015 the panel had noted that at that time “systematic KPI’s were not yet defined. The lack of KPI in the field of networks makes it difficult to evaluate the universities progress. Thus, the review team recommends a development of a consistent KPI system.”

Resources

BAU provides necessary support regarding human and financial resources. The mission of the IRO¹⁰ is to oversee the University’s international strategic development, as well as manage, coordinate and supervise all international relations and initiatives. IRO facilitates both students and academic and non-academic staff exchange and manages the funding for international projects.

BAU financially supports the academic staff members to participate in international projects or activities that provide cultural and academic learning opportunities. BAU also offers training programmes to academic staff and students on how to participate in national and international activities. A set of guidelines and procedures was developed and disseminated through the University website and platforms for students as well as academic and non-academic staff to help them participate in international activities.

SWOT Analysis

BAU conducted a survey on network achievements in fall 2020-2021 based on 1,901 respondents from the BAU academic staff (291), non-academic staff (232) and students (1378). The questions were grouped in different sections for each network substandard and the resulting weighted average was calculated for each one as described in the following table:

| SWOT | Item | New Result | Old Result |
|---------------|--|------------|------------|
| Strengths | BAU has signed agreements with other universities. | 80.67 | 72 |
| | BAU has an applicable and effective strategy towards achieving national and international recognition. | 81.40 | 72 |
| Opportunities | BAU established the Faculty Advisory Committees aiming at strengthening the relation and partnership with its community. | 80.07 | 70 |

¹⁰ International Relations Offices of BAU.

| | | | |
|---------------|--|-------|----|
| Opportunities | BAU has established networks with business sector, foundations, and social organisations. | 78.67 | 69 |
| | BAU tracks national and international initiatives, events, activities, and programmes. | 80.20 | 70 |
| | BAU gained an international reputation in the last few years due to the continuous upgrading of its networks. | 81.47 | 70 |
| | BAU maintains existing national and international relations. | 82.27 | 70 |
| Opportunities | BAU stimulates existing national and international networks. | 81.07 | 69 |
| | BAU organizes national and international seminars, workshops, and conferences. | 81.00 | 71 |
| | BAU participates in higher education European projects (Erasmus+ capacity building and mobility programmes). | 81.07 | 70 |
| | BAU maintains contact with its alumni locally and abroad. | 74.07 | 67 |
| Strengths | BAU regularly evaluates agreements with universities, hospitals, and other organisations. | 80.13 | 70 |
| | BAU evaluates the national and international projects through regular reports. | 76.53 | 68 |
| | BAU holds regular meetings with the concerned partners to evaluate network activities. | 77.07 | 67 |
| | BAU assesses the outcomes of its network activity through regularly revising the networking reports. | 76.47 | 67 |
| Opportunities | BAU enjoys an increase in the number of national /international partnerships. | 78.07 | 69 |
| | BAU enjoys an increase in the number of annual participations in international projects, activities, and programmes. | 77.53 | 67 |
| Strengths | BAU supports the academic staff members to participate in international projects or activities that provide | 78.27 | 70 |

| | | | |
|--|---|-------|----|
| | cultural and academic learning opportunities. | | |
| | BAU has a website that facilitates national and international interactions. | 81.00 | 71 |
| | BAU offers training programmes to develop and submit projects. | 76.27 | 66 |
| | BAU offers training programmes to academic staff and students on how to participate in national and international activities. | 73.87 | 65 |
| | BAU facilitates the attraction of national and international projects and funds. | 75.20 | 68 |

Referring to the described results, BAU concluded that in consequence of its ongoing actions taken all items met the expectations of stakeholders because their satisfaction result exceeded 70 %. In addition, there were improvements as compared with the results of 2014.¹¹

According to BAU, these SWOT analysis results will be used in preparing the new network strategy 2020-2030 such as proposing joint training programmes between the University / Faculties and the industry, to exchange and share mutual experience, emphasising the participation of alumni in the various University / Faculty committees, and improving the services offered by the “Alumni and Career Office”.

Assessment

In considering the University’s links and aspirations, the panel welcomes that BAU strives to widen its cooperation and during the last years signed respective agreements with other national and international universities and organisations. This is in line with its strategic objectives and concept. The panel notes that BAU can take advantage of the cooperation especially with the European Union for funded projects. They have positive effects on research, teaching, internationality, and mobility of its staff and students. The SWOT analysis shows that BAU made progress during the last years when it comes to measure the number of concluded agreements, the established Faculty Advisory Committees, the participation in international projects and the self-evaluation of these activities.

The panel welcomes that the list of cooperating international universities includes several institutions that have a good reputation and open future chances for student and staff exchange. The panel also takes the view that BAU has clarified the criteria for selecting partner universities and networks.

This may require increasing the departments of academic and administrative staff involved. In this context the panel reminds BAU of the FIBAA Assessment report 2015¹² which had

¹¹ Please refer to the deficits identified by the panel about the SWOT analysis as such: chapter I Management.

¹² See Report p. 29.

noted that the University “shall be subject to further investments in the future. The reviewers recommend considering that the international office may be strengthened.”

The effectiveness of cooperation with other universities and institutions is measured and monitored on a regular basis. This happens internally, but also with regular meetings with the partners. As far as the SWOT analysis is concerned the panel notes that BAU made progress in additional aspects such as establishing the Faculty Advisory Committees as well as networks with business and social organisations and foundations. However, also referring to the assessment of chapter I, some criteria that are part of the SWOT analysis are not qualitatively and / or quantitatively measurable such as maintaining existing relations or gaining international reputation. Also, the SWOT analysis shows strengths and opportunities but not weaknesses and threats (see condition in chapter V). This is caused by the design of questions and answers: Assessed is the relative level of satisfaction by students and staff. If the satisfaction is above 70 % any weaknesses and threats are excluded.

In this context the panel welcomes that BAU developed measurements with achievements and KPIs as recommended in the FIBAA Assessment Report 2015. Apart from this, the panel takes the view that these KPIs should be measurable and allow to measure progress¹³.

The panel has the view that the management of BAU should also take into account risks and important goals that are measurable with clear KPIs, irrespective of satisfaction of stakeholders (see also condition in chapter I. Management).

The HEI provides the necessary resources for the implementation of its networking strategy and distributes them adequately. However, taking into account the advantages BAU can take from the cooperation with other universities it might be worth spending even more financial resources for these projects.

| Quality Requirements | Exceptional | Exceeds the Quality Requirements | Meets the Quality Requirements | Fails to Meet the Quality Requirements |
|------------------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| II. Networks | | | | |
| II 1. Strategic Objectives | | | X | |
| II 2. Partners | | X | | |
| II 3. Effectiveness and Efficiency | | | X | |
| II 4. Resources | | | X | |

III. Teaching and Learning

BAU offers 45 undergraduate programmes for 7,322 students enrolled for these programmes while 1,718 students are enrolled for 67 graduate and postgraduate programmes¹⁴.

Structural developments

During the last years, the numbers of enrolled students have increased. So is the prognosis for the year 2022. During the last eight years BAU developed and installed in eight of its ten

¹³ See above chapter I (condition).

¹⁴ Numbers are referring to the year 2021.

Faculties 21 new study programmes which are undergraduate, graduate (Diploma and Master) or PhD programmes (programme names and year of introduction):

- Graphic Design: 2014
- Interior Design : 2014 Fashion Design: 2017
- Master in Architecture: 2018
- Master in Creative Sustainability: 2018
- Ph.D. Architecture: 2018
- Petrol Engineering: 2013
- Biomedical Engineering: 2017
- Chemical Engineering: 2017
- Master in Traffic Safety: 2017
- Master in Medical Physics: 2017
- Diploma in Medical Law: 2017
- Diploma in Procedures Law: 2017
- Diploma in Construction Law: 2017
- Diploma of Women Studies: 2017
- Teaching Diploma: 2014
- Master of Clinical Psychology: 2017
- Ph.D. in Libraries and Information Technology: 2017
- Doctor of Business Administration: 2017
- Ph.D. in Dentistry: 2015
- Infection and Prevention Control: 2016
- Analysis and food safety: 2017

All study programmes are listed on the website. Moreover, BAU offers to students more than 50 elective courses with their detailed descriptions on the University's website. Some of them have the same title and content and are organised in parallel. BAU has 221 full-time academic staff members and 394 part-time lecturers. 366 members belong to non-academic staff, in addition 194 externals.

There are another 1,785 students who take part in continuing education. The (short) courses are offered by BAU's Center for Continuing and Professional Education (CCPE).

Moreover, CCPE plans vocational and non-vocational seminars, workshops on demand, public conference activities based on "education for everyone" and "life-long learning" principles, making publications on and issuing certificates for such activities¹⁵.

Achieving high quality in education is one of BAU's strategic objectives. The strategic planning considers all areas of education and supportive learning resources to provide the students with an effective learning environment. The programmes and diversity of educational modules of the curricula were designed to be relevant to the current trends in each field. Likewise, the mandatory and elective courses are continuously enhanced to cope with recent changes in the corresponding domain.

Teachers use student-centered learning as a method of training. BAU orients its programmes at the needs of the labour-market. Stakeholders' suggestions are included in the different domains.

¹⁵ <http://ccpe.bau.edu.lb/>.

Curriculum development, which considers the needs and expectations of students, is the first priority in the strategy of teaching and learning. In this context BAU takes into account the following factors:

- Supervision and teaching skills as well as social and communication abilities of the teaching staff
- Grading/assessment that supports learning
- Practical training modules that support the achievement of learning outcomes/competencies
- Advising students from the beginning until the end of their studies
- Involving talented students in research.

Development of curricula

The curricular design is based on determining the outcomes of courses and programme. The curriculum committee in each programme and department councils are responsible for finalising the preparatory process before discussion at the Faculty council for suggestion of approval.

The course contents must be up-to-date and in alignment with recent approaches in each field. The curriculum should emphasize the general requirements for all disciplines as follows:

- Involving research-based education,
- Applying critical thinking skills,
- Motivating to complete self-learning activities,
- Allowing intellectual freedom,
- Including community-based activities,
- Enhancing soft skills (communication skills, time management, leadership skills).

The delivery of the curricula is based on applying different teaching and learning methods, e.g., problem solving, problem-based learning, team-based learning and others. The Faculties use different training methods adapted to their specific needs for example:

- The Faculty of Pharmacy coordinates the so-called interprofessional education (IPE) at BAU with special courses. Students from two or more professions in healthcare learn together during all or some parts of their professional training.
- BAU students were asked to build an educational tool targeting the community concerning certain health programme (Covid-19, HIV, cancer, antibiotic misuse, drug addiction). Then, students were informed to determine their target setting (hospitals, primary healthcare centers, community), and their target population (well persons, persons at risk, diseased patients). They met regularly to build their educational tools and submit it to their corresponding instructor through email. The final product (educational tool) can be a poster, flyer, YouTube channel.

BAU includes into the teaching process applied knowledge and practical learning. Academic programmes incorporate syllabi with defined learning outcomes. The curricula of programmes as well as the didactics address the subject developments.

BAU integrates internationalisation in its curricula based on adopting international benchmarking. This is achieved through the application of different mechanisms:

- Facilitating the procedures for ECTS credit transfer from abroad,
- Strengthening academic cooperation with international institutions,
- Increasing the number of students from abroad,
- Encouraging the participation of students and staff in international projects such as “Erasmus+,”
- Increasing the number of international visitors at the Faculties to facilitate knowledge transfer and the internationalisation of the curricula,
- Achieving the international accreditation of almost all University programmes,
- Expanding the marketing campaigns of BAU programmes to the international level.

Introducing the “Human Rights” course into the curriculum of all Faculties as a University mandatory requirement is one of the international aspects taken into account in the implementation of curricula. Moreover, in order to stimulate student and staff mobility, BAU’s “International Relations Office” facilitates the communication of students and academic staff with the relevant international institutions.

The University has mechanisms in place for providing academic advice, including academic advisors who advise students on matters such as course choice and manage students’ academic files. During the online conference students confirmed the accessibility and quality of information made available in the BAU Rules and Regulations. They also confirmed that BAU’s website is informative and easy to use.

Covid-19 challenges

BAU also managed to cope with the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic with IT to support learning and blended learning which was confirmed by students during the online conference. The prior availability and exposure of the different e-tools adopted by the University in teaching and learning, facilitated the emergency switch to distance learning and ensured the continuity and quality of the educational process. Faculties applied various online tools in teaching and learning during COVID-19. Synchronous teaching sessions through the use of video conferencing software allow academic staff and students to host or join online meetings, access virtual study rooms with audio and high definition (HD) video and allow application sharing and session recording capabilities from any computer, smartphone or tablet devices. Moodle was used as a tool for online teaching and learning. Virtual office hours were held through Moodle chat.

Internal assessments of quality

Faculties adopt different methods of training assessments such as written, oral, performance-based exams, case studies and assignments, mini projects or senior projects.

The quality of teaching and learning is evaluated in continuous and ongoing processes as part of the University Quality Assurance System, also under the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

SWOT analyses and KPIs measure the effectiveness of the actions taken. They assist in determining the threats and points of weakness to direct the corrective actions that need to be implemented. Accordingly, expected challenges and changes can be directly dealt with to avoid unexpected situations. In this regard, different tools are used, including oral feedback and personal communications at all levels to execute prompt actions.

During COVID-19 Pandemic the University is keen to enhance the professional capabilities of the academic and non-academic staff. An agreement was signed between the University and Higher Education Development Center funded by USAID¹⁶ to offer different online webinars and workshops in various topics in higher education with special emphasis on online tools in education and administration.

Quality Assurance

As already mentioned¹⁷, BAU has set up a Quality Assurance Committee to oversee the quality process at the University headed by the University President. In each Faculty BAU established a quality assurance unit. Moreover, at University level BAU installed a Development and Quality Assurance Centre (QAC) under the supervision of the Dean of Academic Development and Quality.

Each semester, the University Quality Assurance Committee carries-out on-site visits to all Faculties and Tripoli branch to review the workflow of the quality assurance system, including assessment of documentary evidence whether documents are paper or electronic. The on-site visit includes observations of teaching and learning activities, and meetings with academic staff, students and possibly employees.

After each site-visit, the University Quality Assurance Committee Members submit their comments. The Deanship of Academic Development and Quality issues the site-visits reports to the University President. These reports include comments and recommendations and conclude a summary of the Faculty's strengths, weaknesses and prospects to be sent to the Faculty Dean. Suggestions of stakeholders are documented in Faculties' Advisory Committees. This mechanism of receiving, processing and responding to the reviews and feedback contributes to enhance the programme curricula.

For the internal Quality Assurance system at BAU, Faculties share experiences and best practices. Therefore, workshops were organised on items such as: "Standards and Indicators for Quality Assurance;" "Toward the Lebanese Quality Assurance Agency," "Internal Quality Assurance/ Development and Implementation of Operational Plan".

Facilities

As to the resources, the panel's on-site visit had to be replaced by an online conference because of the Covid-19 pandemic. BAU made available to the panel several photos of its buildings, rooms, and the library as well as descriptions in the self-evaluation report thereof.

An adequate number of classrooms is available at BAU to accommodate its students. All are upgraded, renovated, and equipped with data-shows, and other relevant facilities. It is worth mentioning that different Faculties can share their facilities among each other when needed. Traditional study halls were modified in their structure to become fit for purpose regarding team-based learning, problem-based learning and to cope with recent advances in teaching and learning that serve student-centered education.

Specialized laboratories are available in each Faculty according to the different programmes and specializations. BAU makes use of shared facilities made available for inter-related

¹⁶ United States Agency for International Development.

¹⁷ See above "Institutional Background"

disciplines. The renovation process of the laboratories responds to the emerging needs of the Faculties, either for modernization or modification of the purpose for use.

BAU strives to upgrade its IT resources, particularly after the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The academic staff, in all disciplines, make use of the different IT facilities. The University offers online orientation for students advising at the University and Faculty levels. With the aim to enhance students' learning experience, the IT resources were improved. Furthermore, the learning resources are checked annually to ensure their effectiveness.

The University libraries are supplied with updated databases to serve all programmes. In addition, off-campus services have been enhanced. Furthermore, the staff is continuously subjected to professional development to enhance and upgrade their skills in different library domains. The updating of books and periodicals is a continuous process managed by the library team. Seeking the feedback from the students about their satisfaction as library users is a continuous process and among the KPIs of BAU Strategy in this regard.

Additionally, each academic year BAU allocates a considerable budget for purchasing new books, electronic books, databases.

In the framework of continuous assessment and quality assurance procedures, measures are taken to improve the situation. BAU conducted a survey on teaching and learning in the fall of 2020 with 1,378 students and 291 academic staff members from different Faculties:

| SWOT | Item | New Result | Old Result |
|-----------|---|------------|------------|
| Strengths | Workload is adequate for academic programmes | 72.7 | 67 |
| | Academic programme provides adequate skills to work in academia and research | 76.6 | 73 |
| | BAU applies strict selective admission criteria to select highly qualified students | 70.5 | 68 |
| | The instructors are committed to give the students proper advising before registration. | 81 | 70 |
| | The instructors refer to their research in the courses | 76.3 | 70 |
| | Scientific contents of academic programme are up to date | 82.5 | 71 |
| | The assessment measures the learning outcomes of the courses | 81.9 | 72 |
| | Academic programs include general education, major and elective | 87.9 | |

| | | | |
|---------------|---|------|----|
| | courses | | |
| Opportunities | Inputs from advisory committee are taken into consideration to revise and re-evaluate the programme | 76.4 | 69 |
| | BAU offers scholarships to distinguished students as other universities | 74.5 | 68 |
| | Organizes a job fair day to introduce senior students to prospective employers | 75.9 | 70 |
| | Establish links with employers that help in the process of providing job opportunities. | 70.1 | 72 |
| | Involve relevant stakeholders and specific interest groups in programme and course design | 73.9 | 69 |
| Strengths | Academic programme provides adequate skills to work in academia and research | 76.6 | 70 |
| | Students are encouraged to perform extracurricular activities | 74.3 | 69 |
| | Academic programme appreciates discipline, honesty, and ethical values | 83.6 | 72 |
| | Academic programme develops communication skills | 81.3 | 71 |
| | Academic programme develops critical thinking | 81.5 | 71 |
| | The instructors refer to their research in the courses | 76.3 | 70 |
| | Academic programme develops leadership and decision-making skills | 77.6 | 74 |
| | Academic programme develops the ability to work in a team | 82.1 | 72 |
| Opportunities | Academic programme promotes lifelong learning | 80.6 | 72 |
| Strengths | Academic programme develops critical thinking | 81.5 | 71 |

| | | | |
|---------------|--|------|----|
| | Scientific contents of academic programme are up to date | 82.5 | 71 |
| Opportunities | Academic programme promotes lifelong learning | 80.6 | 72 |
| | Academic programmes are modernized according to international accreditation standards | 83.4 | 73 |
| | Inputs from advisory committee are taken into consideration to revise and re-evaluate the programme | 76.4 | 69 |
| Strengths | Course content reflects the exact learning outcomes of the course | 82.5 | 72 |
| | The assessment measures the learning outcomes of the courses | 81.9 | 72 |
| | Course outcomes are clear and well explained by the instructors | 82.5 | 73 |
| | Assessment criteria are clear and acceptable | 81.9 | 72 |
| | The instructors use a variety of assessment methods | 82.3 | 71 |
| Opportunities | Inputs from advisory committee are taken into consideration to revise and re-evaluate the programme | 76.4 | 69 |
| Strengths | Computing facilities are adequate to support the course work, research, and other assignments | 78.4 | 70 |
| | Educational resources (laboratories, libraries) are adequate to support the students' learning needs | 81.6 | 70 |
| | Connect facility is adequate to support student learning and communication with the instructors | 78.4 | 67 |
| | BAU provides sufficient and qualified human resources for teaching and learning. | 80.1 | |
| | BAU provides the required physical resources for teaching and learning. | 80.9 | |

Assessment

BAU has a plausible and coherent portfolio of study programmes, which reflect current and conceivable future developments in the respective discipline, as well as demands of (prospective) students and the labour market. The study programmes also reflect the institution's focus on employability of graduates. Particularly, they react to demographic developments and the diversity of the student body.

Moreover, the panel welcomes that BAU in terms of knowledge transfer offers short courses for further education which also generates additional income.

Also, the panel welcomes that BAU has answered pro-actively on the Covid-19 pandemic with introducing blended learning and online teaching and learning. However, considering the total number of BAU's graduate and postgraduate students the panel believes that the portfolio of the graduate study programmes is broad and might enclose too many different programmes. It recommends BAU checking whether it can be effective reducing the scope of graduate programmes and clustering programmes rather than diversifying.

During the online conference students reported that the teaching process emphasises applied knowledge and practical learning.

The panel welcomes that the University has recognised the need to modernise learning and teaching. This has been stated clearly in the SER¹⁸. Also, the panel underlines the importance of student-centred learning which should become fully established at the University. The panel has the view that the examples of innovative practice in student-centred learning (such as problem-based learning, experiential learning, case studies, interactive learning and IPL) should be shared more systematically.

The HEI has defined indicators in order to validate to which extent objectives have been reached. By doing so, it assures the attainment of qualification objectives, the quality and up-to-datedness of study programmes as well as adequate study conditions. It guarantees a high-quality, internationally oriented education, which secures the employability of graduates.

As far as the quality assurance system and the evaluation of teaching and programmes are concerned, the panel welcomes that BAU has installed a systematic quality assurance structure with clearly defined responsibilities which in particular includes assessments of teaching and study programmes. Also, it notes that faculty strives for continuous improvement of study programmes and teaching. The panel welcomes that conferences and workshops are being organised to raise awareness of quality policy and practice in areas such as pedagogy and research. Also, measures are in place to focus on student employment, internships, and employability as an indicator of study programme quality.

As far as the SWOT analysis is concerned the panel is referring to chapter I and II (see also condition in chapter V).

Since the online conference was conducted replacing an on-site visit, the panel did not have the opportunity to visit the BAU's buildings. It welcomes that BAU provided several photos and descriptions of its premises and facilities. Based on the materials provided, the panel formed the view that the HEI provides the necessary resources for the implementation of its teaching and learning strategy and distributes them adequately.

¹⁸ See pp. 69.

| Quality requirements | Exceptional | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| III. TEACHING AND LEARNING | | | | |
| III 1. Strategic objectives | | | X | |
| III 2. Study programmes | | | X | |
| III 3. Internationality | | | X | |
| III 4. Quality assurance | | | X | |
| III 5. Resources | | | X | |

IV. Research

Based on its strategic objectives BAU has defined as its goal “to contribute significantly to the advancement of research”¹⁹. Moreover, as a sub-strategy BAU strives to support research excellence which includes:

- to promote conducting high quality research,
- to enhance research activities nationally and internationally,
- to advance innovation in research.

Basic preconditions for BAU’s research strategy are the following corner stones: (1) Based on the law BAU as a full private university is entitled to conduct doctoral studies and has the right of doctoral provision which is important for research. (2) BAU can focus on faculties with scientific research subjects and a list of research themes that are attractive for industry and other stakeholders. Therefore, the University can play a significant and scientific role for applied research in cooperation with local industry, NGO’s, and institutions. (3) BAU has a tight frame of financial resources. It is influenced by the requirement of the Ministry²⁰, that 5 % of a University’s total revenue should be allocated to research. There is only little public funding for research available. (4) The cooperation with foreign universities, especially in the EU can open additional opportunities for research.

These strategic objectives, preconditions and perspectives allow developing and having a sustainable research strategy.

Research strategy

BAU points out that the following stakeholders are relevant for its research strategy: Faculties’ advisory committees, National Council for Scientific Research (CNRS), networks of University, including the Research Committee, and Faculties and academic staff members. Chances and challenges are identified through surveys and other feedbacks from stakeholders. Data were collected and integrated into the strategic goals and short-term plans. However, BAU was facing challenges:

(1) One challenge was the absence of acquired grants by researchers and a lack of information about granting bodies. Actions were taken to resolve this deficit, such as:

- Workshops are conducted on how to search for granting bodies

¹⁹ See above chapter I Management.

²⁰ The Lebanese Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MEHE).

- BAU signed a research agreement with CNRS and facilitates the procedures and the acquisition of all the required documents for both sides
- BAU established intramural grants for projects
- BAU encourages its researchers to apply for extramural grants and assists them through the process of application.

(2) Another challenge was lacking knowledge in Faculties about ranking of journals. BAU initiated activities to solve this deficit:

- Seminars were conducted to explain to researchers the ranking of journals and where to publish and what does an indexed journal means
- A committee was formed, and a memo was formulated and sent to all researchers informing them about journal rankings guidelines
- The publication guidelines were posted on BAU research website.

(3) A third challenge was the lack of information and standardisation of research methods and publications and absence of a definition for the role of authors and other terms in research. These questions have been clarified.

(4) A fourth challenge was a lack of clear research areas that should be focused on. This was resolved by establishing a committee that studied the research interest of BAU Faculties and elaborated a proposal of four research themes:

- Health and well-being
- Science and technology
- Society, culture and human behavior
- Creative sustainable development.

All ten Faculties aligned their research subthemes under the main four themes. BAU presented to the panel a list of research themes and subthemes for each Faculty. All postgraduate research (PhD and Master) must be focused on one of these four themes and indicated in the thesis registration forms. Four BAU journals were launched, with each one holding the title of one of the four themes.

BAU plans and implements its research activities mainly with publications, a BAU forum on research and with collaborative research.

- Research outputs from BAU staff members are published in annual research reports including seminars, events and networking.
- The objective of the BAU Research Forum is to provide a platform for all its academic staff members to meet and exchange research ideas and to find common research directions.
- BAU researchers have collaborations and joint research work with various HEIs and the strategy behind the collaboration mainly depends on the complementarity between BAU and other institutions. The international agreements and collaboration conducted in the last few years with universities outside Lebanon are facilitating research production and the quality.
- Collaboration with local authorities, such as municipalities, enable knowledge transfer to society. An example for this is the collaboration between the Faculty of Architecture-Design and Built Environment and Beirut Municipality and Tripoli Municipality, in addition to the collaboration between the Faculty of Engineering and Saida Municipality.

Internal assessments of research

The research is assessed according to the quality and significance of the journal in which this research has been published in and whether it is indexed in a reputable database. In this concern and to monitor the quality of the publications of the academic staff members, an online publication form was generated at BAU. Through this form, which is updated on annual basis, academic staff members can upload their publications. The quality of their publications and the ranking of journals, in which they have published, are then assessed and the academic staff members are notified of it upon their submission.

Moreover, the quality of research is assessed from its applicability and whether it attracts national or international collaborators. An example from the Faculty of Health Sciences: Bacterial contamination of spices was shown to be another food safety concern in Lebanon. To solve this issue an academic staff member worked on developing decontamination systems for spices with the “School of Engineering, University of Glasgow.”

Furthermore, to reward active researchers who produce quality research and publications, an incentive policy has been laid to remunerate those researchers who publish in highly ranked journals.

As for the money allocated for research, BAU has set a budget for research and all the activities relating to it, such as attending or organizing International conferences, attending or organizing research workshops and purchasing the requested equipment and chemicals. BAU has established an intramural grant programme that all Faculties can apply to, encourages its academic staff members to apply for national and international extramural grants, and facilitates the attainment of all the needed documents and procedures.

Research was one of the main self-evaluation activities in SWOT analyses. The results of the last SWOT analysis conducted with 250 academic staff members and students from different Faculties are given in the following table:

| SWOT | Item | New Result | Old Result |
|---------------|--|------------|------------|
| Strengths | BAU has a research strategy that is monitored, evaluated, and enhanced | 78 | 71 |
| | BAU research policy supports multi-cultural cooperation | 78.5 | 70 |
| | BAU research policy supports multidisciplinary research | 79 | 73 |
| | BAU research policy upholds research ethics, honesty, and discipline | 82.1 | 78 |
| | BAU Considers future perspectives to improve quality of research | 79.9 | 74 |
| Opportunities | BAU research activities are relevant to community needs | 79.5 | 71 |

| | | | |
|---------------|--|------|----|
| | BAU updates its stakeholders with the latest accomplishments and seeks their feedback | 76.5 | |
| | BAU considers the evolving necessities and demands in research and adjusts research to conform with it | 77 | |
| Strengths | BAU provides research activities that are relevant its research strategy | 77.6 | 72 |
| | BAU provides research activities that meet the university mission statement | 78.9 | 72 |
| | BAU integrates research and evidence-based practice related principles into undergraduate programmes | 78.3 | 71 |
| | Academic staff are encouraged to perform multidisciplinary research | 78.8 | 73 |
| Strengths | BAU ensures that research activities are monitored, evaluated, and enhanced | 79 | 73 |
| | Has a mechanism to follow up on the outcomes of research | 77.1 | 67 |
| Opportunities | BAU adopts a mechanism to foster publications in international journals | 77.2 | 67 |
| | Academic staff participate in international conferences | 78.9 | 75 |
| Strengths | Research resources are continuously maintained and developed | 76.4 | 70 |
| | Information Technology (IT) supports research activities | 74.1 | 67 |
| Weaknesses | BAU provides financial support for research | 67.9 | |
| Opportunities | Research environment is stimulating and productive | 74.6 | 66 |
| | BAU supports faculty members to attract research funds | 75.9 | 71 |
| | BAU provides free access to highly indexed online journals | 77 | 74 |

Assessment

BAU has a plausible research portfolio, which is embedded in its overall strategy. There are systematic linkages between research activities, teaching and knowledge transfer. The panel welcomes that BAU accepted the recommendation which was part of the Assessment Report 2015 establishing Junior Research Teams (JRT) in all Faculties based on the positive experiences of the Faculty of Pharmacy. The panel also welcomes that BAU made evident progress in terms of enhancing research. BAU encourages Faculties and staff to engage in research in a number of ways, including homegrown journals, rewarding active researchers and organising conferences that include international inputs. Also, the panel noted that BAU organises team-based research into several units. The panel welcomes that BAU also encourages staff to publications in international journals and that insofar international standards are taken into account. The panel supports BAU to give incentives for research on innovative themes.

The panel appreciates that BAU identifies research themes that the University should focus on, identifies new fields of research and takes them into account in the further development of its research strategy. It takes up scientific trends as well as research demands in its environment. Moreover, the panel recommends BAU for the future defining clear directions by agreeing a set of realistic, achievable and measurable targets of research for the next five years.

During the online conference, the panel noted that the BAU Research Department gives support to academic staff also for research activities. However, the panel formed the view that governance could lay even more emphasis on research.

As the SWOT analysis shows BAU has defined indicators in order to validate to which extent objectives have been reached. By doing so, it assures the quality as well as scientific, economic and/or societal relevance of its research activities. Nevertheless, the panel takes the view that the SWOT analysis as a tool for strategic planning should be structurally improved (see the condition in chapter V).

The panel noted that BAU provides as much financial resources as it can facing a difficult political and societal situation and that there is little public funding for research. However, from the panel's perspective, financing of research might be more undertaken on a project-based submission and an approval process following clear criteria. Also, the panel has the view that BAU should try to provide more financial resources for research.

| Quality requirements | Exceptional | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements |
|----------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| IV. RESEARCH | | | | |
| IV 1. Strategic objectives | | | X | |
| IV 2. Research activities | | | X | |
| IV 3. Quality assurance | | | X | |
| IV 4. Resources | | | X | |

V. Dynamics – Capacity for Future Change

BAU's approach to systematically use and raise its capacity for change touches all strategic objectives as they have been mentioned above²¹.

Structural change and developments

As described in chapter III, during the last eight years BAU developed and installed in eight of its ten Faculties 21 new study programmes which are undergraduate, graduate (Diploma and Master) or PhD programmes. They include two programmes on design (Graphic Design, Interior Design); two programmes on architecture; five engineering programmes; three law programmes and other programmes such as in medicine, public administration, clinical psychology, dentistry.

According to BAU²², the University developed strong and solid relationships, through its administration and Faculties, with all Lebanese Ministries, professional bodies, graduates' employment centres, vocational training centres, and civil society institutions. BAU concluded agreements that regulate these relationships²³. Moreover, BAU organises the "Open Door" event²⁴ twice a year with the participation of all Faculties for secondary school students in order to market BAU's programmes and academic degrees.

At the administrative level, the following examples illustrate the procedures of changing issues:

- The website office collaborates with the registration department to update the information on the website under close supervision of the deanery of students' affairs. This procedure facilitated the communication with students through online submission and application, particularly during the general lockdown. Updates covered different services including, Financial Aid & Scholarships, Social Financial Aid, bank loans and others.
- It is obvious that BAU because of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as of the difficult political and economic crisis of the country is facing a challenging situation and development that in some parts requires techniques of surviving. For example, BAU Healthcare Center (BAUHC) during academic years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 survived all encountered challenges, mainly imposed by the Lebanese political situation, the economic crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and Beirut Port blast. During COVID-19 lockdown and confinement period, BAUHC managed to provide health services by applying telemedicine strategy. In an initiative to support the community following Beirut Port blast, BAUHC launched a medical campaign with free of charge physician consultations and free medications for two weeks.

Recently, BAU tended to activate the methods of E-learning, distance learning and blended learning, in line with global trends in this regard, and considering the need of the current generation of students for this type of learning that is consistent with the rapid development in the means of communication. As a new strategic orientation, BAU decided in 2019, to

²¹ See chapter I Management.

²² See SER p. 86.

²³ <https://www.bau.edu.lb/Office/International-Relations>.

Quality ²⁴ <https://www.bau.edu.lb/Campus-Life/BAU%E2%80%99s-Open-Doors>

adopt the use of “Moodle”²⁵ as open-source learning-management platform, to facilitate the administration of educational content and the monitoring of learners’ performance.

During the last few years, BAU further developed international relations, based on effective partnership with international comparable institutions, through contractual agreements.

Quality Management

As described above BAU has a quality management system in place²⁶. It includes monitoring and reviewing the applied procedures and facilitating them, identifying and dealing with obstacles, and continuously monitoring any improvement. It is being applied at each level of institutional function, including Faculties, Units, and Offices. Moreover, BAU adopts policies and procedures to ensure the performance at all levels.

The “Academic Development & Quality Assurance Centre” (QAC) headed by the Dean of Academic Development & Quality is assigned to handle the planning, the implementation and the development of the quality assurance of educational processes. Non-academic staff are responsible for the overall co-ordination of BAU’s quality operations and activities.

In addition, the Quality Assurance Units (QAU) were established in all Faculties to enhance the level of academic performance and to meet international standards. QAC performs periodic site-visits to all Faculties, Departments, Centres and Offices, during which QAC members investigate and evaluate all documents and meet with students and persons in-charge. At the end, a technical report is raised to BAU top administration. Moreover, QAC tries to enhance the awareness of the quality assurance concept through conducting workshops for academic staff. Participants are trained on how to prepare technical documents and reports, including designing educational outcomes of each course and mapping them to the programme objectives.

Each unit and centre must submit an annual report addressing the achievements attained in relation to each strategic area of BAU. These reports are to be evaluated by top administration to measure the achievements and the expected outcomes. In addition, there are different evaluation forms assigned to each category of the academic and non-academic staff, where the quality of performance and tasks productivity are the main issues for evaluation.

BAU has in place a Quality Manual which is available on the BAU website. It explains inter alia the procedures required for the implementation of the quality assurance system and the above-mentioned responsibilities in a more generic way.

IT improvements

BAU continuously upgrades its IT facilities to cope with the emerging needs of knowledge transfer, develops the existing laboratories to meet the learning needs of students, and renovates the offices and study halls in all Faculties. Moreover, BAU has accomplished a great deal of improvement in its Libraries <https://www.bau.edu.lb/Libraries>. Libraries are regularly supplied with new and recent textbooks and databases (e.g., Access Medicine and Access Pharmacy). The online services of the Libraries have been enhanced. BAU subscribed to international journals of high impact factors.

²⁵ See above chapter III.

²⁶ See above chapter III Teaching and learning; moreover: <https://www.bau.edu.lb/Academic-Development-and-Quality-Assurance-Center/Quality-Assurance-Process>.

To provide high quality services to its students and staff and to improve the pre-existing ones, BAU continuously enhances its IT Department and increases the capacity of the BAU portal to accommodate the amounts of online services. BAU also provides and implements new means of virtual communications to facilitate online teaching that was forced upon BAU and other higher education institutions during COVID-19 pandemic that struck the whole world.

Innovations

As far as innovation in the different fields of activity is concerned, BAU described respective changes.

- In the area of teaching and learning, BAU supports academic staff to apply a wide range of new teaching and assessment methodologies to ensure active engagement of students. During courses' delivery, instructors employ diverse teaching strategies (Interactive lectures including peer teaching and open discussions) and diverse assessment methods (written, practical, oral, performance-based, and workplace-based assessments). In this regard, communication technologies including students' smart phones are used as input devices to make students actively engaged in online class activities.
- In alignment with the current trends in the assessment methodologies, BAU established eight Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) stations to provide simulated workplace environment in order to assess the extent of the targeted competencies expected to be acquired by medical Faculties' students. In each interactive station, students are exposed to a situation that is similar to real practice setting.
- BAU continuously develops the infrastructure of laboratories, provides them with required equipment, and establishes new laboratories. In this regard, BAU established two "Cell Culture" laboratories in Beirut and Debbieh sites. Moreover, the "Pharmaceutical Nanotechnology Laboratory", was established and it is the only specialized laboratory, in Lebanon, in this domain.

BAU strives to deepen public engagement and to promote stronger collaboration and partnerships with different public sectors for mutual benefits. BAU's relationship with Beirut Municipality comes as one example of positive interaction with different sectors of Lebanese society and its reflection on the development of the surrounding environment.

BAU organises non-biased selections of academic staff and non-academic staff. Efficiency and excellence in performance are the only principal standards for getting employed. The selection process has been described in a template that shows comprehensive criteria for staff selection and recruitment. Moreover, BAU promotes the principles of equality and the repulsion of discrimination, offering equal opportunities regardless of color, race, religion, origin, gender, age, physical disability, social status, or social class.

In 2016, BAU installed internal regulations on "Academic Staff Promotion" which stipulate the prerequisites for promotion of academic and non-academic staff. BAU encourages and supports financially individuals to attend professional workshops, reputable conferences, and seminars inside and outside Lebanon.

BAU has based on its strategic objective to diversify the financial resources elaborated a strategy of fundraising, aiming at finding other revenues than tuition fees that may add up to BAU's budget. In this context BAU points out that the Centre for Continuing Professional

Education should bring additional revenues. Also, the Centre for Consultation and Studies (CCS) at BAU offers services²⁷ to the Lebanese community at affordable prices, such as water analysis, drug analysis in addition to engineering tests and other types of consultations all constitute an additional source of income to BAU.

SWOT analyses

The SWOT analyses that have been quoted above²⁸ are continuously used to adapt and improve the different areas such as management, teaching and learning as well as research based on satisfaction rates of students and staff.

The following SWOT analysis on dynamics was carried out in fall 2020-2021 for academic staff and non-academic staff and students. The internal actions taken have been assessed relating to the satisfaction level of the participants and compared to a previous one.

| SWOT | Item | New Result | Old Result |
|---------------|---|------------|------------|
| Opportunities | BAU has strong relations with national and international organisations and institutions. | 78.53 | 70 |
| | BAU continuously collects internal and external feedback about its performance at all levels. | 78.00 | |
| | BAU adopts various mechanisms to identify community needs at early stages. | 76.53 | 68 |
| | BAU can develop appropriate plans because of internal and external emerging needs. | 77.87 | 68 |
| | BAU offers new educational programmes to meet the community emerging needs. | 80.33 | 72 |
| | BAU scans and identifies the emerging requirements of the job market. | 75.40 | 67 |
| Strengths | BAU applies effective mechanisms to evaluate its performance at all levels. | 78.00 | |
| | BAU shares decision-making among its students, academic and non-academic staff. | 72.20 | 67 |
| | BAU seeks the satisfaction of its students, employees, and stakeholders. | 76.00 | |

²⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/BAUCCPE>

²⁸ See above chapters II, III and IV.

| | | | |
|---------------|---|------|----|
| Strengths | BAU applies effective mechanisms to evaluate its performance at all levels. | 78.0 | 67 |
| | BAU shares decision-making among its students, academic and non-academic staff. | 72.2 | |
| Opportunities | BAU partakes in and gets benefits from various community activities and events. | 78.0 | |
| | BAU deepens its networks for the benefit of its students, graduates, and academic staff. | 78.7 | |
| Strengths | BAU improves its infrastructure to meet the emerging internal and external needs. | 78.8 | |
| | BAU provides appropriate/resilience infrastructure that facilitates creativity for employees. | 75.6 | |
| | BAU ensures continuous and systematic development of its infrastructure. | 79.6 | |
| Strengths | BAU supports its academic staff to apply advanced teaching and learning. | 79.8 | |
| | BAU supports its academic staff to integrate research results to education. | 78.8 | |
| | BAU offers stimulating environment to its academic staff to produce quality research. | 75.7 | |
| | BAU supports the innovative practices and ideas of its employees. | 75.3 | |
| Strengths | BAU follows a transparent standards, policies, and procedures for all its activities. | 78.8 | |
| | BAU seeks the satisfaction of its students, employees, and stakeholders. | 76.0 | |
| | BAU ensures a non-biased selection of its academic and non-academic staff. | 76.6 | |
| | BAU offers training programmes and workshops for the development of its employees | 76.4 | |
| | BAU protects the individuals' freedom of all its employees. | 78.5 | |
| | BAU recruits diverse academic and non-academic staff with distinguishable abilities. | 78.1 | |

| | | | |
|-----------|---|------|--|
| | BAU supports professional development of its academic and non-academic staff. | 77.6 | |
| Strengths | BAU improves its infrastructure to meet the emerging internal and external needs. | 78.8 | |
| | BAU offers stimulating environment to its academic staff to produce quality research. | 75.7 | |
| | BAU supports the innovative practices and ideas of its employees | 75.3 | |
| | BAU offers training programmes and workshops for the development of its employees. | 76.4 | |
| | BAU supports professional development of its academic and non-academic staff. | 77.6 | |
| | BAU provides appropriate/resilience infrastructure that facilitates creativity for employees. | 75.6 | |
| | BAU ensures continuous and systematic development of its infrastructure. | 79.6 | |

Assessment

The panel welcomes that BAU, as already mentioned²⁹, has installed a quality management (QM) system which is comprehensive, leads to visible consequences and is subject to systematic monitoring. It noted that BAU has a quality manual in place which describes the quality procedures and the responsibilities of the management functions involved such as the Dean of Academic Development & Quality as well as the centres QAC and QAU. The panel recommends BAU also publishing its quality assurance reports.

As far as improvements, changes and innovations are concerned BAU gives evidence for implemented developments with numerous examples that have been described above. The panel gained the impression from the SER as well as from the online discussion that a strategic planning for structural changes is lacking in several cases. Therefore, the panel recommends BAU for the structural change-management developing roadmaps and defining milestones as well as prioritising the change projects.

The panel welcomes the SWOT analyses that BAU elaborates in time intervals. However, the analysis is only based on satisfaction rates of students and staff and possibly other stakeholders. The items that have been asked are in some cases too generic; in others, students and / or staff will not be able to assess the measures that have been taken.

²⁹ See above, chapter III Teaching and Learning.

When commenting on this report BAU pointed out that the questionnaires for the self-study have been modified although BAU was not able to conduct these modifications because of several obstacles including the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, the SWOT analyses were not the only tool used for the detection of points of weaknesses. Other methods were used including international accreditations of programmes, statistical data, advisory committee meetings and different own surveys such as about answers from graduates, alumni and employers. Minor areas to be considered were detected rather than as points of weakness.

In addition, BAU mentioned that the results of each survey were correlated with the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The final judgment of the attainment of the BAU outcomes for each standard is determined according to the following rules:

- If the weighted average exceeds 80%: Exceeding Expectations (EE)
- If the weighted average ranges between 70% and 80%: Met Expectations (ME)
- If the weighted average ranges between 60% and 70%: Progressing towards Expectations (PE)
- If the weight average is below 60%: Doesn't meet expectations (DNME)

Minor areas to be considered were detected rather than as points of weakness.

Regarding the implementation, of strategy 2020-2030, BAU intends to update questionnaires with all relevant issues to identify all possible weaknesses and threats, Realistic, achievable and measurable targets will be developed for the next ten years, and assessment will be done on a yearly basis.

The panel welcomes that BAU conducts and takes into account several surveys and other facts, results and figures. However, it did not become clear to what extent and percentage students, staff and other stakeholders participated in the evaluations which will be all the more difficult during the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, this kind of SWOT analysis does in most cases not allow to find out all real weaknesses and risks (see also condition in chapter I. Management) although the SWOT analysis is an important concept for the strategic planning process of the University. Therefore, the panel recommends the following **condition:**

The University will develop and use a professional SWOT analysis that examines the real strengths and weaknesses and identifies the opportunities and risks / threats.

Also, it might be helpful for the strategic planning to add an analysis of the political, economic, social, demographic and technological developments that can have an impact on BAU's future.

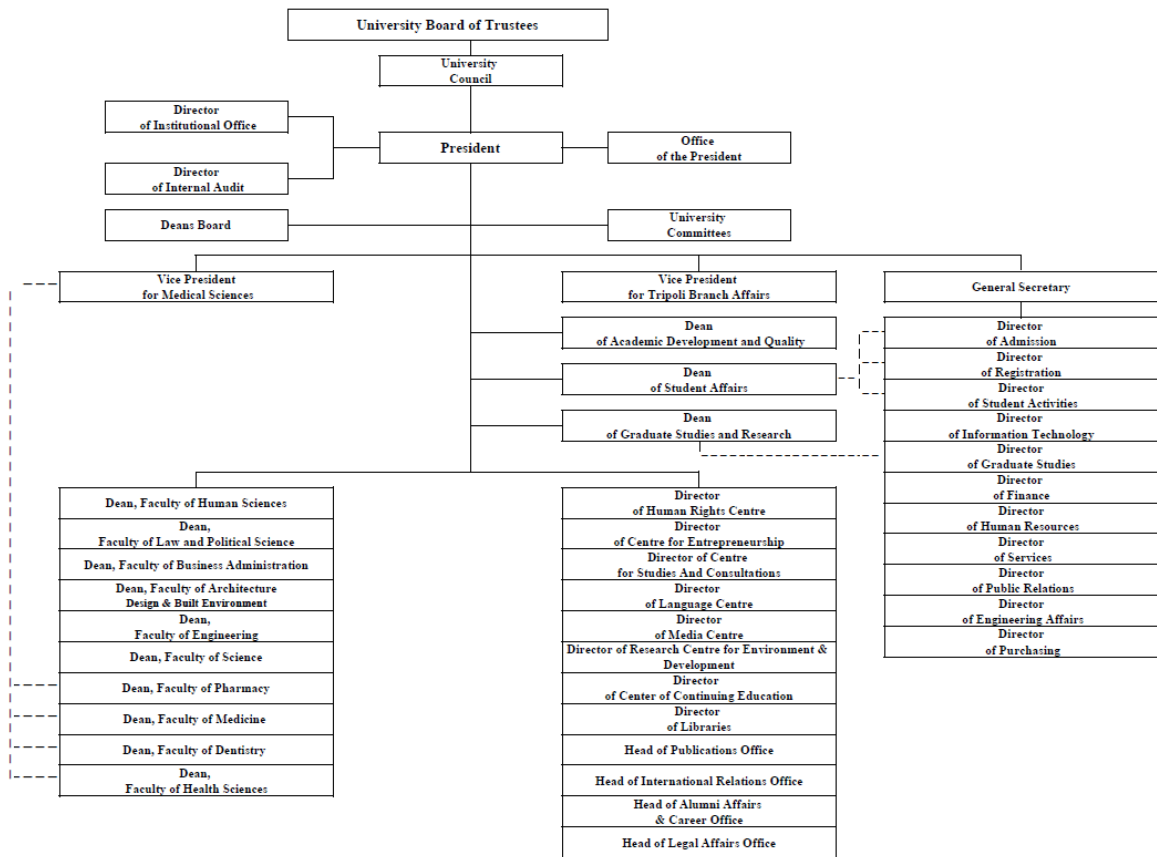
The panel noted that BAU's strategy aims at actively shaping its particularly regional environment and generating benefits for its stakeholders.

The HEI secures the continuous supply of human and financial resources.

| Quality requirements | Exceptional | Exceeds quality requirements | Meets quality requirements | Does not meet quality requirements |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| V. DYNAMICS | | | | |
| V 1. Capacity for change | | | X | |
| V 2. Development of quality assurance | | | | Condition |
| V 3. Measures and affects | | | X | |
| V 4. Innovation | | | X | |
| V 5. Staffing policy | | | X | |
| V 6. Resources | | | X | |

Annex

BAU Organizational Structure



19/04/2021