

# **American University of Science and Technology**

## **Quality Manual**



### **Governance and Quality Management Manual**

#### **Policies & procedures**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Edition**

**April 2025**

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This work is entitled “Governance and Quality Management Manual”. It is a compilation of the documents that provide the umbrella and guidelines for continual improvement in the various university functions. Improvement is supposed to yield a better quality product. Planning, updating, checking and implementing may be perceived by some as “overdoing it” but there is no doubt that the process is an eye opener that is likely to bring about better quality delivery.

This compilation includes the Constitution and Bylaws of the University which, together with the Board approved policies, provide the spirit and soul that govern change. The Handbook of Quality deals with quality assurance as practiced at AUST. It provides possible KPIs for certain major functions and includes schematic diagrams for some processes involving students and faculty (recruitment, promotions, registration...).

There are other factors that affect quality but are not included in this compilation (example: student handbook, academic rules, regulations and procedures, affiliations with international universities, affiliation with governmental bodies, university calendar...and others).

The university website ([www.aust.edu.lb](http://www.aust.edu.lb)) provides a comprehensive picture of AUST.

## Introduction

This Governance and Quality Management Manual serves as a comprehensive guide to the policies, procedures, and frameworks that underpin the effective functioning of the University. Designed to ensure alignment with institutional goals and global standards, the manual encapsulates the principles and practices required to promote excellence in governance, teaching and learning, research, and community engagement.

At its core, the manual integrates the **Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) Cycle**, a methodology developed by Edward Deming, which is widely regarded as a cornerstone of effective quality management. This iterative process drives continuous improvement by systematically planning objectives, implementing strategies, assessing performance through monitoring and evaluation, and making necessary adjustments based on evidence. The PDCA cycle fosters a culture of accountability and adaptability, ensuring that every aspect of the university's operations evolves in response to emerging challenges and opportunities. The concept of the **quality loop** is central to this manual, emphasizing the cyclical and interconnected nature of quality assurance processes. By linking planning, implementation, evaluation, and feedback, the quality loop ensures that improvement initiatives are continuously refined and aligned with the university's mission and vision. This approach promotes the integration of stakeholder input and fosters a dynamic environment where decisions are informed by data and analysis.

The quality loop for the university includes, when applicable, the following steps:

1. **Planning:** Define objectives, standards, and procedures to achieve quality in governance, teaching, learning, and research.
2. **Implementation:** Execute these plans and procedures in practice.
3. **Evaluation:** Monitor and assess the effectiveness of the implemented processes using tools like Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), surveys, and audits.
4. **Feedback and Analysis:** Gather feedback from stakeholders (e.g., students, staff, and external partners) and analyze data to identify areas for improvement.
5. **Improvement:** Adjust strategies, revise procedures, and update policies to address identified gaps or inefficiencies.

Additionally, the manual is structured around the **process approach**, a methodology that views activities and functions as interrelated processes contributing to a unified system. This approach facilitates clarity, consistency, and efficiency by identifying key, supporting, and management processes across the institution. Each process is documented with defined inputs, outputs, responsibilities, and performance indicators, ensuring that the university operates as a cohesive and goal-oriented organization. This manual is not merely a collection of policies; it is a living document that reflects the university's commitment to quality, transparency, and continuous improvement. By providing a clear roadmap for governance and operational excellence, it equips the institution to meet the needs of its stakeholders and adapt effectively to the demands of an ever-changing academic and societal landscape.

## Glossary of Terms

**Academic Advising:** Done by faculty members to ensure that a student's tenure on campus is supported by individuals who are knowledgeable about the system. Hence advisors can help students avoid scheduling pitfalls, assist in navigating through academic requirements and financial obligations. Advisors may, at times, act as much needed friends in personal, social and psychological situations.

**Academic Major:** This refers to the subject matter a student wishes to specialize in. A minimum of 36 credit hours of course work are required in the academic major for graduation.

**Academic Probation:** Denotes poor performance below the level of acceptable accomplishment. Any grade point average below 2.00/4.00 will lead to a probation. Repeated probations will lead to suspension.

**Accreditation:** this term refers to national, regional and international procedures and agencies that study the quality of the management systems, laboratories and academic programs and issue certifications of compliance with standards set by the governmental or professional agencies. Examples: Ministry of Education, ABET, IACBE...ISO certifications.

**Ad hoc Committees:** These are committees established for a particular purpose to get a job done. Once the task is accomplished, the committee ceases to exist.

**Administrative Council:** meets every day at 9:00 AM and it deals with issues that support the academic process and guarantees that no unforeseen surprises mar the good going of events in the classroom and outside the classroom. The council is comprised of the Dean of Students and Admissions, the inhouse lawyer, the Public Relations Officer, the Quality Assurance Officer, the IT manager, the HR manager, the Design Office Manager, the Campus Security Chief, the Buildings and Grounds Manager and the highest student achiever (by invitation when issues relating to student welfare are discussed). This council follows up on issues of cleanliness, security, adequate preparation for events, parking...This Council guarantees staff participation in a wide and effective way.

**Alumni and Alumni Association:** an alumnus is a person who has lived the life and felt the spirit (ethos) of AUST for at least one semester. The alumni – (commonly known as “the graduates” although they may not have necessarily graduated)- are organized under the umbrella of the Alumni Association. They are considered important stakeholders and they play an important role in the development and growth of their Alma Mater.

**Appeals:** All constituencies of the University have the right to seek appeals to higher councils or individuals if they feel a perceived in justice.

**Assessment of Student Learning:** Assessment of student learning is a major task of the faculty members and of the university as a whole. Faculty members should develop ways and criteria through which they may be able to assess how much has the student learned in contrast to what used to prevail as to how much did the teacher teach. Faculty members should diversify the assessment methods and not be satisfied with examinations. Library searches, independent projects, research, term papers, class presentations, exit examinations, expositions of projects...etc... should become regular means of assessment since these may counter the effects of AI and ChatGPT (and others) that may be deceiving signs of positive assessment.

**Board of Advisors:** this is a Board of chosen individuals from outside the University who agree to assist the University with their time and expertise. Membership may include alumni, company directors and individuals who may be instrumental in providing advise and/or avenues for training and employment of students.

**ChatGPT and Artificial Intelligence:** Blessings and curses to education. One should use them constructively. Faculty members should encourage the use of the offerings of the new technologies but always keeping in mind

the abuses that may take place. Students could greatly benefit from the provisions of ChatGPT and AI but they should remember to use them as means for widening the scope of the availability of information and not as means to replace personal efforts.

**Commencement:** this is the graduation ceremony held each year in July. It signifies the beginning of a new phase in the lives of the graduating students. At AUST, the commencement is a grand colorful event with a prominent speaker. It is the time when the university honors a chosen one (or few) for brilliant and substantive accomplishments by awarding the honorary doctorate diploma after study and consent of the Executive Council.

**Constitution:** This is the document that defines the university, its mission and the scope of its governance in short, succinct and clear terms. The University By-Laws details the issues dealt with in the constitution.

**Continuing Education Department:** the department provides education that does not end with a university degree. The department offers a wide selection of academic and non-academic courses that may be tailored to the specific needs of individuals or groups. Material taken in the Continuing Education Department does not appear on the regular academic transcript of record of AUST.

**Course:** A course is 45 hours of instruction in a single subject matter. Ordinarily, a course carries 3 credit hours and requires 45 contact hours between student and teacher. Examples: Micro Economics, Introduction to Organic Chemistry, Introduction to Microbiology, Differential Equations...etc.

**Credit Hour:** AUST adopts the American system of higher education where a credit hour is defined as 15 hours of face to face encounter between student and teacher. A course usually carries 3 credit hours meaning that the student and the teacher were engaged together in 45 hours (each hour is of 50 minutes duration).

**DOSA:** This is an acronym for Dean of Students and Admissions. This office is responsible for recruitment of students. It provides counselling and social guidance to students and follows up on students academic performance. The office oversees the Career Services Center which assists students in locating part time and full time jobs.

**Executive Council:** is the highest council at AUST. It is comprised from the President and the Vice Presidents. This council serves as a council of appeals for faculty, students and staff. It also serves as the council that coordinates the work among the Vice Presidents. The Executive Council acts on recommendations from departments, faculty members, staff, students, administrators and lower councils.

**Faculty Evaluation:** Every semester students are asked to evaluate the teaching effectiveness of the faculty member in the course being taught. Faculty members are also evaluated by the chair concerned. Data from evaluations are ordinarily used in the deliberations of faculty promotions.

**Faculty Meetings:** A meeting of the faculty at large is called for and chaired by the President. A meeting of the teaching faculty of an academic Faculty is called for and chaired by the Dean of the Faculty (School). A departmental faculty meeting is called for by the chair of the department. All meetings should have an agenda and minutes that are distributed to the faculty and approved in the “next” meeting.

**Financial Aid:** this is the assistance that the university provides to students in financial need. The aid stipulates that the student be in good standing. All students- without discrimination- may apply and receive aid within the limits provided in the budget.

**Full Time Student:** At AUST, a full time student is one who is registered in a minimum of 15 credit hours (5 courses) at the undergraduate level and 9 credit hours at the graduate level.

**Grade Point Average (GPA):** This is the sum total of all points accumulated by the student divided by the number of credit hours from which the points were received. A gpa of 2.00 is the cut off line between Good standing (above 2.00) and Poor standing (lower than 2.00).

**Graduate Study:** Refers to work beyond the Bachelor's level. A graduate student is someone who has earned a Bachelor's degree (BA/BS), applied for acceptance to a graduate program in the same (general) strain of specialization and is accepted. Usually, a minimum gpa of 3.00/4.00 is required for acceptance.

**Grievance:** this is a term that implies that individuals who feel slighted by certain decisions have the right to appeal to the highest possible person or council to receive satisfactory treatment.

**Institutional Councils of the Faculty:** These are councils specified in the University By-Laws by the Board of Trustees. These councils are run according to Robert's Rules of Order and have faculty representation from the Academic Faculties of the University. Because AUST adopts a participative management system, staff and students have representation on Faculty Councils.

**Job Description:** This is a delineation of what is expected from the employee in that particular position. Ordinarily, the job description spells out the main functions and duties of the employee. It is not a restrictive, all inclusive elaboration of what the job may entail.

**Key Performance Indicators:** These are quantitative and qualitative measuring sticks (units) used toward attaining a particular goal. Every project should identify measurable KPIs that will throw light on the feasibility, status and success of the project. In universities, KPIs could identify the success of new academic programs, the validity of recruitment efforts...etc. All new initiatives should identify trackable KPIs that will help measure the success of the initiative against the time expected for maturity.

**Learning Outcome:** is a measure of what a student has learned. This is in contrast to what has been taught. Measuring the outcome is usually the result of data received from various/ differing criteria.

**Mission Statement:** The University Mission Statement is drafted by the Executive Council and approved by the Board. It defines the major goals that the University sets for itself. The Statement is the Raison d'Être of the institution and it is the focus of all activities that the University is involved in. Faculties, schools and programs may draft their own mission statements; these must be in conformity with the University Mission Statement. All university actions must relate to the fulfilment of the goals set in the Institutional Mission Statement.

**Policy:** A policy is a Board approved framework that the administration is required to work within its guidelines. Amendments to a policy may be affected only by a revision by the Board.

**Quality Goals/ Objectives:** These goals are to be consistent with the requirements set by the academic programs and with the general institutional Mission Statement. They must be measurable through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that may differ from one goal to another but, in general, bear great resemblance because they all seek quality improvement.

**Quality Management System:** This is a system established by the top administration and tasked with observing and maintaining the quality of all services offered by the Institution. The President appoints a team to supervise the implementation of the proper functions in the various sectors of service. In addition to the President, the team includes the VPS, the Deans and the Directors of the major offices providing services to the general university operation.

**Quality:** This is a term that is imbedded in the goals, functions and procedures of all actions and processes of the University. It covers all functions from student recruitment to student graduation and from faculty selection to

promotion and eventual retirement. Classroom work, learning, teaching, research, evaluation, purchases, activities...etc. all are subject to quality assurance procedures that are meant to improve the quality of services.

**Recognition of AUST Degrees:** The Bachelors (BA/BS) and Masters (MA/MS/MBA) degrees awarded by AUST are recognized by the Lebanese government. Being recognized by the country where AUST operates makes these degrees recognized by other countries. In short, AUST degrees are recognized all over the world. AUST strengthens the acceptance of its degrees by accrediting its academic programs by leading international professional bodies.

**Research:** A requirement for promotion in professorial ranks. Classroom learning and teaching should observe increased emphasis on student involvement in research. Students in their last year of undergraduate study should have become thoroughly research oriented and should be able to independently think, propose and carry out research ideas and research topics.

**Rules and Regulations:** These are drafted internally within the guidelines set by the Board in Policies. Rules and Regulations may be amended by the Executive Council as long as these amendments do not contradict the policies.

**Semester:** AUST adopts a semestrial calendar with 2 semesters each of 15 week duration and 2 summer modules each of a 5 week duration. The Fall semester begins around the first week of October and ends in mid February while the Spring semester begins in mid February and extends till mid June. A student in good standing (gpa  $\geq$  2.00) may enroll in 15-18 credit hours in a semester.

**Stakeholder:** A person or group that has an interest in what the institution is doing...e.g. students, faculty, parents, alumni...etc.

**Strategic Plan:** A plan that involves all the offices and budget functions of the University. The plan drafts a strategy for the University to follow so as to accomplish its mission in light of the competition and prevailing conditions (security, financial, social...) that may affect the course charted by the University through the involvement of all stakeholders. The strategic plan suggests road maps to follow in order to reach the desired goals. Because of the changing security and financial conditions in Lebanon, the strategic plan drafted by the community of AUST suffered many serious adjustments to the plan and effectively where growth was expected deep cuts had to be made to accommodate the unexpected changes dictated by the dwindling purchasing power of Lebanese currency.

**Syllabus:** It is a summary of what is required from a student over the 15 week semester. It specifies the reading material and the timely evaluation procedures and criteria.

**University By-Laws:** these describe the relationship between the Board of Trustees and the University. They detail the formation, prerogatives and the main function of the Board which is the election and appointment of the University President.

**University Council:** is comprised of the members of the Executive Council, the Faculty Academic Deans, the Dean of Students and Admissions, the Registrar, the Director of IT and the Director of the Bursar's Office. The Council invites students, faculty and staff members when deliberating on issues that directly concern them.

**University Management Orientation/ System:** American University of Science and Technology (AUST) adopts a participative management system which provides opportunities for participation in the decision making process to all the components of the university. Hence, councils, departmental and faculty and meetings will have presence of the major constituents of the university...namely: administration, faculty, staff and students.

# **University Mission**

In May 2022, the Board reviewed the Statement of Mission of AUST. The new statement rewrites the older statement in a clearer form and incorporates suggestions from the stakeholders as well as some recommendations made by the Evalag team of experts in 2019. These recommendations are included in italics and they are the last 4 bullet points.

The Board of the University defined in May 2022 the Mission of AUST as follows:

- The American University of Science and Technology (AUST) is a recognized institution of higher learning licensed by the Lebanese Government that is committed to excellence and freedom in teaching and research. AUST reflects the concerns of its founders that affordable American-styled education should be within the reach of all seekers without any form of discrimination or prejudice.
- AUST shall be a student oriented university that prioritizes learning, critical thinking, applied training and research-based class work. It shall establish wide networks of cooperating universities for exchange and joint research and of potential employers who may provide part time and/or full-time employment to students and who may be recruited to serve on the advisory boards of academic majors.
- The University shall offer high quality programs comparable to those offered in the USA including a liberal arts curriculum that is distinctive of American education.
- AUST shall strive to graduate highly competitive, proficient and motivated communicators, problem solvers, designers and entrepreneurs who enjoy high levels of tolerance for different opinions, who are promoters of human rights and intercultural dialogue and who are well versed in the new technologies.
- The University shall require internships in academic majors offered so as to shorten the distance between the classroom and the working place and it shall establish an office to assist students in finding full time and part time jobs while studying.
- AUST shall avail the university community and the larger “society” with cultural and educational programs and activities that will support and complement the traditional classroom teaching and learning processes and provide an extended arm to the “society” to share and participate in the wealth of experience that the university can provide.
- *AUST shall offer academic programs needed in the market and not sufficiently offered by other universities.*
- *The University shall adopt a flexible scheduling system so as to allow working students the possibility of taking advantage of its full curriculum.*
- *AUST shall encourage applied research with effort to find solutions to existing problems.*
- *The University shall review its Mission Statement every 4th year (or before if circumstances require) and it shall consider the inputs of all possible stakeholders (boards, administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni, employers...).*

# **University Constitution**

**Preamble:**

This Constitution is in full conformity with the Educational Law of the Republic of Lebanon.

**Article I. Name**

The name of the University is the American University of Science & Technology (AUST) recognized by the Government of the Republic of Lebanon as per decree # 3585 of August 8, 2000 and #677 of 2007. It has four locations Beirut, Zahle, Sidon and Bhamdoun, Lebanon and its mailing address is PO.BOX 16-6452, BEIRUT-LEBANON.

**Article II. Mission Statement**

The Board of the University defined in May 2022 the Mission of AUST as follows:

- The American University of Science and Technology (AUST) is a recognized institution of higher learning licensed by the Lebanese Government that is committed to excellence and freedom in teaching and research. AUST reflects the concerns of its founders that affordable American-styled education should be within the reach of all seekers without any form of discrimination or prejudice.
- AUST shall be a student oriented university that prioritizes learning, critical thinking, applied training and research-based class work. It shall establish wide networks of cooperating universities for exchange and joint research and of potential employers who may provide part time and/or full-time employment to students and who may be recruited to serve on the advisory boards of academic majors.
- The University shall offer high quality programs comparable to those offered in the USA including a liberal arts curriculum that is distinctive of American education.
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- *AUST shall offer academic programs needed in the market and not sufficiently offered by other universities.*

- *The University shall adopt a flexible scheduling system so as to allow working students the possibility of taking advantage of its full curriculum.*
- *AUST shall encourage applied research with effort to find solutions to existing problems.*
- *The University shall review its Mission Statement every 4th year (or before if circumstances require) and it shall consider the inputs of all possible stakeholders (boards, administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni, employers...).*

### **Article III. The University Vision**

American University of Science and Technology strives to become the leading digital university in Lebanon while maintaining reasonable tuition fees accessible to young men and women from Lebanon and the Middle East.

### **Article IV. Educational Program**

The educational program of the University shall include four-year study programs leading to the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees, and such special certificate courses and programs as may from time to time be desired to meet the specific needs of the Middle East. Graduate programs leading to a Master's degree are conducted in a selected number of disciplines.

### **Article V. Organization**

#### **Board of Trustees:**

1. Membership-- The Board of Trustees shall be a free standing, self perpetuating body and shall elect its members in a manner to ensure continuity of membership. The Board of Trustees shall consist of an odd number between 9 and 21 members.
2. Duties—the Board of Trustees is responsible for the total wellbeing of the University, for the development, oversight and implementation of the basic University policies, for the academic standing of the University and for the appointment of the President of the University.

#### **Faculty**

3. Membership—the faculty shall consist of the teaching personnel, the major administrative officers, the registrar and the professionally trained university librarians.
4. Duties—the faculty shall be responsible for maintaining the academic standards and program of the university within its established policies.

## **Article VI. Meetings of Board**

The Board of Trustees shall meet three times per year and when called by the Chair or upon the written request of three trustees.

A quorum of the Board of Trustees shall consist of the majority of the membership.

Board members who miss more than three consecutive meetings without a compelling reason will be asked to resign.

## **Article VII. Officers of Board**

There shall be at least three officers of the Board who shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Board. It shall be the duty of the Chair to preside over all meetings, and the duty of the Vice Chair to serve in his/her absence; the Secretary/Treasurer shall keep a record of all meetings and actions, carry on official correspondences and oversee the financial records and transactions of the University.

## **Article VIII. Amendments**

Amendments of this Constitution (which are consistent with the Laws of Lebanon) may be made only by an affirmative vote of two thirds of the membership of the Board of Trustees. Notice of a proposed amendment shall be given to the Board of Trustees at least 30 days before a vote is taken.

## **Article IX. Repeal of Previous Constitutions**

All previous constitutions of the American University of Science & Technology (AUST) are hereby repealed and the foregoing Constitution is effective...as of October 1, 2023.

**BYLAWS**  
**of**  
**American University of Science**  
**and Technology (AUST)**

American University of Science and Technology (AUST) is organized and operated exclusively for educational purposes. No Board member shall receive profit from the operation; except for return on investment versed by the founding family as per agreement with the Board.

## **Article I. Membership of the Board of Trustees**

### **The Board shall be constituted as follows:**

1. The duly elected Board members
2. The President of the University who attends as an ex-officio member
3. The President of the Alumni Association (who shall be elected by the Association's members) who attends as an ex-officio member
4. The elected representative of the teaching faculty who attends as an ex-officio member

The President attends all executive sessions except when the topic of discussion relates to the "President". Ex-officio members of the Board are not voting members.

### **Terms of Office**

Terms of office shall be for four years with members elected to one of the three classes. A member may be reelected for one consecutive four year term. After serving two four year terms, a Board member shall be ineligible for reelection.

### **Nominations to the Board of Trustees**

### **Qualifications & Elections**

Board members shall be upright citizens who are in Leadership positions. They are selected according to their previous record of accomplishment and according to the potential services that they may be willing to render to the university. Board members are normally expected to cover their expenses in attending Board meetings if these are held outside Lebanon.

A three-member Nominating Committee shall be appointed each year by the Board during its annual meeting. The Nominating Committee shall study the CVs of the recommended candidates and present, for consideration, to the Board the names of the candidates who were identified to fit the general image of a Trustee.

A short biodata for each candidate shall be presented to the Board members for consideration before the Annual Board meeting. The number of recommended candidates shall be the same as the number of vacancies. Candidates become members upon receiving two thirds majority votes in a meeting with a quorum.

The Nominating Committee shall work closely with the President and it shall welcome nominations from Board members, University faculty, administrators and respected members of the society at large.

Election of members of the Board, of the Executive Committee and of the officers shall be by secret ballot and shall take place at the annual meeting of the Board in Summer.

To be elected a candidate must receive a two-thirds majority of the votes of the members present and eligible to vote. Terms of office of the new members are to begin with the close of the meeting at which they are elected.

## **Article II. Duties of the Board**

### **General Duties**

The Board shall be responsible for seeing that the purpose of the University is met (organizationally, administratively, educationally and socially), that adequate facilities and funding are provided, and that a policy framework is established within which the program of the University can be developed and administered by the staff.

The Board shall have the following prime functions:

### **The Board shall utilize its unique position to:**

- a) select and support or remove the President of the University
- b) ensure that an adequate statement of mission and purpose be established
- c) assure that a three year long range plan for the University is developed
- d) assist in improving the fundraising activities of the Institution either by direct giving or through personal contacts who may be willing to help.
- e) evaluate the financial wellbeing of the institution through the annual audit and through means of comparison used by other institutions
- f) assess the performance of the management team
- g) ensure that the academic standards of the institution & of the faculty are at the desired level
- h) ensure that funds and assets are managed effectively so that the academic process may proceed successfully and so that the financial health of the Institution is maintained.

### **Selection of President**

1. One of the major tasks of the Board is the selection of the President who is the leading academician and administrator of the University. In executing this important task, the Board members must keep in mind that the President of the University is not only the leading central figure who is responsible for the various university operations toward the Board, but he/she is also the person who represents the Institution publicly in social, educational, cultural, business and legal circles at the national and international levels. The selection of the proper person should therefore take into consideration the ability of the President to be a good spokesperson and representative of the Institutions.

**The procedure of selecting a new President shall be:**

1. One year before the five year term of the President comes to end, a Selection Committee shall propose three to four names to the total Board.
2. The Selection Committee shall present the names to the Board with the CVs of each candidate at least two weeks prior to the Board meeting.
3. Election by secret ballot shall take place as the first order of business in the Board meeting. The recommended candidate must receive 60% of the votes of the total Board members to be declared successful; otherwise the process is repeated starting with step 2 above.

**Removal of the President**

The President may be removed from office only by the same percentage of votes (60%) needed for election.

**Approval of Administrative Officers and Faculty**

The top administrative officers who report directly to the President (Provost and Vice Presidents) shall need the approval of the Board upon being recommended by the President. The Board approval required is that of a simple majority in a regular meeting with quorum.

**Other Approvals**

The Board of Trustees shall approve the long range plan, the income budget, the expense budgets of all funds, non-budgeted expenditures, inter-fund transfers, changes in fees, changes in salary schedules, changes in the total number of employees, and the acquisition, use or disposal of land, buildings or major pieces of equipment. For those items specified in the constitution, specific approval of the Board of Trustees is necessary.

### **Article III. Meetings of the Board**

#### **Stated Meetings**

The Board shall hold three stated meetings each year, one around the end of the first term of the year, the second around the end of the second term of the year and the third around the end of the month of August and it shall be designated as the annual meeting.

#### **Special Meetings**

Special meetings may be called by the Executive Committee or upon the written request of five members; notice must be given at least 30 days in advance for such a meeting. Emergency meetings may be called by the President and Chair of the Board with less notice if the nature of the emergency justifies such action.

#### **Quorum**

A quorum shall consist of a majority of the voting members currently serving on the Board. Proxy votes are accepted only if the quorum is physically present. Proxy votes may be given to other voting Board members, only one proxy vote may be used by a voting member.

#### **Executive Sessions**

An Executive Session during a meeting of the Board shall be defined as a meeting of the voting members of the Board with the understanding that the President of the University will also attend all Executive Sessions of the University except when his/her own personal relationship to the University is under consideration

#### **Meeting Place**

The Board of Trustees shall meet in Lebanon, at one of the campuses of the University, unless the Board decides otherwise from time to time.

#### **Order of Business**

The order of business shall normally be as follows:

1. Call to order
2. Approval of agenda
3. Consideration of the minutes if the Executive Committee meeting(s) and approval of the minutes of the Previous Board meeting
4. Business arising from the minutes
5. Report of the President
6. Report(s) of staff
7. Elections and appointments
8. Reports of special committees
9. Other business
10. Date and location of next Board meeting
11. Executive session (if need be)
12. Adjournment

#### **Article IV. Officers of the Board**

The officers of the Board of Trustees shall be the Chair of the Vice-Chair and the Secretary-Treasurer. They shall be elected annually at the annual meeting of the Board

##### **Chair**

The Chair shall preside over meetings of the Boards, and shall perform the usual duties of the presiding officer. He/she shall have the right to vote on all questions on which a vote is taken and shall perform the duties of his/her office as instructed by the Board. He/she shall normally be a member and the Chair of the Executive Committee.

##### **Vice Chair**

The Vice Chair shall perform duties of the Chair person in his/her absence or at his/her request. He/she shall be a member of the Executive Committee will serve as its Chair in the absence of the Chair and shall perform such duties as may from time to time be assigned to him/her.

##### **Secretary-Treasurer**

The Secretary-Treasurer shall be a member of the Executive Committee of the Board. He/she shall assume responsibility for the accurate recording and distribution of the minutes of the Board and Executive Committee meetings, for notifying the Board members of the time, place and agenda of all regular and special meetings of the board and the Executive Committee (he/she may delegate these duties, but not the responsibility, to one or more members of the Administration) and for overseeing the financial records and transaction of the University with respect to conformance with Board policy.

#### **Article V. Executive Committee of the Board**

##### **Membership**

The Chair, the Vice-Chair and the Secretary-Treasurer are members of the Executive Committee that is composed of seven members. The four remaining members shall be elected at the annual meeting to constitute the Executive Committee.

##### **Duties**

1. The Executive Committee shall be considered as having a quorum when at least four members are physically present.
2. Between the stated meetings of the Board, the Executive Committee shall meet on a monthly basis to execute the normal work of the Board. All decisions and actions of the Executive Committee shall be subject to the review of the total Board in its next meeting.
3. Board members who are not members of the Executive Committee may attend the meetings at any time but cannot vote.
4. The agenda and minutes of all Executive Committee meetings shall be circulated to all members of the Board at the same time.
5. The Executive Committee of the Board shall be the judicial body that will study appeals from F.T. faculty members in case of “unfair” dismissal.
6. All decisions of the Executive Committee may be challenged during the regular Board meeting.

## **Article VI. Standing Committees of the Board**

The Board shall have its members distributed over committees in such a manner that maximum benefits would be derived from the expertise of each Board member.

There shall be six standing committees with the major administrative officers participating in the work of these committees as coordinators and secretaries.

The following lists the Board committees with the proper administrative officer listed opposite each committee.

|                                     |                                            |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Nominating Committee                | President                                  |
| Academic Affairs Committee          | Provost/VPAA                               |
| Audit Committee                     | Internal Auditor                           |
| Development & Relations Committee   | President/Provost/VP for Development       |
| Planning & Administrative Committee | VP for Finance & Administration            |
| Student Affairs Committee           | Provost/VPAA/Dean of Students & Admissions |

Committee membership shall be recommended by the Chair and President for approval by the total Board.

Approval shall be by majority vote in a meeting with a quorum.

Each committee shall elect its Chair. The staff member shall be the secretary and he/she shall keep minutes for review during the next Board meeting.

### **Article VI-A. Nominating Committee of the Board**

The committee's membership and role shall be as spelled out in Article I-C

### **Article VI-B. Academic Affairs Committee (AAC)**

The Academic Affairs Committee is responsible to the Board for maintaining academic standards that are acceptable to the Board and to the Government of Lebanon. These standards should be compatible with those of high-level universities in the USA.

The AAC shall be responsible for the development, modification and subsequent oversight of the Board policies relating to academic affairs.

The Academic Affairs Committee shall also practice oversight over the total educational program of the university including the academic curriculum, research, teaching methods and standards, sabbaticals and tenure, faculty hiring and retention, academic calendar, internal and external academic standards and academic services (library, laboratories, computer centers, studios, ...etc.).

**Article VI-C. Audit Committee (AC)**

The Audit Committee shall have oversight on the financial practices and on the internal control system of the University. Board members who serve on the Audit Committee may not have any financial dealings of any sort with the University for two years prior to becoming a member of the (AC), during the period of membership on the AC and for two years after membership on the AC comes to an end. The Audit Committee shall review the internal and external audit plans, review the financial statements and the results of the audit, and report to the Board on the status of administrative and financial controls. The AC shall also have direct access to the Internal Auditor and shall practice oversight on the Conflict of Interest Policy.

**Article VI-D. Development & Relations Committee (DRC)**

The Development & Relations Committee (DRC) shall be responsible to the total Board for developing, maintaining and overseeing the development of a policy that covers public information, development and relations.

The policy shall engage the University in projects designed to raise funds for the University from alumni, friends, supporters and governments and in programs that will make the university known to the public so as to attract students to the academic programs and support from individuals, schools, governments...etc. so as to increase the visibility and overall assistance to the University.

The DRC shall work closely with the President and the Provost on developing a public information program designed to inform and attract students and friends to the university.

**Article VI-E. Planning & Administrative Committee (PAC)**

The Planning and Administrative Committee is responsible to the Board for developing maintaining and overseeing a policy that covers planning in the areas of finance, personnel and facilities.

The PAC shall review the long-range plan of the University and see to it that the financial and personnel sections of the plan go hand in hand with the academic section. The PAC shall also evaluate the annual budget and shall review the reasons for changes in fees, salaries and personnel numbers.

The PAC works closely with the Vice President for Finance & Administration to evaluate the future of the University in buildings, and major equipment.

**Article VI-F. Student Affairs Committee (SAC)**

The Student Affairs Committee (SAC) shall be responsible to the Board for the development, modification and subsequent oversight of a policy that covers the student life in the University with special attention being given to the development of a healthy university community life that recognizes the rights and responsibilities of all university constituencies and amongst them, of course, the students.

The SAC shall be responsible for the development, modification and oversight of a financial aid policy designed to provide needy students, academically excelling students, siblings and students who have lost a parent with financial support so as to be able to begin and continue their university education.

The SAC shall evaluate the implementation of programs that are designed to enrich the life of the students socially, culturally and intellectually. Moreover, special attention shall be given to the promotion of sports activities and ensuring that the University is a drug free place.

## **VII- The Board and the Faculty**

### **VII-A. Membership**

The Faculty of the University shall consist of all teaching personnel, the major administrative officers, the Registrar and all professionally trained University librarians.

### **VII-B. Duties**

The Faculty, through the Deans, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Provost and the President, shall be responsible for the academic standards and the total educational program of the University and shall take the steps necessary to assure that such standards are compatible with the standards in good US universities. This may be done –though not exclusively- through internationally accepted and recognized tests.

### **VII-C. Organization**

The Faculty shall be organized along with the key staff personnel into councils that will allow them to develop the expertise necessary to exercise their responsibilities in providing leadership to the total educational program of the university.

### **VII-D. By-Laws**

Faculty By-laws shall be established to provide procedures through which faculty members may execute their responsibilities and develop themselves professionally.

## **VIII- The Board and the Administration**

The President appoints all major administrative officers (Provost, Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors, and other major administrators) to execute and fulfill the obligations of the University. All officers who report directly to the President should be confirmed by the Board upon the recommendation of the President.

Deans, because of their sensitive positions, are also to be confirmed by the Board upon the successive recommendation of the Chief Academic Officer and the approval of the President.

### **VIII - A. The President**

The President shall be selected and appointed to the Board.

The President is the Chief Executive Officer of the Institution. He/she is responsible for the total functions of the universities. He/she delegates responsibilities to the Vice Presidents but remains the person bearing the ultimate responsibility to the Board and to the Government of Lebanon under whose jurisdiction the University operates.

The President attends Board meetings in an ex-officio capacity and invites Vice Presidents to Board meetings as resource officers each in the area that he/she supervises. The President attends the meetings of the Executive Council of the university as an ex-officio member and may exercise the right of veto whenever the good of the institution is imperiled.

### **VIII - B. The Provost and Vice Presidents**

The Provost and Vice presidents are appointed by the President after securing Board confirmation. They practice their authorities in the functions that they are entrusted with by delegation from the President.

The Provost and each Vice President are to have job descriptions explicitly explaining the prerogatives of each.

The relationship between the President and the Vice Presidents and the relationship of the Vice Presidents with the university constituencies are to be schematically shown in a University organizational structure (diagram).

### **Article IX Amendment of the By- Laws**

These By-laws may be amended by an affirmative vote of a majority of the membership of the Board of Trustees provided such amendments are within the terms of the Constitution and a notice of any proposed amendments shall be mailed to the members at least 30 days before the meeting if the Board of Trustees at which the amendment is to be considered. Alternately, these By-laws may be amended at any stated or special meeting of the Board, without previous notice, by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership of the Board of Trustees.

# **University Policies**

A policy is a Board approved framework that the administration is required to work within. Amendments to a policy may be affected only by a revision by the Board.

## Policy on Rights and Responsibilities

### **A. Preamble**

The policy on rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the University's belief that it is a part of the society and the culture that it exists in. Furthermore, this policy reflects the way the University sees itself as an example of what the practice of good citizenship should be like. Respect for the laws of Lebanon and of the social, cultural, economic, political and religious aspects that define Lebanon are intrinsic pillars of the University's policy.

### **B. Introduction**

Members of the AUST community have the obligation to fulfill the responsibilities incumbent upon all citizens by respecting the laws of Lebanon, and adhering to the conditions and requirements of the policies of the University.

All members of the University's community share the obligations to respect

1. The basic rights of others
2. The rights of the University
3. The right of each member of the University's community to equitable and fair procedures.

### **C. Basic Rights**

All members of the University's community enjoy the same basic rights and are bound by the same responsibilities that are binding to all citizens.

Some of these basic rights are:

1. Freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and, freedom of political and religious beliefs that abide by the University's policies and the laws of Lebanon.
2. The University does not impose any particular mode of behavior upon its members. These members have the right to lead their personal lives in the ways they see fit, provided they do not violate the laws of the Land and the policies of the University, and as long as they do not interfere with the rights of others and the integrity of the educational process.
3. Promotion in position and rank within the University shall be in accordance with the University's policies and regulations without any discrimination.
4. The right to be heard at the appropriate levels of the decision-making process regarding matters and issues that are of direct interests.
5. The right to engage and organize peaceful and orderly demonstrations, to post notices and to hold public meetings. Impartial and reasonable rules designed to reflect the educational purposes of the University and to protect the safety of its physical facilities, shall be established so as to regulate time, place and manner of use of said facilities.
6. The right to complain and appeal to the appropriate body if another member of the University is negligent or irresponsible in the performance of his or her responsibilities, regardless of whether the negligence affects the individual directly or not.

7. The right of grievance and appeal to the appropriate body if a member of the University's constituencies presents the work of others (from the Institution or from outside) as his or her own.

#### **D. Responsibilities**

Members of the University have responsibilities that are in alignment with the nature and requirements of the university's educational process in its search for the truth.

These responsibilities include:

1. The obligation to respect the spirit of free inquiry and therefore, the freedom to teach, to learn, to conduct research, and to publish without any institutional censorship.
2. The obligation to create an atmosphere of tolerance that would further and enhance free inquiry without undue restrictions.
3. Freedom of teaching and learning implies that teachers have the freedom to choose the methods that suit them best while still assuming the responsibility not to depart significantly from the set curriculum.
4. The obligation not to interfere with the freedom of others to teach, to learn, to conduct research, and to perform management and administrative duties.
5. The obligation to support the right of any member of the University's community to freely state and write ideas that are "different", but within the confines of the laws of the country and the University's policies.

#### **E. Rights and Responsibilities of the Institution**

The University, and any division or agency which exercises direct or delegated authority for the said institution, has rights and responsibilities of its own. These include

1. The right and obligation to provide an open forum for members of the University, whereby they debate public issues in an academic spirit, presenting their various points of view.
2. The right to prohibit individuals and groups from using the name of the University, its finances, or its physical and operating facilities for commercial, political or non-political activities.
3. The right and obligation not to take a stand, as an institution, on electoral politics or public issues, except on those issues which directly affect the autonomy and the freedom of the University's members, its financial support, and its academic functions.
4. The right and obligation to protect the members of the University and visitors to its campuses from physical harm, threat of harm or abuse; its property from damage and unauthorized use; and, its academic and administrative processes from interruptions.
5. The right to require that persons on the campus be willing to identify themselves by name, addresses, and state what business, if any, they have with the University.
6. The right to set reasonable standards of conduct in order to safeguard the educational process and to provide for the safety of members of the University and its property.
7. The right to stop and penalize any unwanted and unbecoming sexually related behavior.
8. The right to deny pay and academic credits to members of the University who are on strike.
9. The right to require of individuals or groups responsible for any activity that results in damage of University's property to reimburse the University for any damages.

## **F. Right to Fair Procedure**

Members of the University have the right to fair and equitable procedures which shall determine the validity of violation of University's regulations.

1. The procedures shall be structured so as to facilitate reliable determination of the truth or falsity of charges, to provide fundamental fairness to the parties, and to be an effective instrument to maintain order.
2. Charges of minor infraction of regulation, penalized by small fines or reprimands which do not become part of permanent records, may be handled expeditiously by the appropriate individual or committee. Persons so penalized have the right to appeal.
3. In case of charges of infraction of regulations which may lead to notation in permanent records, or to more serious penalties, such as suspension or expulsion, members of the University have the right to formal procedures with adequate due process, including the right of appeal.
4. Members of the University charged or convicted of violations under general law may be subject to the University's sanctions on the same conduct, in accord with the University's policies and procedures; this is especially the case when the conduct is in violation of a University rule essential to the continuing protection of other members of the University, or the safeguarding of the educational process.
5. Members of the University shall be entitled to the protection of the University, within its abilities, for liabilities incurred because of the exercise of their University's duties.

## Policy on Academic Integrity

AUST believes that the university should be a model for the community to emulate. It also believes that students, faculty members, staff members and administrators should live in an atmosphere of total integrity in their dealings with each other inside and outside the classroom.

Since members of the university community are also citizens and members of the greater community, AUST practices a policy of zero tolerance of dishonesty, but encourages totally ethical atmosphere inside the university that will project favorably onto the outside community through the practices of its members within their communities.

Academic integrity is defined as total truthfulness, giving proper academic credit where warranted and the observance of the intellectual rights of others.

Two areas are covered by this policy:

- a. Academic integrity and procedures as applied to students
- b. Academic integrity and procedures as applied to faculty and staff

### **a. Academic Integrity Procedures as applied to Students:**

AUST has zero tolerance of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, providing or obtaining prior knowledge of the contents of an examination, multiple submissions, unauthorized collaboration, falsification of original examination data, and requesting extra grades, and presentation for admission of forged or incomplete documents for admission or transfer purposes.

#### **Definitions**

Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional, unauthorized use of the intellectual work of another person without giving proper credit to the original author. Plagiarism applies to research or term papers, speeches, music, slides and transparencies, computer codes, electronic publications and scientific data and procedures.

Multiple submissions are cases where academic work or papers are submitted in two different classes without the prior consent of the faculty member. Falsification of original examination data includes cases where students seek extra marks by erasing, changing or tempering with the originally submitted test paper(s).

#### **Sanctions & Procedures**

Possible sanctions for a violation of the Policy on Academic Integrity may include:

Rejection of the work submitted for credit, a temporary incomplete grade, a letter of warning, loss of academic credit, suspension, expulsion, and/or revocation of diploma or degree. The decision as to which action or sanction shall be adopted or administrated shall rest with University's officials, provided sufficient notice and opportunity to respond are provided.

A case of academic dishonesty (violation of the policy on Academic Integrity) is initiated by the faculty member who should have good reason to believe that a violation of the policy has occurred. As a first step, the faculty member should try to solve the case on a bilateral basis with the student. If that fails, the faculty member should inform the chairperson of the concerned department and the dean of the said faculty; the latter will inform the Review Committee that will review and assess the allegation. The student will be given notice of the case and

will be allowed to respond to the allegation and defend his/her case in-front of the Committee chaired by the Dean of Students. The Provost is then apprised of the Committee's decision and recommendation for final deliberation and verdict.

The University's lawyer shall be involved in the proceedings of the case from the time the Committee is formed until the Provost pronounces the final verdict. The total period allowed to reach a conclusion from the date the infraction took place shall be no more than 15 working days.

The Provost shall apprise the President and the members of the Executive Council of the details of the case as it progresses.

**b. Academic Integrity Procedures as applied to Faculty & Staff:**

All faculty members and teaching-staff members are to provide official transcripts, copies of degrees and letters of recommendations as integral items of their personal files. Faculty members are also to be addressed (and require to be addressed) according to their proper academic titles. This assures that integrity of the teaching corps and protects the integrity of all graduate degree holders.

Faculty members and teaching-staff members must demonstrate the highest degree of academic integrity in teaching, research and other scholarly activities. They should be aware that not giving proper credit in presentations and publications is a serious infringement of intellectual property's rights, and constitutes a flagrant case of academic dishonesty.

Moreover, faculty and teaching-staff members who engage in multiple submissions or engage in fake collaborative research shall be accused of academic dishonesty. A faculty member or a teaching-staff member who is accused of academic dishonesty shall be referred by the Dean of the faculty to which he/she belongs to a Peer Review Committee that shall conduct its meetings in the same manner as that followed with students, as described above.

## Policy on Academic Research

American University of Science and Technology is a comprehensive institution where teaching is prioritized but research is a necessary requirement for promotion in rank.

The objective of this policy is to ensure that research done at AUST is intended to support the academic process and to maximize the contributions of AUST (faculty, staff and students) to the intended field of research while using scientific and scholarly rigor and applying the highest ethical standards and integrity in obtaining, recording and analyzing data and eventually in publishing the results.

This policy governs the research work done at AUST grounds and the research done on the grounds of cooperating universities within signed MOUs between the two institutions.

### Scope and Limits

AUST expects all those conducting research on AUST grounds to uphold the following:

- a) Abide by the Lebanese government's rules and laws
- b) Refrain from any behavior that deviates from the acceptable scholarly norms such as:
  - i. Copying results of others
  - ii. Plagiarism
  - iii. Using research funding for purposes other than the ones committed to
  - iv. Falsifying and fabrication of data
  - v. Claiming authorship of someone else's work
  - vi. Failure to apply for and receive IRB permission to do research on humans and animals
  - vii. Denying authorship and contribution to individuals who did work on the project
  - viii. Destroying or hiding results
  - ix. Engaging in conflict of interest activities such as falsifying info about other researchers in order to benefit oneself
  - x. Falsely claiming authorship of another person's work

AUST urges all faculty members to get engaged in research- especially applied research- and to get their students- graduates as well as undergraduates- to get involved in high quality research that reflects positively on the researcher's image and on the image of AUST as an institution engaged in finding solutions for problems that afflict society. The emphasis on the applied nature of research does not mean that AUST will not support basic theoretical research to the same extent as applied research.

AUST consecrates 5% of its annual budget for research. The direct assistance to researchers is summarized in 4 areas:

- a) Granting seed money for research
- b) Granting released time, if needed
- c) Paying publishing costs in refereed International journals

- d) Support travel to conferences to present papers. The University Research Council deliberates on requests to any of the 4 areas and its recommendations are submitted to the Executive Council for final approval. AUST encourages researchers to submit proposals to grant awarding foundations in Lebanon and outside Lebanon.

## Policy on Academic Freedom

Academic freedom is defined as: the freedom to express opinions and ideas without restraint or coercion by the University or by an outside body, and the freedom to pursue unfettered research within the guidelines of the University's policies and of the culture that the university exists in.

The American University of Science & Technology (AUST) believes that the practice of responsible academic freedom promotes the academic process and enables the development of academic capabilities. Moreover, AUST believes that free inquiry is essential to the development of ideas and research, for it will reflect positively on the actual teaching and learning process and on the outcome of research.

More Specifically:

- a. Faculty members are entitled to freedom of discussion within the limits of the syllabus. Although they are encouraged to train and guide students as to how to discuss and best deal with different viewpoints, they must be careful not to introduce controversial matters that may be potentially divisive, especially if such matters do not belong to the subject matter being taught.
- b. Faculty members are entitled to freedom of research and publication. The University should develop procedures that will encourage free research, and should ensure that faculty members are free to publish their findings as long as the research and findings do not run against the accepted cultural and institutional norms. The point here is not to limit or direct research and publications but rather to remind faculty members that there may be legal and social implications for freedom of pursuit if that freedom is misused.
- c. University faculty members are members of their communities and citizens or residents of the country that they live in; they are, as well, learned members of the institution and of their profession. Because it is difficult to clearly separate their various associations, faculty members may have, at times, to practice utmost care in their utterances and speeches.
- d. When the faculty members speak as citizens, they should speak with complete freedom but their positions in society and as university professors may impose certain obligations.

As scholars they should realize that the public may not differentiate between their individual right to speak and freely express their opinions and their association with AUST, or their membership in their profession. Hence, they should strive to exercise proper restraint, should be accurate at all times, and should always make it clear that they do not represent the institutional position when they are presenting their personal views.

- e. Faculty and students should enjoy an atmosphere of freedom and mutual respect when conducting classroom discussions or research. The University's community, in general, should reflect the proper practice of freedom of speech and expression inside and outside the classroom.

## Policy on Student Life

### **A. The Role of the University**

The American University of Science & Technology strives to develop its students academically, morally, ethically, socially and intellectually in order to meet the various challenges that may be faced in life. For this purpose, the University shall avail its students of proper guidance that is provided by the total academic and administrative corps in an atmosphere of care, closeness, freedom, and respect.

AUST seeks to develop in its students the qualities and traits of leadership and responsibility so that they may play their leadership roles effectively in their respective communities and societies.

### **B. Responsibilities of the Students**

AUST expects its students to behave responsibly and to use the freedom that they enjoy in a positive manner. Students are expected to respect the rights of others and not to disrupt the normal functioning of the Institution. Students are also expected to adhere to the rules and regulations of the University and the applicable laws and norms of the state and society of Lebanon. They are also expected to be positive spokespersons for AUST and strong participants in its academic and social well-being.

### **C. Participation in Campus Life**

Students are encouraged to form functional clubs to develop and practice leadership traits in the operation and governance of these clubs.

The management of student clubs should concentrate on the aims of the clubs which may be social, cultural, recreational, educational or promotional.

Given the prevailing political atmosphere in Lebanon, clubs cannot have political associations directly or indirectly. All clubs, and the regulations that regulate the functioning of these clubs, are to be approved by the Executive Council.

**Student representatives with GPA  $\geq 3.00$  shall be included in meetings of academic departments and in 4 faculty councils (Admissions, Curriculum, Co-Curriculum and Institutional Review Board)**

### **D. Judicial Procedures**

Students have the right to resort to proper judicial procedures in cases of misbehavior or misconduct that are of a non-academic nature.

This right includes the right of appeal to the Executive Council.

### **E. Diversity and Social Involvement**

AUST practices a non-discriminatory policy and it encourages its students to live the provisions of this policy so that their lives are enriched by meeting and associating with others who come from different cultural, racial, social and religious backgrounds.

Furthermore, AUST students are encouraged to be actively involved in social, cultural and ecological events.

## Policy on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The policy of AUST on equality, diversity and inclusion is rooted in the policy on rights and responsibilities that defined the beliefs, the principles and the mode of operation of the Institution.

For increased clarity this policy reiterates the basic rights and responsibilities that all members of the university community should enjoy regardless of differences in gender, color, social background, religious belief and preferences.

The university practices zero tolerance regarding all kinds of infractions to the basic rights guaranteed by the rule of the land and by the applicable policies of the university.

All university constituents are provided with the right to appeal to the highest level possible.

Differences in pay are to be the result of difference in qualifications and not due to differences in gender, religion, color, nationality or social standing.

Diversity is to be seen as a source of wealth and not a source of strife.

Religious, sexual and intellectual differences are to be respected and tolerated and not abused verbally or in writing. Personal opinions and behavior are rights for individuals and should not be tread upon, ridiculed or forcibly changed.

All provisions of this Policy should be within the observed Law of the Land (Lebanon).

## Policy on Financial Aid

### A. Aim of the Financial Aid Policy

The aim of the financial aid policy is to provide opportunities for needy and financially challenged students to start pursue and continue their education at AUST, without regard to race, religion or gender.

The University believes that providing financial assistance to needy students will ensure another dimension of diversity in the composition of the student body.

### B. The Financial Aid Program

AUST provides several types of financial aid programs designed for specific recipients as follows:

1. Students who cannot meet the financial requirements of their programs of study may submit applications for work-study assistance. Based on their eligibility and on their class schedule, students will be awarded a certain number of hours of work in the University. The amount accrued from this work will be deducted from their tuition fees. The number of hours allocated will be decided upon by the Financial Aid Council.
2. Students who have lost their father will be assisted in the neighboring of 15% of their tuition fees.
3. Students who have a brother or a sister at AUST will each have a10% assistance.
4. Needy students who are on the varsity team of the University will be assisted of up to 20% of their tuition fees.

All assistance comes within the work-study program which is designed to help eligible students develop their work skills in an academic environment.

AUST considers financial aid as a means to reach an end. It is meant to alleviate some of the worries that students in good academic standing may have because of shortage of family or personal funds. Financial aid is therefore, to be considered a privilege and not an acquired right; hence student's acceptance and observance of the University's rules & regulations constitute a condition for granting financial aid.

### C. Financial Aid Resources

Every year the University budget shall allocate a certain percentage for the Financial Aid Program. The allocated amounts shall be utilized over the whole academic year as per the advice of the Financial Aid Council. AUST shall attempt to secure extra revenues for the Financial Aid Program through active fundraising. The extra amounts collected shall be dispended as per the advice of the Financial Aid Council.

### D. Limitations

All AUST students are entitled to apply for financial aid. The applications are studied by the Financial Aid Council.

Aid is awarded regardless of gender, religion or nationality. There are only limitations that will hinder the receipt of Financial Aid, namely:

1. Lack of funds
2. No evident need
3. Student is not in good academic standing
4. Student has not completed Intensive English

## Policy on Drug Abuse

The use, distribution, sale and/or production of illegal drugs such as heroin, cocaine, marijuana, barbiturates, amphetamines, hallucinogens, or other addictive drugs on the University's property will result in suspension or dismissal of the violator.

## Policy on Risk Management

The American University of Science & Technology (AUST) recognizes that effective risk management is essential for safeguarding its assets, reputation, and stakeholders' interests. This Risk Management Policy outlines the framework and procedures for identifying, assessing, mitigating, and monitoring risks across all aspects of university operations.

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Promote a proactive approach to risk management that identifies and addresses potential threats and opportunities.
2. Ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements related to risk management.
3. Enhance decision-making by providing a systematic process for evaluating risks and implementing appropriate mitigation measures.
4. Foster a culture of risk awareness and accountability throughout the university community.

This Risk Management Policy is subject to periodic review and revision to reflect changes in the university's operating environment, objectives, and risk profile. Feedback from stakeholders is solicited to inform updates to the policy and associated procedures.

This policy is reiterated with definitions and explanations under the title of Risk Management in a later part of this manual.

## Policy on Computer and Information Technology

The network and computer policy establishes the vision of the Board of Trustees as to the freedom of sharing information within the scope of responsibility and respect to others and to the Institution itself.

Information Technology (IT) has provided means of sharing information that requires specified guidelines because of the nature of the tools and media used. The University defines the tools of Information Technology (IT) as networks, computers, email, electronic data, electronic information, web pages and the IT facilities available on the campuses such as computer laboratories and computer facilities.

The Policy defines the authorized user as any member of the AUST community (administrator, faculty, student, staff and worker) who has been legally permitted to use the IT system that AUST has put to use for its community.

All authorized users shall be subject to the following:

- a. The freedom of speech, expression and opinion in the pursuit of scholarly inquiry are fundamental in the process of proper learning and teaching. The sharing of information amongst the AUST community and among the learned community outside AUST is also believed to be an important vehicle in the learning process. The use of IT resources and services is therefore seen by the University as providing the necessary tools for the promotion of this freedom and the ability to share.
- b. Access to the Internet shall be guaranteed to all authorized users during all times. The use of the Internet shall be encouraged for the purpose of enhancing the education process.
- c. The use of the Internet for purposes that are not strictly educational shall be the responsibility of the user, and shall not be covered by any university insurance policy.
- d. The University expects (and is committed to) its constituencies to grow professionally, ethically, socially and politically; thus, it sees the Internet as a good medium for this growth. The use of the Internet however should be done within the proper limits of responsibility, ethics, social & political awareness and in full compliance with the laws of the Republic of Lebanon and of University's policies.
- e. The use of the Information Technology tools may be revoked, denied or restricted if authorized users abuse the privileges of such use, and do not operate within the confines mentioned above. The University shall not assume any legal responsibility for any illegal abuse, and may refer to prosecution if any user intentionally abuses the IT system or the country's ethical code of conduct.

The University reserves the right to apply and use the appropriate measures for the protection of its hardware, software and network system.

## Anti-Corruption Policy

American University of Science and Technology should be a haven of decency and good practice. Bribery, falsification of records, cheating, theft, and libel are not tolerated. In fact, AUST practices Zero tolerance to offenses that are considered discriminatory, non-ethical, and/or in direct contradiction to civilized behavior and to the rule of law.

Infringements to the anticorruption policy are answerable to special ad-hoc committees that are formed to deal with these issues. The committees deliberate and recommend a course of action to the Executive Council.

Appeals are within the rights of all constituencies but a validated infringement may lead to the expulsion of the person concerned.

## Policy and Procedures on Purchasing

AUST considers the money that it collects from tuition fees and donations as sacred and it has to be disposed of in a responsible manner without any pitfalls.

All university purchases should be done through the office of purchasing and under the guidance and supervision of the Vice President for Finance and Administration.

Purchase requests should follow the provisions approved in the budget.

All purchases need to begin as purchase requests and be approved through the relevant management ladder.

The internal auditor should review all purchasing transactions and should promptly inform the VPFA of any irregularities, especially on issues that may involve bribery and/or corruption.

All purchase orders are to be filled on special triplicate stationery and 3 bids should be sought for purchases over 500\$. When 3 bids are impossible to obtain a special dispensation from the VPFA should be obtained.

## Policy on Investment

One of the committees of the board of trustees is the Investment Committee. It is tasked with overseeing the management of the University funds.

The Investment Committee must be formed of Board members who are successful business individuals and who are totally free of any association with companies with which AUST money is invested (or will be invested).

Board members serving on the Investment Committee must have totally white, clean records without any blemishes resulting from actions like conflict of interest, or indictments resulting from bribery or corruption.

The Investment Committee should follow the investments that are approved by the total Board. The committee recommends to the Board as to which companies or funds the money should be invested in and the Board deliberates on the recommendation.

Members of the Investment Committee should keep in mind that AUST is not a profit organization and any funds available for investment should be dealt with carefully and without taking unnecessary risks.

The Investment Committee of the Board has to update the board with accurate changes that may affect the safety of the University's investments promptly and not wait for scheduled Board meetings to do so.

## Academic Affairs Policy

AUST believes that free inquiry is essential to the development of ideas and research, and that the practice of responsible freedom promotes the academic process and enables the development of academic capabilities. That is why the Board has set a separate policy on Academic Freedom which is to be read and understood as an integral part of the Academic Affairs Policy.

### **The Role of the University**

As an academic institution operating in Lebanon and receiving the overwhelming majority of its students from Lebanon and the neighboring countries, AUST defines its academic role as one that

- a- Offers academic programs that will enhance the quality of education and life of the citizens of Lebanon and the neighboring countries. Some of these programs must come as answers to the needs of the job market, others should be introduced in anticipation of the personal and business needs, and others are to be for widening the educational and cultural horizons of the students.
- b- Educates students as to their role in promoting good international and national citizenships.
- c- Provides students with opportunities to develop leadership traits, self-confidence, independent thinking and analytical decision making.
- d- Collaborates and operates with universities in Lebanon and/or elsewhere to ensure that the academic goals are met.
- e- Offers graduate programs in fields where there is evident need, or where AUST has cut a special niche of expertise and excellence.
- f- Offers undergraduate programs leading to the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Science degrees that are equated to the Lebanese License, and thus, accepting into these programs only those students who have passed the Lebanese Baccalaureate (or its equivalent) as Sophomores.

Lebanese students who have waivers of the Lebanese Baccalaureate and non-Lebanese students will have to enroll into a freshman class.

- g- Provides students with on-campus and off-campus opportunities that would complement their classroom education.
- h- Offers undergraduate programs that will satisfy the following three criteria
  1. A core of Liberal Education courses that include requirements in languages, humanities, social sciences, math/computer science/or natural science.
  2. A solid range of courses so as to satisfy the normal requirements of a major in good, reputable US universities while still impregnating these courses with material required by professional societies and/or the business world.
  3. A Capstone Senior Project as a requirement in the Senior year; this project helps students to synthesize the knowledge acquired during the three preceding years; it is to be based on either research or real life experience.

- i- The University offers specialty programs in the four faculties, namely, Faculty of Arts and sciences, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Health Sciences, and Faculty of Business and Economics. The program comprises a minimum of 21 credit hours (7courses) in areas which meet the market's demands.
- j- Establishes a network of universities and institutions that would cooperate with AUST in research, student exchange, faculty exchange, academic conferences and sports events so as to internationalize the institute, and offer its students and faculty a global perspective on education.
- k- Establishes summer programs designed to draw international students to AUST; thus, giving AUST students a chance to meet students from outside the region.
- l- Recruits faculty members who can teach and do research, and gradually increase the emphasis on research so that this emphasis becomes a necessary requirement for promotion.
- m- Provides faculty members with time release so as to get involved in research (according to set procedures).
- n- Holds conferences and activities of academic nature to benefit the University's students and the public.

### **Academic Standards**

In order to ensure that academic standards are of high quality, AUST shall subject all incoming students to the Freshman and Sophomore years to entrance and/or placement exams in the English language and in Mathematics. Moreover, it shall see to it that the following conditions are met:

### **Academic Rules and Procedures: These are set by the University's Council, and are listed in the Student Handbook, and the University's catalogue.**

Graduation Requirements: These requirements are by the faculty of each major, keeping in mind that the minimum number of credits required for a Bachelor's degree in any major is 120-credit hours, and that all requirements set by the Lebanese Government to equate the BA/BS degrees with the Lebanese License should be met. A minimum of 2.0/4.0 Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) is required in all courses taken, and in the courses described as major courses, to graduate with a Bachelor's degree.

Certain departments may have additional requirements:

- Satisfying the requirements of a Masters' program means the successful completion of a minimum of 39- credit hours, with a minimum GPA of 3.0/4.0. Candidates applying from a different major may be required to take additional pre-requisites to be determined by the Faculty Graduate Committee.
- Ordinarily a 6-credit hour thesis (out of the 39) is required. This thesis should show original research work and results.
- In the MBA program, the number of credit hours required for graduation is 39- credit hours. He student may choose to finish his /her degree by pursuing either a 6-credit thesis or a 3-credit research project. Both choices are included within the aforementioned 39 credits.

**Faculty Evaluation:**

The teaching competence of faculty members shall be evaluated every semester by the students, chairpersons and deans of concerned faculty. Procedures for the evaluation process are to delineated in a clear form.

**External Evaluation:**

The faculty shall establish procedures for annual evaluation of the quality of the graduating senior student's vis-a-vis graduates from reputable universities. These procedures may include interviews, statistics and evaluation from employers, standardized examinations...etc.

**Academic Services**

1. Academic Records: These records should reflect the performance of the students as well as that of the faculty be it in teaching, research and services. These records are confidential and include the key academic information needed to judge the academic standards of the institution, utilizing the commonly accepted approaches in American higher education.
2. Library and Learning Resources: Students and faculty have easy access to these learning resources which support the University's educational process. An adequate percentage of the budget shall be consecrated for the development of the learning resources of the University, including that of the library, the computer centers and the learning laboratories.

**Faculty Duties**

Faculty members are entrusted with the students' academic welfare. Their primary duties shall be the service of the students in an engaging teaching and learning process.

Furthermore, students' advisement and guidance are to be considered by the faculty members as integral components of the learning process. As mature individuals therefore, they should be trusted friends and noble examples to their students and advisees.

The faculty shall be responsible for keeping itself updated on the most recent and current developments in their areas of study, and endeavor to enrich the learning and teaching process with innovative techniques and ideas designed to further and enhance the students' involvement and grasp of subject matter.

Full-time faculty members shall enter into contractual agreements with the Institution. Although their teaching and advising duties shall extend from late September to the end of June, they are assumed to be engaged in research, in self-professional development or in teaching during the summer months.

A full time faculty is entitled to 4-week vacation during the summer unless his/her summer teaching load dictates otherwise.

The following defines faculty's duties in weeks (or their equivalents)

1- Service Equivalents

|                                |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| a. Teaching Duties             | 24-30 |
| b. Advising and Council Duties | 0-6   |
| c. Professional Development    | 8     |

2- Optional Equivalents:

|                                                    |    |
|----------------------------------------------------|----|
| a. Summer Teaching and/or Professional Development | 10 |
| b. Vacation                                        | 4  |

—

|                            |    |
|----------------------------|----|
| Total weeks or equivalents | 52 |
|----------------------------|----|

Fulltime faculty members are expected to use the 18 weeks of professional development in the improvement of their research profile and/or in updating their course's material.

## Faculty Affairs Policy

- i) FACULTY RECRUITMENT
- ii) FACULTY CONTRACTS (Types of Contracts, Term Appointments & Deadlines, Salary Payment).
- iii) FACULTY LOADS
- iv) FACULTY RANKS
- v) PROMOTION OF THE FACULTY
- vi) THE PEER GROUP COMMITTEE
- vii) LEAVES (Sabbatical Leaves, Leaves without Pay, Released time for Research, Sick Leaves, and Compensation Leaves).
- viii) OUTSIDE TEACHING
- ix) EXPECTATIONS FROM FACULTY MEMBERS
- x) JOB DESCRIPTIONS (Coordinator, Chair, Director/Dean)
- xi) THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
- xii) THE INSTITUTIONAL COUNCILS OF THE FACULTY (Curriculum, Admissions, Financial Aid)
- xiii) MEETINGS OF THE FACULTY

### **FACULTY RECRUITMENT**

AUST believes that the faculty member is a central figure in the teaching and learning process. The College therefore strives to recruit the most proficient faculty members possible. The procedure(s) provided below should guarantee objectivity, transparency and excellence.

Faculty members are recruited according to the following decreasing order of priority:

- a. Holders of terminal degrees in the field with demonstrated experience in teaching and research.
- b. . Holders of terminal degrees in the field with evident promise in teaching and research.
- c. Holders of MA/MS degrees with demonstrated experience
- d. Holders of MA/MS degrees with good promise (in extremis)
- e. Recipients of BA/BS degrees may be recruited as assistants in laboratories or studies.

AUST advertises faculty vacancies and needs in specialized international journals. Applicants are accepted through direct answers to the ads or on a walk in basis. Applications are received at the office of the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and are then dealt with according to the following procedure:

- a- Applications received electronically are acknowledged by the Office of the CAO with a statement specifying an approximate time for deliberation. Copies of the applications are sent to the concerned Dean/Director/Chair as the case may be.
- b- The Division or Department concerned shall study the various applications and shall come up with a short list of the top three applicants that answer the specific needs of the position. This short list should be no more than a three person list prioritized in order of 1st, 2nd and 3rd

- c- The CAO shall put the other administrators (President and VPs) in the picture and following discussions shall negotiate with the chosen applicants in the priority order that was approved.

## **FACULTY CONTRACTS**

Full time faculty recruitment shall be executed on the basis of the following faculty loads:

- a) 24 credit hours per year for PhD degree holders
- b) 30 credit hours per year for Master's degree holders

Full time faculty contracts shall be subject to the Lebanese Law of Contracts and obligations. All contracts shall be drafted for the duration of 12 months with the faculty member entitled to one month vacation per year. The fringe benefits accorded to faculty members shall be specified in the contract.

### **A. Types of Contracts**

There are three types of faculty contracts:

1. Three Year Limited Tenure: Associate professors and full professors on "limited tenure contracts". These are three year contracts renewable each year.
2. One Year Contract: A full time faculty member who is not on limited tenure will normally be offered a contract for one year. AUST, however, reserves the right to offer contracts for more than one year especially to those faculty members recruited from outside Lebanon and the Middle East.
3. Part Time Contracts: Part time faculty members shall be contracted for the duration of the term when their services are needed and they shall be remunerated on an hourly basis as per the rates set by the administration.

**Note:** Since AUST is a relatively young institution and its fees are considerably low so as to allow a wide spectrum of education seekers to benefit from the type of education provided, the Administration may see it useful to digress from the types of contracts mentioned above. Such digression is permitted by the Board as a moratorium which will cease when the reasons cease to exist.

### **B. Term Appointments and Deadlines**

Faculty members who are on limited tenure shall be offered contracts for 3 years and these contracts are renewable each year.

Full time Assistant Instructors, Instructors, Lecturers and Assistant Professors are normally offered contracts for one year. AUST, however, reserves the right to offer contracts for more than one year especially to those faculty members recruited from outside Lebanon.

Non limited tenure faculty members should be notified by April 1 if their contracts are not to be renewed.

Once a renewal of a contract is proposed to a faculty member in writing, the faculty members has 15 days to commit to the renewal and return the contract signed otherwise the position shall be deemed vacant and search for a substitute faculty member shall commence immediately.

**C. Salary Payment**

Salaries of full time faculty members are paid (over 12 months) no later than the last working day of the month.

All salaries shall be subjected to the statutory tax deductions.

Part time faculty members shall be contracted for the duration of the term when their services are needed and they shall be remunerated on an hourly basis as per the rates set by the administration.

Full time and part time faculty contracts are signed by the faculty member and by the President of AUST.

## **FACULTY LOADS**

Being learned, highly proficient and intelligent individuals, faculty members are considered as a central human resource and a treasure house that might be referred to, at times, to recruit for administrative positions.

Although most faculty members are initially appointed as full time teaching staff some of them may be appointed for part time or even full time no teaching, administrative positions. Accordingly, faculty full time loads may vary from 100% teaching to even 100% administrative duties. These loads are also dependent on the faculty member's degree and on whether he/she is involved in research or not. AUST considers that the teaching load of a Ph.D. holder is a total of 24 credit hours over the period extending from October 1 until June 30 of the academic year. Non-PhD holders have a total load of 30 credit hours to be covered during the same period. The University shall decrease the load of a full time faculty member in an amount commensurate with the administrative duties that may be required of him/her. Alternately, the University may choose to compensate financially without any reduction in the teaching load.

The full time teaching load may also be reduced by 3 credit hours per semester by special dispensation for conducting research. The procedure for such dispensation shall be made known to faculty members.

Should –in extremis- a full timer be asked and he/she agrees to teach a specified extra load in a certain semester then the University shall remunerate the faculty member at the hourly rate for part timers in the same academic rank.

## **FACULTY RANKS**

Recruiting full time faculty members shall be done to any of the following college recognized faculty ranks:

- a. Instructor: The rank of Instructor shall be given to full time faculty members who do not hold completed terminal degrees in their field. New recipients of terminal degrees other than PhDs shall be recruited as instructors for a period of 3 years after which they shall assume the ranks of Assistant Professor. Instructors have a teaching load of 30 credit hours per year.
- b. Lecturer: The rank of Lecturer is reserved for Masters Degrees holders who have completed a minimum of 12 years in College teaching and are enrolled in a PhD program. Individuals who have completed course work for their doctorate but did not complete their dissertations are recruited to the rank of Lecturer. Alternately, a faculty member may be assigned to the rank of Lecturer if he/she fails to get promoted to the rank of Associate Professor but is deemed important to the good running of the academic process in his/her field. Lecturers have a teaching load of 30 credit hours per year.
- c. Assistant Professor: New PhD degree holders are recruited to the Assistant Professor's rank. Ordinarily, an Assistant Professor needs six years of full time service in this rank before he/she becomes eligible for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor (with limited tenure). A minimum of three of the six years must be in the service of AUST. Assistant professors have a teaching load of 24 credit hours per year.
- d. Associate Professor: Full time faculty members are recruited to the rank of Associate Professor if they have been duly promoted to this rank at a recognized institution of higher learning. They shall have their

files studied during the 3rd year of service (after two full years of service at AUST) for limited tenure. If limited tenure is denied, they may be reconsidered for limited tenure during their 4th year of service at AUST. Should limited tenure be denied again, then they have to leave AUST or move to the rank of Lecturer by a Board decision.

Associate Professors who have completed seven years of full time service in the rank, with a minimum of three years of which at AUST may be eligible for promotion to the rank of Professor. The teaching load of Associate Professors is 24 credit hours per year.

- e. Professor: The rank of professor is reserved for full time Associate Professors who are duly promoted to this rank. Except in very rare cases (in extremis), AUST does not recruit full time faculty to this rank. Those rare cases are usually associated with administrative positions such as those of Deans and Vice Presidents. Associate Professors who have completed eight years of full time teaching (of which a minimum of four are in the service of AUST) may be eligible for promotion to the rank of Professor. The normal load of a teaching full time Professor is 24 credit hours per year.
- f. Visiting Professor: This “rank” is reserved to faculty members of the three preceding professorial ranks who are recruited for short periods and who do not plan on staying permanently at AUST. Faculty members recruited as Visiting Professors may use their years of service in this position toward their promotion should they decide to stay at AUST and should their requests to this effect be accepted.

## **PROMOTION OF THE FACULTY**

### **Promotion Criteria**

The AUST faculty member must be an upstanding citizen who is a good example to emulate and who would be a good reflection of the Institution that he/she represents.

The criteria and requirements for the promotion of faculty members are basically the same as those of any university that follows American norms and guidelines. Hence, the following major categories of evaluation are to be considered when a faculty member’s file is considered for possible promotion in rank:

1. Teaching effectiveness: Being an educational institution where teaching is considered the central and major responsibility of a faculty member, AUST places teaching effectiveness ahead of all other factors required for promotion. Faculty members are normally evaluated by their students and by their immediate supervisors; these evaluations are considered as essential inputs in the factor of teaching effectiveness.
2. Research and Publications: Second to teaching effectiveness, research comes as a necessary requirement in the promotion process. Visibility in research is usually measured by the quality of the academic publications of the faculty member.
3. Service to AUST and the Community: Being an integral and important member of the family of AUST, the faculty member is called upon to be an active participant in the life of the Institution.

This participation is usually measured by the faculty member’s involvement in faculty meetings, council meetings, organization of conferences & lectures, curriculum design and redesign, observance of student welfare...etc.

As a member of the larger community the service factor is measured by the active involvement of the faculty member in academic and non-academic activities that are held outside the university walls. In general, the service factor is associated with visibility inside and outside the university. In addition to the general promotion criteria listed above (teaching effectiveness, research and service), promotion from one rank to another is attached to the fulfillment of a time requirement.

**Promotion from the Rank of Assistant Professor to the Rank of Associate Professor (with limited tenure)\***

Assistant professors need to complete six years of full time teaching, a minimum of three of which must be in the service of AUST in the rank of Assistant Professor. Years of service at research institutions may be counted toward the total provided the research was novel research. The study of the file of the Assistant Professor by the Peer Group Committee shall commence during the first half of the 6th year of the faculty member's tenure as Assistant Professor and shall be concluded at the end of this same 6th year. The Assistant Professor whose promotion is approved will assume the new higher rank as of the beginning of the 7th year. If however, the request for promotion is not approved, then the faculty member may use the 7th year to relocate. Full time faculty members who completed their doctorate degrees while teaching full time at AUST may count three years of their teaching tenure as full timers in the rank of instructor. These faculty members would have to complete three years of full time teaching (at AUST) at the rank of Assistant Professor before being promoted to the rank of Associate Professor with limited tenure.

\*The Administration is permitted by the Board to promote to the rank of Associate Professor without linking this promotion to limited tenure provided the newly promoted faculty is issued a 3 year contract.

**Promotion from the Rank of Associate Professor to the Rank of Professor**

An Associate Professor needs to complete seven years of full time teaching in the Associate Professor rank, a minimum of three of which must be in the service of AUST. The study of the file of the Associate Professors by the Peer Group Committee shall commence during the first half of the 7th year of the faculty member's tenure as Associate Professor and shall be concluded at the end of the same 7th year. If promotion is approved, the faculty member shall assume the rank of Professor as of the beginning of the new academic year in October. If the promotion is denied, the Associate Professor may reapply for consideration once he/she feels that his/her file satisfies the requirements for promotion. Denial of promotion does not affect the limited tenure ship of the Associate Professor.

## **Chronology of the Promotion process**

In Chronological order, the steps involved in the promotion process are the following:

- a. By November 30th, the concerned faculty member should present a complete file for study by the Peer Group Committee “PGC” (see below) to the Head of the Academic School to which he/she belongs. By the same deadline, the Chief Academic Officer would have appointed a Peer Group Committee (PGC) that will be charged with the study of the file.
- b. The Head of the Academic School shall study the presented file and shall review its contents and check them for authenticity, completeness and fulfillment of the time requirement. The Head of the Academic School should complete the review and submit a report to the Chief Academic Officer by December 31st.
- c. By the 15th of January, the Chief Academic Officer shall convene to PGC, shall charge it with the task and shall see it that the Committee elects a Chair.
- d. Between January 15th and June 30th, the PGC shall convene and shall deliberate on the items(s) at hand. All deliberations shall be confidential and conducted in an atmosphere of professionalism and objectivity. The members of the Committee shall abide by the approved criteria for promotion in rank and shall refrain from injecting personal factors that may prejudice the collective judgment of the group. The Committee shall be free to seek professional counsel from outside AUST especially when the counsel is needed in the case of evaluating publications. By June 30th the Peer Group Committee shall present its collective verdict in a detailed report submitted by the Chair to the Chief Academic Officer.
- e. The Chief Academic Officer shall have until July 31st to come up with his/her recommendation that will be presented to the President. The CAO shall submit the Peer Group Committee’s report and his/her own to the President. In case the two recommendations are contradictory, the CAO shall have to discuss the issue with the President in order to come up with a common understanding that will be presented to the Board.
- f. The Board shall receive a recommendation from the President regarding the applicant’s file and shall act on it during its summer meeting before September 15.

## **THE PEER GROUP COMMITTEE (PGC)\***

The Peer Group (promotion) Committee shall be appointed by the Chief Academic Officer and shall be composed of full time faculty members who are in the rank to which the “applicant” may be promoted or higher .e.g. the PGC for an Assistant Professor applying for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor shall be made up of Associate Professors and/or Professors. The composition of the Committee should observe, as much as possible, the field of specialization of the applicant so that at least one member of the Committee is in a field of specialization close to that of the applicant. In the possible cases where no such one person could be found, an outsider may be co-opted to be a member of the Committee.

\*Because of the young age of AUST, the Board recognizes that the composition of the PGC from AUST faculty members may take some time to be achieved. Consequently the Chief Academic officer is allowed a wide margin of freedom in the choice of non AUST to become member of the PGC.

**The Meetings of the Peer Group Committee (PGC):**

The Committee shall have its first meeting with the Chief Academic Officer acting as Convener.

The Peer Group Committee shall be convened for an initial organizational meeting by the Chief Academic Officer. During the 1st meeting, the Committee shall be charged with its task and it shall elect its Chair for the duration of its mandate; from there on, all meetings shall be convened upon the call of the Chair who shall conduct the meetings in total confidentiality and in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order. The Committee shall convene as often as the members of the Committee deem necessary. External experts may be called upon by agreement of the members if there is evident need for outside expertise. The Committee shall work within the deadlines spelled out above and shall submit a final report of its recommendations to the Chief Academic Officer.

At no time should any member of the Committee reveal or communicate the proceedings or the recommendations of the Committee to any individual.

The Peer Group Committee shall submit its recommendations in written form to the CAO by July 31st. After the report is submitted, the work of the Committee comes to an end.

Promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor with Limited Tenure requires the accumulation of 20 quality points. (See later)

Each article in a refereed international journal shall count up to 5 quality points but no less than 3 quality points (3-5 points)

Each note or review in a refereed international journal shall count up to 3 quality points but no less than 2 quality points (2-3 points)

Articles in refereed regional or local journals shall count up to 2 quality points each but no less than 1 quality point (1-2 points). Notes or reviews in refereed regional or local journals shall count as one point or shall carry no points at all (0-1 points)

A minimum of 10 points must be accumulated from quality work published in internationally refereed journals. The remaining points could be accrued from publications in local or regional journals. On the other hand, the remaining points could be accrued from poster presentations in international refereed conferences (2 points each) and from paper presentations in international conferences and symposia provided these presentations involve novel research which is abstracted (2 points each). It should be noted that the above provides guidelines and not strict stone etched criteria. It remains incumbent on the PGC to evaluate the quality of the journal(s), the quality of the publication(s) and the novelty and relevance of the work.

## **LEAVES**

### **Sabbatical Leaves**

AUST recognizes the importance of sabbaticals for faculty rejuvenation and improvement. It has therefore established—in the following— guidelines and procedures that will regulate the issue of sabbatical leaves.

Sabbatical leaves are to be regarded as granted privileges and they are regulated by the following conditions:

- a. The faculty member must be a tenured faculty member and must have completed a minimum of six years of teaching at AUST in order to qualify for a sabbatical.
- b. A tenured faculty member may apply for a sabbatical leave every seventh year without any restrictions as to the total number of times the sabbatical has been granted.
- c. Before applying for a sabbatical leave, the faculty member must have had secured a position in a recognized educational university level institution where he/she shall be conducting research or teaching and research.
- d. Sabbaticals are for half a year (6 months) with full pay from AUST or full year (12 months) half pay from AUST.
- e. Airfares and transportation are to be assumed by the faculty member or the hosting institution. Only in certain instances where AUST's direct interests are involved will airfares and transportation be covered and this is done by special approval of the Provost and President.
- f. In determining whether to grant or deny a request for a sabbatical, the Dean of the academic school to which the applicant belongs should certify in writing to the Provost's office that there is available other full time or part time faculty members who can assume the teaching duties left vacant if the sabbatical is approved. Moreover, the Schools' budget must have the necessary funds required for the sabbatical.
- g. The application of the faculty member for a sabbatical is submitted to the Dean of Academic School for input and then directed to the Executive Council for deliberation. All approved sabbaticals will be presented to the Board by the President for final approval.
- h. The recipient of a sabbatical must return to AUST and serve for a minimum of two years, otherwise the money received from AUST will have to be returned.
- i. Once the sabbatical leave comes to an end the recipient should submit a report to the Dean, the Executive Council and the Office of the Provost summarizing the activities concluded during the sabbatical within three months after returning to the University.
- j. The time spent on a sabbatical shall be considered an integral part of the total years served by the faculty member and it shall be considered in seniority and advancement calculations.

AUST believes that, in adopting “the sabbatical system”, it is incurring a considerable financial burden as an institution that does not have any endowment at this present time. AUST however, is eager to provide its faculty with the advantages of sabbaticals so as to keep them updated and well networked. It is with this spirit and for these reasons that AUST tenured faculty members are called upon to look for and consider sabbaticals that will rejuvenate and improve the research and teaching potential and at the same time project AUST favorably,

through the faculty members sabbatical research, among internationally recognized institutions of higher learning.

**Leave without Pay**

Any faculty member may petition for a leave without pay for one semester or for a whole year provided he/she has completed three full years of full time service at AUST.

A leave without pay may be granted after consideration of the faculty member's teaching, research and service contributions to the University. Consideration may also be given for special personal or familial considerations. The recipient of a leave without pay may not accept regular faculty or administrative duties at another institution of higher education in Lebanon. The leave without pay extends the tenure clock for a period equivalent to the duration of the leave and reserves the position vacated by the faculty member until his/her return.

AUST may accept an extension of a leave without pay to the maximum total of 2 years, beyond which the faculty member either returns to AUST or loses the reserved position.

Requesting a leave without pay shall need the approval of the Dean/Director of the School and of the Executive Council.

### **Released Time for Research**

Full time faculty members may request time release for research. This time release shall be equivalent to one course per semester and shall be effective for one semester only (renewable upon restudy).

Requests for time release shall be submitted through the Dean of the School to the Executive Council for deliberation at least one semester before the release commences.

### **Sick Leaves**

All full time faculty members shall be entitled to ten working days as sick days per year. These days are to be used only during grave illness or during hospitalization. Non used sick days may be accumulated to a maximum of 4 working days in order to safeguard the faculty member's income during serious long illnesses or hospitalization.

New faculty members will be automatically vested with five sick days for the first year.

The university shall not terminate the contract of a full time faculty member during a sick leave. If the duration of the sickness is longer than the number of sick days accumulated then the faculty member and the Administration shall resolve the case amicably upon the end of the sickness.

#### **a) Compassionate Leaves**

"A compassionate leave" of 4 days with full pay will be granted to full time faculty members who are bereaved with the loss of a father, mother, sister, brother, child or spouse. No such days will be granted for the loss of grandchildren, grandparents, in laws, uncles and aunts.

### **OUTSIDE TEACHING**

AUST full time faculty members may not teach courses at another university. In the case where a recognized university officially requests the temporary teaching services of a faculty member the issue will be handled by the Dean and the Chief Academic Officer provided that there is reciprocation of such "services" between the two universities.

Full time faculty members may be guest lecturers at other institutions.

### **EXPECTATIONS FROM FACULTY MEMBERS**

The following is a reminder of what the "Administration" expects from faculty members in the domain of "Mechanical Observances".

- 1- Have completed employment files
- 2- Be punctual at the start and end of class sessions
- 3- Use diversified teaching aids if possible.
- 4- Provide the students with course syllabi by the end of the first week of classes.
- 5- Post office hours on the door of the office and/or the door of the instructor's lounge and be present for consultation during these hours by the end of the second week 1hr/3cr.
- 6- Be a proactive advisor (for full timers); i.e. call advisees to the office and engage them in dialogue.
- 7- Cooperate in the implementation of the rules and regulations concerning class attendance and submit CDs of the absences to the secretary of the Department.

- 8- Deliver a midterm exam within the announced time frame and report weak and disruptive students to the Department Head and the Office of the Dean of Students.
- 9- Notify in writing the Department Head and the Office of the Dean of Students as early as possible of detected academic weaknesses or deficiencies of students enrolled in his/her courses.
- 10- Provide extra instruction sessions for weak students.
- 11- Attend meetings of the Faculty.
- 12- Be an active member of the University Community by participating in University run activities.
- 13- Refrain from accepting any kind of employment outside AUST without securing the approval of the Executive Council (for full-timers).
- 14- Be responsible and accountable for completing the material content specified in the syllabi.
- 15- Follow departmental rules concerning exams.

## **JOB DESCRIPTIONS (Coordinator, Chair, Director/Dean)**

Coordinators, Chairs and Directors should have well defined jobs.

They should know exactly what is expected of them so that they are held accountable for these expectations.

### **The Coordinator**

The coordinator shall be responsible to the Chair and Director/Dean for coordinating activities relating to his/her academic unit.

More specifically the coordinator shall:

- a) Participate with the Chair and Director/Dean in the choice of suitable instructors for the courses in his/her particular unit.
- b) Orient new instructors to the academic requirements, rules and procedures of AUST before they begin classroom teaching or at most during the first week of the semester.
- c) Ensure that instructors of the same course are using the same textbook, that they follow the same syllabus at the same pace and deliver the same common midterm and final exam to their respective students.
- d) Collect copies of the instructors' syllabi and submit them to the Chair concerned.
- e) Develop with the instructors of the same course common evaluation criteria for the course.
- f) Hold meetings for instructors in his/her academic unit for the purposes of coordination and planning.
- g) Follow up on instructors in his/her academic unit as to the application of AUST's rules and procedures and submit periodic reports to the Chair.
- h) Coordinate the above with his/her counterpart in the Zahle (or Beirut) campus and develop together a course of action that will ensure that the two academic units in the two campuses are moving in unison.
- i) Participate in the planning and execution of community activities relating to the concerns of his/her academic unit.
- j) Be responsible for promoting the use of information technology tools in the courses within his/her academic unit.
- k) Recommend to the chair renewal or non-renewal of faculty contracts within his/her academic unit as well as salary adjustments based on merit.

### **The Chair**

The Chair shall be responsible to the Director/Dean for all activities relating to his/her academic units.

More specifically the Chair shall:

- a- Coordinate the activities within the various academic units under his/her jurisdiction.
- b- Be responsible for proper follow up of coordinators within his/her proper academic unit.
- c- Establish a data bank for potential instructors within his/her units.
- d- Participate in the choice of proper instructors and recommend the chosen candidate(s) to the Director/Dean.

- e- Ensure that all instructors within his/her academic unit are cognizant of the rules and procedures of AUST.
- f- Hold meetings for the instructors of his/her academic unit for the purposes of coordination, planning and guaranteeing quality assurance.
- g- Be responsible for placing book orders for courses relating to his/her academic unit at least 3.5 months before the books are needed.
- h- Prepare the course offering of his/her academic units so as to span always two semesters and two summer modules.
- i- Submit periodic evaluation of the progress of the faculty in his/her academic unit to the Director/Dean.
- j- Study and oversee this issuing of final course grades in his/her academic unit.
- k- Coordinate the above with his/her counterpart in the other campuses.
- l- Lead his/her academic unit in the planning and execution of community activities.
- m- Be responsible for promoting the use of information technology tools within his/her academic unit.
- n- Recommend to the Director/Dean renewal or non-renewal of faculty contracts within his/her academic unit as well as salary adjustments based on merit.

### **The Director/Dean**

The Director/Dean shall be responsible to the Provost for leading and executing proper management of the various academic units that fall under his/her jurisdiction.

More specifically the Director/Dean shall:

- a- Be responsible for the welfare of the academic programs, the faculty and the students under his/her jurisdiction.
- b- Be the leader and the mover of the units that she/he heads.
- c- Exercise his/her prerogatives in a wise and constructive manner.
- d- Ensure that all courses are staffed with the best faculty members available.
- e- Approve and finalize the course offerings submitted by the faculty (2 semesters + 2 summers).
- f- Exercise proper judgment in deliberations regarding faculty salaries and benefits.
- g- Approve and finalize the recommendations of the chairs regarding faculty hiring.
- h- Hold general faculty meetings for instructors under his/her jurisdiction for the purposes of information, communication, planning and observance of university policies, rules and regulations.
- i- Approve and finalize book orders for all courses under his/her jurisdiction are least 3.5 months before books are needed.
- j- Represent his/her school in the meetings of the Executive Council.
- k- Assure the quality of delivery in the classroom and ensure the maximum use of information technology in all courses under his/her jurisdiction.
- l- Represent his/her school in activities or programs related to that particular school.
- m- Be cognizant of the changes and improvements that are taking place in fields belonging to his/her school for possible adaptation.

- n- Organize school activities for the benefit of the students and the professional community.
- o- Work on establishing a network with the business community for the promotion of AUST's graduate and for learning the needs of this community.
- p- Suggest new programs to the Executive Council for implementation after having had these programs studied by the pertinent faculty and councils.

## **THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

### **Membership**

The Executive Council shall be composed of the President, Vice Presidents, Provost, Deans and/or Directors of Academic Programs and the elected Faculty Representative.

### **The Chair**

The Chair shall rotate among Council members. The Chair shall be elected by the membership of the Council and the term shall normally be for one year. Meetings shall be conducted according to the provisions of Robert's Rules of Order.

### **Duties**

The Executive Council shall be the highest institutional Council invested with the task of ensuring that the total program of the university is implemented according to the set policies, rules and procedures.

The Executive Council shall act on recommendations submitted by lower councils, academic units and personnel within the general policy framework set for the Institution.

### **Specifically, the Executive Council shall:**

- 1- Deal with recommendations received from Councils and academic units regarding recommendation for new programs and changes to existing programs in legislative or executive capacity as the situation may dictate.
- 2- Act as coordinator among the various Councils of the Institution as these Councils develop policies and programs while ensuring that duplication should be minimized.
- 3- Act as a Council of appeals for resolving disputes among academic units, Institutional Councils, students, faculty and staff as well as for student discipline cases that may result in suspension or expulsion.
- 4- Develop an organizational structure for the Institution that will ensure proper reporting and explicit relationships among individuals and offices.
- 5- Approve job descriptions for every position of the Institution and ensure that staff members within the same office receive training in the various functions of that office.
- 6- Approve the overall Institutional budget which should follow a yearly cycle starting at the base and using the academic unit as the basis for budgetary planning.
- 7- Supervise the implementation of new programs as these may relate to academic or managerial systems and functions without interfering with the proper functions of the concerned units unless absolutely necessary.
- 8- Approve the statement of purpose of the Institution as well as the general policies that govern the Institution.

- 9- Develop through the cognizant units a long-range plan that includes long range objectives and projections with budget guidelines and projections in support of the academic and managerial objectives.
- 10- Review periodically the long-range plan and introduce corrective measures when and where applicable.
- 11- Review annually the performance of faculty and staff members and allocate merit increases accordingly.
- 12- Meet once a week and be ready to meet in emergencies or when there is need for meetings.

## **THE INSTITUTIONAL COUNCILS OF THE FACULTY (Curriculum, Admissions, Financial Aid)**

### **The Institutional Councils of The Faculty**

The participation of faculty members in the governance of the institution shall be through their involvement in faculty councils, collective faculty meetings and departmental faculty meetings.

The faculty councils shall be composed of Faculty members who are nominated to specific councils by the Director/Dean, approved by the Provost and elected by the faculty body.

The Faculty Councils are to have their own chairs who are elected yearly with rotation being a desired but not necessary practice.

Rotation of Council members (and Chairs) is regarded as a method through which Faculty members may gain expertise in college management and in sharing management responsibilities. In addition to faculty members, the Faculty Councils shall involve staff members as ex-officio members where applicable.

**As of Fall 2024, students will have representation on the Institutional Councils and in Departmental meetings.  
As per the decision of the Executive Council on 9/July/2024.**

### **The Curriculum Council**

The Curriculum Council shall:

- Review the university requirements in light of recent developments in education and the need to provide AUST's students with a well-balanced liberal arts education.
- Initiate policies and procedures that will ensure AUST's leading position among Middle Eastern and Lebanese Institutions of Higher Learning.
- Promote and facilitate new teaching techniques.
- Review the extent of use of computer technologies in the various academic programs.
- Establish clear and fair criteria for testing, grading, academic probations, suspensions and graduation.
- Set clear rules and procedures for graduation in conformity with those practiced in leading American colleges and universities.
- Establish proposals for consideration of and acting on academic proposals originating from faculty members, academic units or academic administrators.
- Establish and evaluate procedures for registration, grade reporting, grade recording and grade distribution.
- Seek and implement external evaluation measures, which will evaluate the content of AUST's academic programs, the delivery process and the student achievement.

- Work on developing a system for measuring the teaching and learning effectiveness.
- Establish guidelines and procedures for academic advising by faculty members.
- Satisfy the needs of the professional business community by providing professional continuing education programs through the various academic units or through a separate entity.
- Act on petitions for tutorials, and for course substitutions involving university requirements and course equivalencies in transfer cases.

### **The Admissions Council**

The Admissions Council shall initiate policies, procedures and systems for approval by the Executive Council.

Once these are approved, the Council shall:

- Establish guidelines for admitting qualified students to AUST
- Study the applications for admission to AUST's undergraduate programs and act on them
- Review and act on petitions relating to admission or re-admission.
- Admit qualified students to the programs of their choice or to alternate programs (in certain cases) as per the recommendations and input of the academic units concerned.
- Review the admissions guidelines and procedures annually and implement changes after securing the approval of the Executive Council.

### **Financial Aid Council**

The Financial Aid Council shall:

- Draft the necessary application forms for financial aid
- Study the requests for financial aid from applicants and verify, to the best of its abilities, the contents of the financial aid applications.
- Interview parents and guardians to verify data included in the financial aid applications.
- Award (or deny) financial aid within the allocated budget for financial aid.
- Review petitions from students relating to financial aid.
- Evaluate the financial aid program, annually.
- Suggest a work-study program for consideration by the Executive Council and (once approved) evaluate the program annually.

### **Co- Curriculum Council**

The Co-Curriculum Council shall:

- initiate procedures that will support the academic life of the institution
- convene to study petitions regarding infractions of the rules and regulations regarding absence and lateness
- study petitions regarding missing exams
- deliberate on student initiated requests regarding speakers and events on campus grounds

## **MEETINGS OF THE FACULTY**

The faculty corps is a consultative body that may channel recommendations to the executive Council for possible action.

By definition, any individual who has signed a teaching contract with the University is considered a faculty member.

There are two major categories of faculty members:

- a) Full timers: This category is reserved for individuals who have signed contracts as full timers.

These are in the express service of AUST and do not have outside obligations

- b) Part timers: This status is reserved for individuals who teach on hourly basis for one semester at a time.

The faculty meeting comprises all two categories and all may participate in the discussions of the items on the agenda. For voting purposes, only full timers may vote.

In addition to the faculty members, the following are also considered faculty and may vote on issues, unless they are members of other councils of the faculty: The President, the Provost, the Vice Presidents, the Registrar and the professional university librarian.

The faculty should have at least four stated meetings during the academic year (2 in the fall semester and 2 in the spring semester). The faculty meeting shall be chaired by the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and the agenda shall be prepared by the CAO in cooperation with the President.

The faculty meeting shall be conducted according to the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order and the dealings of the faculty meeting shall be kept in minutes written by a secretary.

# University Governance

The Board of Trustees elects the President.

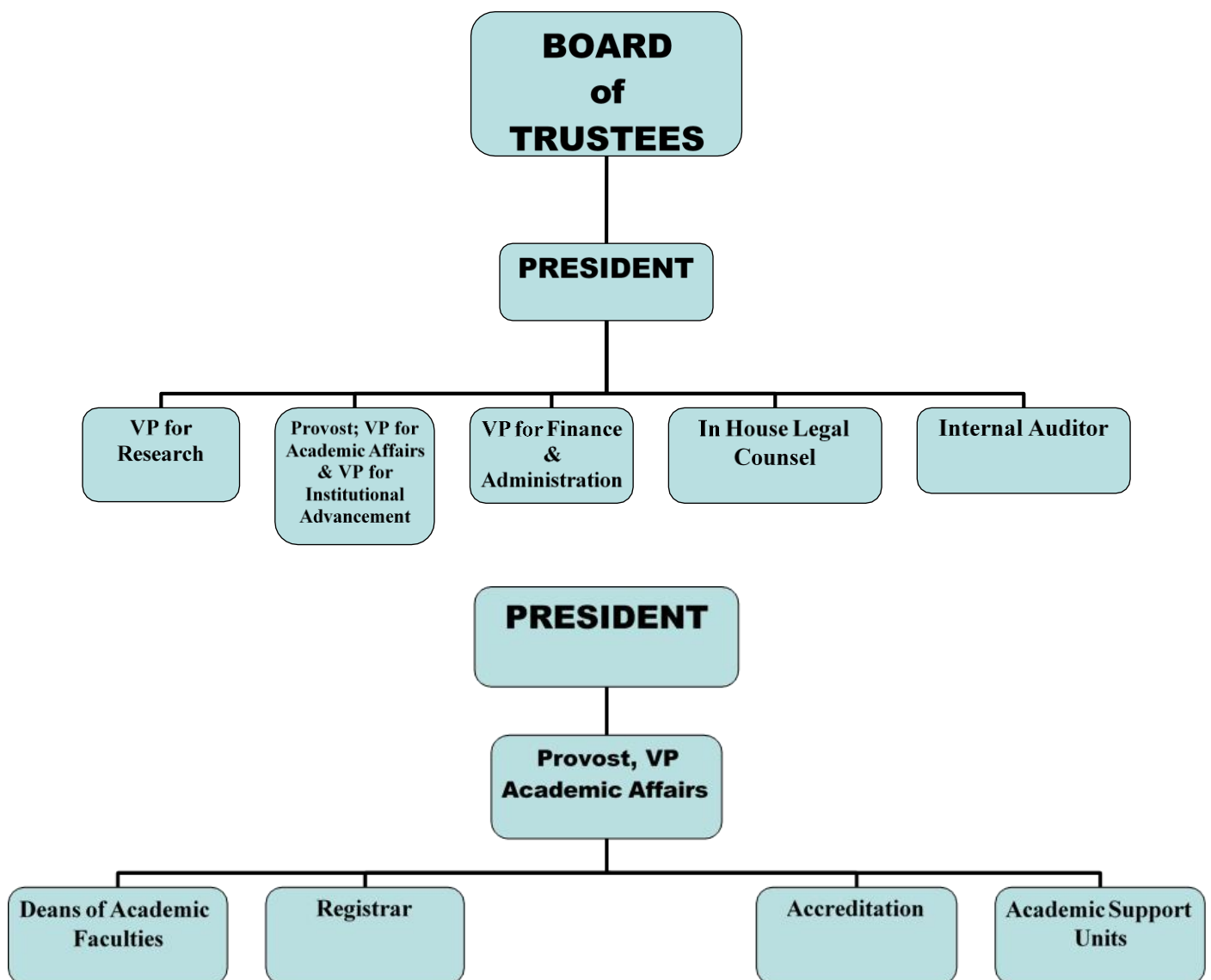
The President appoints the Vice Presidents and the Board approves the appointments.

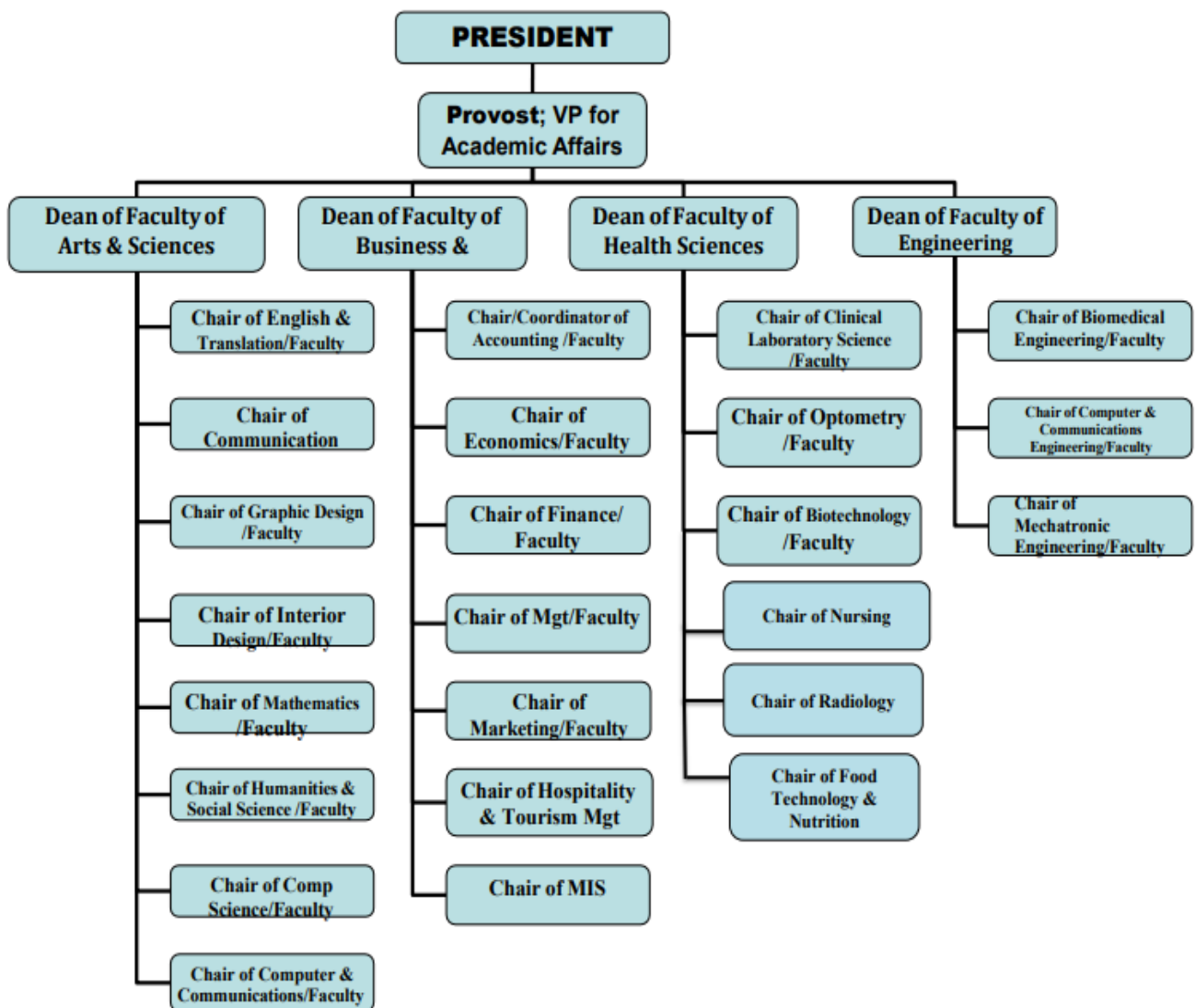
The Deans are appointed by the President after consultation with the concerned Vice Presidents.

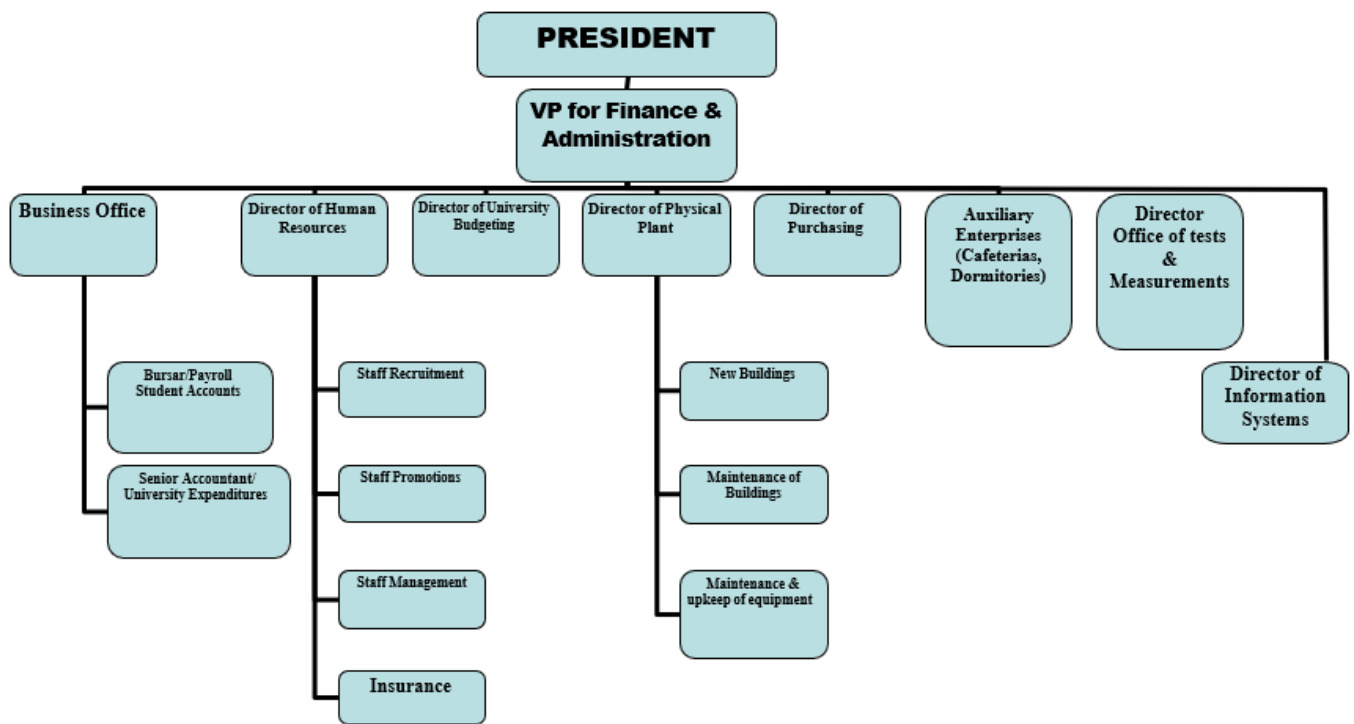
The chairs are appointed by the president upon the Dean's recommendation after consultation with the departmental faculty members.

The day to day management system is best described as a participative management system that allows administrators, faculty, staff and students to contribute to the general management process within the approved university councils.

The following organograms show the reporting structure within the University system.







## University Autonomy

The American University of Science and Technology (AUST) is a private, independent, multi-campus institution fully licensed by the Lebanese Government, with all programs accredited by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education. AUST maintains complete autonomy from external influences and upholds a strict non-discrimination policy.

Each campus operates under an administrative director, ensuring that academic activities are coordinated and standardized across all locations. This coordination guarantees that students, regardless of their chosen campus, experience consistent academic rigor. To achieve this uniformity, identical midterm and final examinations are administered simultaneously across campuses.

Because of weather differences, traffic and unforeseen security conditions, Campus Directors may practice some autonomy that may not affect the academic standards (e.g. make up days, closure for snowy weather, negative security issues.... etc.)

In addition to these practices, AUST exercises autonomy in several key areas:

- **Curriculum Structure and Program Introduction:** The university independently designs its curricula and introduces new programs, tailoring educational offerings to meet evolving academic and industry standards.
- **Learner Assessment:** AUST develops and implements its own mechanisms for evaluating student performance, ensuring assessments align with institutional objectives and educational outcomes.
- **Academic Partnerships:** The university establishes collaborations with other academic institutions and industry partners, enhancing educational opportunities and resources without external interference.
- **Student Enrollment and Admission:** AUST determines the number of students per program and sets its own admission criteria and processes, maintaining control over student selection to align with its mission and standards.
- **Staffing Procedures:** The university manages its staffing autonomously, overseeing recruitment, promotions, and other staffing decisions to ensure alignment with institutional goals.
- **Performance Assessment of Staff:** AUST conducts evaluations of both administrative and academic staff, implementing performance assessments that reflect the university's commitment to excellence.

## University Accountability

The American University of Science and Technology (AUST) operates in strict adherence to the laws of Lebanon, encompassing directives from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, as well as national labor and civil regulations. This compliance ensures that all university operations are conducted within the legal frameworks governing Lebanese society.

AUST is committed to delivering high-quality education through up-to-date delivery systems, meeting the expectations of its stakeholders, including students, parents, faculty, alumni and the broader community. The university's administrative structure, led by the President and accountable to the Board of Trustees, is clearly outlined in its organizational charts. These charts define the management hierarchy and delineate the responsibilities and accountability of faculty and staff members. University policies approved by the Board, along with detailed job descriptions, guide daily operations and decision-making processes. The President holds ultimate responsibility to both the Board and the Lebanese Government for the institution's performance across academic, financial, ethical, and moral dimensions.

In addition to these foundational principles, AUST has implemented comprehensive measures to uphold accountability and integrity:

- **Quality Assurance:** The university has established robust quality assurance mechanisms to monitor and enhance educational standards, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with best practices.
- **Standardized Sanctions Against Examination Fraud and Unethical Behavior:** AUST enforces clear policies and consequences to address examination fraud and unethical conduct among faculty and students, maintaining academic integrity and trust.
- **Compliance with Admission Standards:** Strict adherence to admission criteria is maintained to ensure fairness and transparency in the selection process, upholding the university's academic standards.
- **Ethical Management of Faculty Careers:** The university is committed to managing faculty careers ethically, including promotions and evaluations, fostering a fair and supportive academic environment.
- **Social Responsibility:** AUST actively engages in social responsibility initiatives, developing action plans and monitoring mechanisms to contribute positively to the community and society at large.
- **Financial Integrity:** The university upholds financial integrity through transparent and accountable financial practices, ensuring responsible management of resources and compliance with legal and ethical standards.

## Participation

The University adopts a system of participative management where the various categories contribute in the decision making process. Membership of councils and committees ordinarily includes faculty members, staff members and students. (The inclusion of students was frozen by the Board - for years- because of the volatility of the security situation in Lebanon; but this freeze was lifted as of Fall 2024).

The University seeks to involve all stakeholders in the various stages of governance as is feasible by the nature and expertise of the stakeholder. The American University of Science and Technology (AUST) is dedicated to a participative governance model that actively involves a diverse range of stakeholders in its decision-making processes. This inclusive approach ensures that the perspectives and expertise of various groups are considered, fostering a collaborative and transparent environment.

### Stakeholder Representation and Participation:

- **Faculty Members:** Faculty play a pivotal role in academic and administrative decisions, contributing their subject matter expertise and insights into educational methodologies.
- **Students:** Recognizing the importance of student input, AUST includes student representatives in councils and committees. Although student participation was previously suspended due to security concerns, the Board has reinstated this involvement as of Fall 2024, reflecting the university's commitment to student engagement.
- **Administrative Staff:** Administrative personnel contribute to operational decisions, bringing their practical experience and understanding of the university's day-to-day functions.
- **Alumni:** Graduates provide valuable feedback based on their experiences and career trajectories, offering insights that help shape programs to meet evolving industry standards.
- **Owners and Private Sector Representatives:** Engagement with owners and industry leaders ensures that the university's strategic direction aligns with market needs and employment trends, enhancing the relevance and applicability of its programs.

By incorporating input from these diverse groups, AUST ensures that decisions are well-rounded and reflective of the collective interests of its community. This collaborative approach enhances the quality of governance and promotes a sense of shared responsibility among stakeholders. AUST's governance structure includes various councils and committees where stakeholder representatives deliberate on policies, curricular developments, and strategic initiatives. This structure facilitates open communication and ensures that decisions are made with comprehensive consideration of all relevant factors.

## Job Descriptions

### President

1. **Job title: President**
2. **Last update: 04/02/2025**
3. **Reporting structure: The President reports to the Board of Trustees**
4. **Salary: Commensurate with qualifications and experience**
5. **Basic function:**

Appointed by the board of Trustees, the President serves as the chief executive officer of the University and is directly answerable to the Board of Trustees for four years renewable for one or more terms at the discretion of the Board of Trustees. The President implements the Board approved policies and directs the overall operations of the educational, administrative and fiduciary objectives of the University including short and long-term planning and continuous evaluation of all University units.

#### 6. **Qualifications:**

- Ph.D. Degree with an Associate/Full professor rank.
- Managerial Skills (Ability to work effectively with people, analysis, assessment/evaluation, conflict resolution, problem identification and resolution, interpretation of policies, planning, supervising, negotiating, staff development, scheduling, effective time management skills, ability to meet deadlines, statistical analysis, Assessment/Evaluation etc ...).
- Honesty, integrity, reliability, consistency and related positive character traits.
- Demonstrated success in teaching and research at university level.
- Experience in budget management (control, development).
- Experience in computer systems (PC, networking, MS office, Internet).
- Experience in Public Relations.
- Experience in personal and public speaking.
- Knowledge of University and State policies, procedures and regulations.

#### 7. **Physical demands:**

The Board of Trustees may opt to remove the President for gross mismanagement after a proper course of procedures delineated by a Board Committee.

The President delegates authorities to appointed Vice President that are approved by the Board.

#### 8. **Characteristic duties and responsibilities:**

The following specific functions are delegated to the President:

- Ensure the effective administration and governance of the University, reporting directly to the Board of Trustees.
- Oversee the administration of all University contracts, agreements, and purchases as delegated by the Board.
- Foster unity, collaboration, and a shared sense of purpose among faculty, staff, and students.
- Maintain discipline among university staff and students to uphold institutional standards.

- Establish and enforce institutional rules and regulations to ensure the well-being of the University community and the security of its property, with Board approval and in compliance with laws and policies.
- Communicate and interpret University policies to faculty and staff while effectively conveying institutional needs to the Board.
- Lead the development and implementation of long-term plans for academic programs, campus facilities, and institutional growth.
- Provide strategic leadership in advancing the University's academic, social, developmental, and financial objectives.
- Promote efficiency and excellence in all University operations.
- Uphold a balance between academic freedom and institutional responsibility.
- Serve as a liaison between the Board and faculty, ensuring effective communication.
- Implement a strong internal communication system to connect all University stakeholders.
- Prepare and submit required reports to the Board of Trustees and relevant governmental bodies.
- Make recommendations to the Board regarding faculty and staff employment, compensation, promotions, and dismissals.
- Establish or oversee the appointment of faculty, staff, and student committees.
- Collaborate with the Board to recruit and retain highly qualified faculty and staff.
- Serve as an ex-officio member of all standing committees and councils within the University.
- Develop and present the University's annual operating budget to the Board, ensuring its effective implementation.
- Recommend operational budgets and oversee expenditures in line with Board-approved financial plans.
- Work with the Board on fundraising initiatives to secure financial resources for the University.
- Manage University investments in accordance with Board policies, ensuring proper financial oversight.
- Authorize all payments and approve invoices for financial transactions.
- Award scholarships and financial assistance to students in accordance with the approved budget.
- Serve as the University's primary representative to the public, fostering relationships with stakeholders, alumni, and external partners.
- Oversee the University's marketing, publicity, and publications, including catalogs, bulletins, and newsletters.
- Represent the University in front of governmental agencies.
- Lead the University Development efforts.
- Build and maintain relationships with individuals, businesses, and organizations to promote awareness of the University's mission and funding needs.

- Accept and manage gifts, grants, and donations on behalf of the University.
- Approve the use of University facilities by external groups for conferences, seminars, and events.
- Maintain permanent records of Board of Trustees meeting minutes.
- Oversee faculty and staff personnel records.
- Plan, coordinate, and preside over commencement ceremonies and other official University events.
- Advise the Registrar on policies related to student admissions, transfer evaluations, and academic requirements.
- Sign diplomas and certificates with other designated administrations.
- Take immediate disciplinary action, including suspension and removal, of any employee or student posing a threat to safety, security, or institutional integrity.
- Perform additional responsibilities as assigned or authorized by the Board of Trustees.

**9. Approval**

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Name</b> | <b>Position</b> | <b>Signature</b> |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|------------------|
|             |             |                 |                  |

## **Provost/ Vice President for Academic Affairs**

- 1. Job title: Provost/ Vice President for Academic Affairs**
- 2. Last update: 04/02/2025**
- 3. Reporting structure: The Provost reports directly to the President**
- 4. Salary: Commensurate with qualifications and experience**
- 5. Basic function:**

Appointed by the President and approved by the Board of Trustees, the Provost serves as the chief academic officer of the University, responsible for the overall administration of academic programs, faculty affairs, and institutional planning. Reporting to the President, the Provost ensures academic excellence, promotes faculty development, and oversees curriculum planning and accreditation.

### **6. Qualifications:**

- Ph.D. Degree with an Associate/Full professor rank with at least 5 years university experience.
- Managerial Skills (Ability to work effectively with people, analysis, assessment/evaluation, conflict resolution, problem identification and resolution, interpretation of policies, planning, supervising, negotiating, staff development, scheduling, effective time management skills, ability to meet deadlines, statistical analysis, Assessment/Evaluation etc ...).
- Honesty, integrity, reliability, consistency and related positive character traits.
- Demonstrated success in teaching and research at university level.
- Experience in budget management (control, development).
- Experience in computer systems (PC, networking, MS office, Internet).
- Experience in Public Relations.
- Experience in public speaking.
- Knowledge of University and State policies, procedures and regulations.

### **7. Characteristic duties and responsibilities:**

The following specific functions are delegated to the Provost at AUST:

- Serve as the chief academic officer of the University, overseeing all academic affairs.
- Act as the principal advisor to the President on academic matters.
- Assume the role of chief executive officer in the absence of the President.
- Provide leadership in setting short- and long-term educational objectives and identifying the means to achieve them.
- Oversee the development of faculty and academic units to ensure the University's educational goals are met.
- Maintain and enhance the quality of educational programs through continuous assessment and improvement.
- Lead the planning and evaluation of academic programs and teaching effectiveness.
- Conduct research and long-term planning for academic growth, including faculty and facility needs.
- Develop and recommend policies on faculty qualifications, promotion, tenure, sabbatical leaves, salaries, and professional development.
- Maintain comprehensive academic personnel records, including faculty research and performance data.
- Serve as Chair of the Deans' Council, facilitating collaboration among academic leadership.
- Oversee the coordination of undergraduate and graduate programs across departments.
- Review academic offerings to eliminate redundancy and optimize curriculum efficiency.
- Supervise and evaluate Academic Deans and other academic administrators.
- Develop and propose educational policies for consideration by the Academic Deans and approval by the President.
- Conduct ongoing assessments of academic programs and institutional performance.
- Evaluate academic proposals and make recommendations to the Planning and Academic Program Committees.
- Oversee curriculum planning, course scheduling, and faculty assignments in collaboration with Deans and the Registrar.

- Supervise the evaluation of instructional methods and academic program effectiveness.
- Direct all academic accreditation processes and reporting activities.
- Ensure compliance with high standards for academic assessment and examinations.
- Oversee library operations to ensure alignment with academic needs and research priorities.
- Develop and manage the budget for the Provost's office, coordinating financial planning with the Vice President for Finance and Administration.
- Collaborate on the development of the University's annual education and research budget.
- Oversee financial allocations related to the University's academic mission.
- Foster a positive academic environment that supports faculty morale, professional growth and faculty research.
- Make recommendations regarding faculty hiring, retention, promotion, and dismissal.
- Recommend the selection of Department Chairs and Academic Deans to the President.
- Supervise faculty governance and academic policy implementation.
- Provide leadership in faculty evaluations and workload assignments.
- Approve faculty class loads, registration changes, and academic requests.
- Evaluate and approve faculty grants, research proposals, and academic initiatives.
- Approve faculty membership applications to professional associations and learned societies.
- Submit annual reports on academic affairs to the President.
- Recommend the University's academic calendar as prepared by the Registrar for approval.
- Serve as Chair of key academic committees, including the Standing Committee for Academic Planning and the University Courses and Curriculum Committee.
- Act as an ex officio officer of faculty and departmental committees.
- Oversee the preparation and finalization of class schedules and academic catalog materials.
- Serve as the University's official spokesperson on academic and instructional matters.
- Represent the University in academic policy discussions with external agencies and government bodies.
- Attend professional and academic events to promote the University's academic reputation.
- Facilitate the development and implementation of University policies.
- Interpret academic policies and adjudicate appeals and exceptions.
- Approve the academic and cultural calendar of events presented by Deans.
- Supervise the preparation of official academic publications and reports.
- Assist in the organization of commencement ceremonies and present candidates for graduation.
- Teach a limited course load, balancing administrative and instructional responsibilities.
- Participate as a member of key University committees, including the Academic Council, Planning Committee, Budget Committee, and Academic Program Committee.
- Attend Board meetings, faculty assemblies, commencement exercises, and other University events as required.
- Maintain open communication with Deans and faculty, ensuring they are informed of University decisions.
- Provide a welcoming and supportive environment for faculty concerns, encouraging open dialogue through in-person meetings, email, and phone consultations.
- Treat all individuals professionally and courteously in all academic and administrative interactions.

#### 8. Approval

| Date | Name | Position | Signature |
|------|------|----------|-----------|
|      |      |          |           |

## **Vice President for Finance and Administration**

- 1. Job title: Vice President for Finance and Administration**
- 2. Last update: 04/02/2025**
- 3. Reporting structure: The Vice president for finance and administration reports directly to the President and the Provost**
- 4. Grade/salary:**
- 5. Basic function:**

Appointed by the President the Vice President for Administrative and Financial Affairs (VPFA) serves as the chief financial and administrative officer of the University, responsible for overseeing financial planning, budgeting, human resources, facilities management, and operational efficiency. The VPFA ensures the financial health and sustainability of the institution while maintaining compliance with all regulatory and legal requirements.

### **6. Qualifications:**

- Ph.D. Degree with an Associate/Full professor rank with at least 5 years university experience.
- Managerial Skills (Ability to work effectively with people, analysis, assessment/evaluation, conflict resolution, problem identification and resolution, interpretation of policies, planning, supervising, negotiating, staff development, scheduling, effective time management skills, ability to meet deadlines, statistical analysis, Assessment/Evaluation etc ...).
- Honesty, integrity, reliability, consistency and related positive character traits.
- Demonstrated success in handling the finances of tertiary level educational institutions.
- Demonstrated success in administration of educational institutions.
- Experience in budget management (control, development).
- Experience in computer systems (PC, networking, MS office, Internet).
- Experience in Public Relations.
- Experience in personal and public speaking.
- Knowledge of University and State policies, procedures and regulations.

### **7. Characteristic duties and responsibilities:**

The following specific functions are delegated to the Vice President for Finance and Administration at AUST:

- Develops and implements financial strategies that align with the University's mission and strategic goals.
- Prepares and presents the University's annual operating and capital budgets for approval.
- Monitors financial performance and ensures efficient resource allocation.
- Provides financial reports and recommendations to the President and Board of Trustees.
- Oversees all financial operations, including accounting, payroll, procurement, and auditing.
- Ensures compliance with all financial regulations, tax laws, and reporting requirements.
- Implements and maintains internal financial controls to safeguard University assets.
- Manages risk assessment and financial forecasting.
- Develops strategies for increasing revenue through tuition, grants, investments, and auxiliary services.
- Oversees endowments, investments, and financial reserves in accordance with Board policies.
- Supports fundraising efforts in collaboration with the President and Vice President for Research.
- Oversees HR policies, including hiring, employee benefits, performance evaluations, and labor relations.
- Develops competitive compensation structures to attract and retain high-quality faculty and staff.
- Ensures compliance with labor laws, employment regulations, and University policies.
- Promotes a positive and inclusive work environment.
- Supervises the management and maintenance of University buildings, grounds, and infrastructure.
- Oversees campus safety, security, and emergency response planning.
- Ensures sustainability initiatives and cost-effective facility operations.
- Manages capital improvement projects, renovations, and new construction.

- Oversees purchasing policies to ensure cost efficiency and transparency.
- Negotiates and manages contracts with vendors, service providers, and suppliers.
- Implements best practices in procurement and supply chain management.
- Oversees IT infrastructure, cybersecurity, and digital transformation efforts.
- Ensures data integrity, compliance with information security regulations, and the effective use of technology resources.
- Collaborates with academic and administrative units to improve operational efficiency through technology.
- Works closely with the President and other Vice Presidents to align financial and administrative decisions with institutional priorities.
- Leads initiatives to enhance operational efficiency and cost-effectiveness.
- Participates in institutional accreditation and strategic planning efforts.
- Serves as the University's representative on financial and administrative committees.
- Presents financial and administrative reports to the Board of Trustees.
- Participates in state, national, and international higher education financial networks.
- Attends Board meetings, University assemblies, and other institutional events as required.
- Handles additional responsibilities as assigned by the President.
- Fosters a culture of financial accountability, transparency, and service excellence.

#### 8. Approval

| Date | Name | Position | Signature |
|------|------|----------|-----------|
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## Academic Dean

1. **Job title: Academic Dean**
2. **Last update: 04/02/2025**
3. **Reporting structure: The Academic Dean reports to the Vice President for Academic Affairs/ Provost**
4. **Salary: Commensurate with experience and rank plus a percentage for administrative duties**
5. **Basic function:**

Appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the Vice President for Academic Affairs/ Provost and after consultation with the faculty. The Academic Deans are responsible for overseeing the academic programs, faculty, and students within their jurisdiction. They provide leadership in curriculum development, faculty management, academic policy implementation, and student progress monitoring. The following functions are delegated to the Academic Dean across all campuses

### 6. **Qualifications:**

- Ph.D. Degree with an Associate/Full professor rank.
- Considerable directly related professional and administrative experience in a postsecondary educational institution.
- Managerial Skills (ability to work effectively with people, analysis, assessment/evaluation, conflict resolution, problem identification and resolution, interpretation of policies, planning, supervising, negotiating, staff development, scheduling, effective time management skills, ability to meet deadlines, statistical analysis, Assessment/Evaluation, etc....).
- Honesty, integrity, reliability, consistency and related positive character traits.
- Demonstrated success in teaching and research at university level.
- Experience in budget management (control, development).
- Experience in computer systems (office applications, internet).
- Experience in Public Relations.
- Experience in personal and public speaking.
- Knowledge of University and governmental policies, procedures, and regulations.

### 7. **Characteristic duties and responsibilities:**

The following specific functions are delegated to the Academic Dean at AUST in all campuses:

- Represent the Faculty in governmental meetings.
- Ensure the overall welfare of academic programs, faculty, and students.
- Provide leadership and direction for the academic units under his/her supervision.
- Exercise authority in a constructive and responsible manner.
- Ensure that all courses are staffed with the most qualified faculty members available.
- Approve and finalize course offerings for two semesters and two summer sessions, as submitted by department chairpersons.
- Supervise and implement academic policies and regulations as established by the Academic Council, under the direction of the Provost.
- Supervise, counsel, and evaluate department chairpersons and faculty members.
- Make recommendations regarding faculty and staff appointments, promotions, and other personnel actions.
- Facilitate and participate in the development of faculty policies.
- Interpret policies and handle appeals and exceptions related to academic regulations.
- Oversee degree planning, graduation qualifications, and student progress monitoring.
- Advise the President, Vice Presidents, and Provost on academic matters affecting the University's instructional programs.
- Ensure that the academic quality of all courses and programs aligns with those of reputable institutions.

- Coordinate and oversee curriculum content, class schedules, teaching assignments, and teaching loads in consultation with the Provost, department chairs, and Registrar.
- Conduct general faculty meetings to provide information, foster communication, and ensure adherence to University policies.
- Approve and finalize book orders for all courses under their jurisdiction at least two months in advance.
- Represent their Faculties in University Council meetings.
- Ensure the quality of classroom instruction and promote the integration of information technology in all courses.
- Oversee the evaluation of instructional programs and teaching methodologies.
- Collaborate with the Registrar to establish class and examination schedules.
- Make recommendations regarding faculty appointments, promotions, salaries, training, and dismissals.
- Assign substitute instructors in cases of faculty absences.
- Supervise the academic progress of all students within their school.
- Submit periodic reports to the Vice President for Academic Affairs/ Provost on academic matters.
- Oversee academic orientation programs for new students.
- Develop and present the academic and cultural event calendar to the Provost for approval.
- Approve class loads and student registration changes.
- Authorize make-up work requests for students with excused absences.
- Support and promote faculty research initiatives.
- Support and encourage faculty membership applications to professional associations and learned societies.
- Oversee the assignment of faculty offices, classrooms, and meeting spaces for student organizations.
- Organize academic and professional development activities for students and faculty.
- Establish relationships with the business community to enhance graduate employability and assess industry needs.
- Propose new academic programs to the Executive Council after thorough review by relevant faculty members and committees.
- Oversee the preparation and approval of academic content for official University publications.
- Advise the Registrar on policies related to student admissions, transcript evaluations, and entrance requirements.
- Assist in planning and organizing commencement exercises and present candidates for graduation to the President.
- Teach a limited course load as per contractual agreement with the University.
- Attend Board meetings when required, as well as University assemblies, commencement ceremonies, and other official events.
- Keep faculty members informed of University decisions and policy changes.
- Maintain open communication with students, welcoming their ideas and concerns through office visits, mail, email, and phone.
- Provide courteous and professional service to all members of the University community.
- Perform additional duties as assigned by the President and/or Vice President for Academic Affairs/ Provost.

#### 8. Approval

| Date | Name | Position | Signature |
|------|------|----------|-----------|
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## **Chairperson**

- 1. Job title: Departmental Chairperson**
- 2. Last update: 04/02/2025**
- 3. Reporting structure: The Departmental Chairperson reports to the Academic Dean**
- 4. Salary: Commensurate with rank plus a percentage for administrative duties**
- 5. Basic functions:**

Appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the Vice President for Academic Affairs/ Provost and the Academic Dean after consultation with the faculty members of the Department. The Departmental Chairperson serves as the chief administrative department and is responsible for representing the department to the University. The Departmental Chairperson is concerned with the smooth running of the Department. He/she follows up on teaching, preparing reports, checking and proctoring exams, advising students, counselling faculty, conducting meetings, and planning. The position of the Chair is normally held for 3 years, renewable for period(s) of 3 years. Ordinarily, the Chair's position is a rotational among the members of the Department.

### **6. Qualifications:**

- Ph.D. Degree...
- Managerial Skills (ability to work effectively with people, Analysis, assessment/evaluation, conflict resolution, problem identification and resolution, interpretation of policies, planning, supervising, negotiating, scheduling, effective time management skills, ability to meet deadlines, statistical analysis, assessment/evaluation, etc....).
- Honesty, integrity, reliability, consistency and related positive character.
- Demonstrated success in teaching and research at university level.
- Experience in budget management (control, development).
- Experience in computer systems (office applications, Internet).
- Experience in Public Relations.
- Experience in personal and public speaking.

### **7. Characteristic duties and responsibilities:**

The following specific functions are delegated to the Departmental Chairperson at AUST in all Campuses:

- To establish departmental mission statements and objectives, to guide the department toward established goals, and to periodically revise department's progress in achieving missions and objectives.
- To work with the faculty in the joint establishment on departmental policies curriculum content and changes, instructional standards, course evaluation, selection of textbooks, and course syllabi.
- To plan and present course offerings and book orders.
- To initiate recommendations concerning the requirements of department.
- To participate in the search for new faculty.
- To recommend candidates for positions and promotions in the department.
- To recommend faculty substitutes in case of extended absences.
- To supervise and evaluate faculty as to teaching, research, public service, and professional activities.
- To conduct faculty meetings and organize departmental committees to ensure effectiveness of the department.
- To promote faculty development and encourage faculty members to participate in conferences and to join professional organizations.

- To make recommendations for reappointment, tenure, and promotion of the faculty members.
- To foster productive professional relationships among departmental faculty.
- To recommend to the Academic Dean the budget needs of the department.
- To allocate the resources of the department so that institutional, research, and travel goals are met equitably.
- To recommend instructional materials to be purchased for the department.
- To recommend persons other than faculty members to be employed in the faculty.
- To present to the Librarian the recommendations of the department.
- To oversee, maintain, and upgrade laboratory equipment pertaining to his/her department and to keep an inventory.
- To supervise the academic progress of the students and promote the departmental society or club and extra-curricular activities.
- To monitor department scholarships and prizes.
- To participate in the active recruitment of undergraduate and graduate students.
- To coordinate departmental research and publications.
- To serve as chairman of departmental staff meetings.
- To prepare a semesterial report that will describe the various functions and the status of the department with recommendations for the future:
  - An outline of the material covered in the curriculum.
  - Significant events, changes, and improvements.
  - Total student enrolment.
  - Enrolment of majors.
  - Secretarial and other help used.
  - Brief summary of department faculty activities. e.g. General recommendations for the coming year.
- Be available for Faculty members' consultations.
- To convey University policies, procedures, and actions to the members of the department.
- To represent the department in the University and in off-campus activities.
- To perform additional duties as may be requested by the academic administration.

#### **8. Approval**

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Name</b> | <b>Position</b> | <b>Signature</b> |
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## Dean of Students & Admissions

1. **Job title: Dean of students and Admissions**
2. **Last update: 04/02/2025**
3. **Reporting structure: The Dean of students and admissions reports to Provost**
4. **Salary: Commensurate with experience**
5. **Basic function:**

Appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the Executive Council, the Dean of Students and Admissions is responsible for overseeing student affairs, enrolment management, and the overall student life on campus. This role ensures a supportive learning environment by managing student services, admissions, retention strategies, and student well-being. The Dean plays a crucial role in fostering a vibrant campus culture while ensuring alignment with the University's mission and strategic goals

### 6. **Qualifications:**

- Ph.D. degree in Higher Education Administration, Student Affairs, or a related field.
- Significant experience in student affairs, admissions, or enrollment management in higher education.
- Strong leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills.
- Demonstrated ability to work with diverse student populations and foster an inclusive campus environment.
- Knowledge of best practices in student engagement, retention, and enrollment strategies.
- Experience in data analysis and strategic planning for student success.

### 7. **Characteristic duties and responsibilities:**

The following specific functions are delegated to the Dean of students and admissions at AUST:

- Oversee student services, including counseling, career advising, student organizations, and campus life.
- Develop programs and initiatives that enhance student engagement, leadership, and personal development.
- Ensure student support systems, such as academic advising and mental health resources, are accessible and effective.
- Address student concerns, grievances, and disciplinary matters while upholding university policies.
- Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives to foster an inclusive campus environment.
- Oversee the admissions process, ensuring transparency, efficiency, and alignment with institutional goals.
- Develop recruitment strategies to attract and enroll a diverse and high-quality student body.
- Work with marketing and communications teams to enhance outreach efforts and student recruitment campaigns.
- Monitor enrolment trends and develop data-driven strategies to improve retention and graduation rates.
- Collaborate with academic departments to ensure a smooth transition for incoming students.
- Implement strategies to enhance student retention, progression, and success.
- Develop initiatives to support at-risk students and improve academic performance.
- Work closely with faculty, student services, and administrative teams to enhance the student experience.
- Facilitate mentorship and peer support programs to foster academic and personal growth.
- Serve as an advocate for students, ensuring their voices are represented in institutional decision-making.
- Participate in university governance, contributing to policies that impact student life and admissions.
- Maintain strong relationships with alumni, parents, and external stakeholders to support student success initiatives.
- Lead initiatives that integrate academic and extracurricular experiences to develop well-rounded graduates.
- Represent the university at admissions events, orientation programs, and student activities.
- Ensure compliance with university policies, accreditation standards, and regulatory requirements.
- Develop and manage budgets related to student services and admissions.
- Utilize data analytics to track student success metrics and improve service delivery.
- Prepare reports and recommendations for university leadership on student affairs and enrolment trends.

- Supervise and support staff within the student affairs and admissions departments.
- Lead efforts to have a yearly successful job fair that will assist students in locating jobs.
- Supervise the production of an annual biographical index for all graduating students.

**8. Approval**

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Name</b> | <b>Position</b> | <b>Signature</b> |
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## Quality Manager

1. **Job title: Quality Manager**

2. **Last update: 04/02/2025**

3. **Reporting structure: The Quality Manager works closely with the VPs, the Deans Directors of campuses. He/ she reports to the President.**

4. **Salary: Commensurate with Qualifications**

5. **Basic function:**

Appointed by the President, the Quality Manager monitors the development and implementation of quality assurance and continuous improvement initiatives within the University. Reporting to the President, the Quality Manager ensures compliance with accreditation standards, enhances institutional effectiveness, and fosters a culture of quality across all academic and administrative units.

6. **Qualifications:**

- Master's degree in Quality Management, Higher Education Administration, Business Administration, or a related field.
- Experience in quality assurance, accreditation, or institutional effectiveness in higher education.
- Strong knowledge of accreditation standards, compliance requirements, and governance frameworks.
- Expertise in data analysis, reporting, and performance measurement tools.
- Excellent communication, problem-solving, and project management skills.
- Ability to work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders to promote a culture of quality.

7. **Characteristic duties and responsibilities:**

The following specific functions are delegated to the Quality Manager at AUST:

- Develop and implement policies and procedures to ensure compliance with national and international accreditation standards.
- Coordinate accreditation and reaccreditation processes, ensuring timely submission of required reports.
- Monitor and maintain documentation related to institutional and programmatic accreditation requirements.
- Work closely with academic and administrative units to align programs with quality assurance frameworks.
- Ensure adherence to internal policies, external regulations, and best practices in higher education governance.
- Develop mechanisms for monitoring compliance with academic and operational standards.
- Support the development of institutional policies that enhance quality and accountability.
- Design and implement university-wide quality management systems and key performance indicators (KPIs).
- Conduct regular assessments of academic and administrative processes to identify areas for improvement.
- Provide data-driven recommendations to enhance institutional performance and student outcomes.
- Support academic departments in curriculum review and program evaluation for continuous enhancement.
- Collect, analyze, and report data on institutional performance, student success, and faculty effectiveness.
- Prepare quality assurance reports for university leadership, accreditation bodies, and external stakeholders.
- Oversee the development of dashboards and data visualization tools for informed decision-making.
- Conduct training sessions and workshops on quality assurance best practices for faculty and staff.
- Promote a culture of quality improvement by engaging faculty and administrative leaders in continuous development.
- Provide guidance on implementing assessment tools and methodologies across departments.
- Assist in the development and execution of the university's strategic plan with a focus on quality improvement.
- Monitor university rankings and implement strategies to enhance institutional reputation and global standing.
- Benchmark against peer institutions to identify best practices and areas for competitive advantage.
- Work closely with academic leadership, administrative units, and external accrediting agencies.
- Serve as a liaison between the University and quality assurance bodies, ensuring smooth communication.
- Foster partnerships with other higher education institutions to share best practices in quality management.

8. **Approval**

| Date | Name | Position | Signature |
|------|------|----------|-----------|
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## **Purchase Manager**

- 1. Job title: Purchasing Manager**
- 2. Last update: 04/02/2025**
- 3. Reporting structure: The Purchasing Manager reports to Vice President for Administration and Finance**
- 4. Salary: Commensurate with Experience and Qualifications**
- 5. Basic function:**

Appointed by the President on the recommendation of the VPFA, the Purchasing Manager is responsible for overseeing the procurement of goods and services for the University, ensuring cost-effectiveness, quality, and compliance with institutional and regulatory policies. Reporting to the Vice President for Administration and Finance (VPFA), the Purchasing Manager leads the procurement team, negotiates with suppliers, and develops purchasing strategies to support the University's operational and academic needs.

### **6. Qualifications:**

- Bachelor's or Master's degree in Business Administration, Supply Chain Management, Procurement, or a related field.
- Professional certification in procurement (e.g., CIPS, CPSM) is preferred.
- Proven experience in procurement, purchasing, or supply chain management, preferably in an academic or institutional setting.
- Strong negotiation, analytical, and decision-making skills.
- Knowledge of procurement regulations, contract management, and supplier evaluation.
- Proficiency in procurement software and financial systems.
- Excellent communication and organizational skills.

### **7. Characteristic duties and responsibilities:**

The following specific functions are delegated to the Purchase Quality at AUST:

- Develop and implement procurement policies and strategies in alignment with the University's financial and operational goals.
- Plan and manage the purchasing process to ensure timely availability of materials and services.
- Identify cost-saving opportunities and improve procurement efficiency.
- Identify, evaluate, and select reliable vendors and suppliers based on quality, cost, and service.
- Negotiate contracts, pricing, and terms with suppliers to ensure the best value for the University.
- Maintain strong relationships with suppliers and resolve any issues related to deliveries, quality, or contracts.
- Ensure all procurement activities comply with institutional policies, legal regulations, and accreditation requirements.
- Review and approve purchase orders, ensuring alignment with budget constraints and operational needs.
- Oversee the preparation and evaluation of bids, tenders, and supplier proposals.
- Monitor stock levels and coordinate with relevant departments to prevent shortages or excess inventory.
- Collaborate with warehouse and logistics teams to ensure efficient storage and distribution of goods.
- Implement best practices in supply chain management to enhance efficiency and reduce waste.
- Work closely with the Finance Department to ensure procurement activities align with the budget.
- Track and report procurement expenses, identifying areas for cost reduction and process improvement.
- Conduct market research to stay updated on industry trends, pricing, and sourcing opportunities.
- Assess procurement risks and implement strategies to mitigate them.
- Ensure that all purchased goods and services meet the required quality standards and specifications.
- Handle disputes, delays, or defective deliveries efficiently to minimize operational disruptions.
- Work closely with academic and administrative departments to understand their purchasing needs.
- Serve as the primary point of contact for procurement-related queries and support requests.
- Provide training and guidance to staff on procurement policies and best practices.

### **8. Approval**

| Date | Name | Position | Signature |
|------|------|----------|-----------|
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## HR Manager

1. **Job title: Human Resources Manager**
2. **Last update: 04/02/2025**
3. **Reporting structure: The Human Resources Manager reports to Vice President for Finance and Administration**
4. **Salary: Commensurate with experience**
5. **Basic functions:**

Appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the Vice President for Finance and Administration, the Human Resources (HR) Manager is responsible for overseeing the strategic and operational aspects of human resource management within the University. The HR Manager ensures compliance with labor laws, suggests changes to practices and policies and fosters a positive work environment that supports faculty, staff, and administrative personnel.

### 6. **Qualifications:**

- Bachelor's or Master's degree in Human Resources Management, Business Administration, or a related field.
- Proven experience in HR leadership, preferably in an academic or institutional setting.
- Strong knowledge of labor laws, HR policies, and employment best practices.
- Excellent communication, interpersonal, and conflict resolution skills.
- Ability to manage multiple tasks, work under pressure, and maintain confidentiality.
- Proficiency in HR software and data management systems.

### 7. **Characteristic duties and responsibilities:**

The following specific functions are delegated to the HR Manager at AUST:

- Develop and implement HR policies and procedures in alignment with the University's mission and legal requirements.
- Ensure compliance with labor laws, employment regulations, and institutional policies.
- Contribute to workforce planning, talent acquisition, and retention strategies.
- Assist in developing employee compensation, benefits, and incentive programs.
- Oversee the recruitment, selection, and onboarding processes for staff and administrative personnel.
- Work with department heads to identify staffing needs and create job descriptions.
- Manage the hiring process, ensuring fairness, transparency, and equal opportunity.
- Coordinate orientation programs to integrate new employees into the University culture.
- Develop and implement performance evaluation systems to assess faculty and staff effectiveness.
- Provide guidance to managers on performance improvement plans and staff development.
- Identify training and professional development opportunities for employees.
- Promote career growth initiatives, mentoring programs, and succession planning.
- Foster a positive and inclusive work environment that aligns with the University's values.
- Address employee concerns, grievances, and conflict resolution in a fair and professional manner.
- Organize employee engagement programs, wellness initiatives, and team-building activities.
- Maintain confidentiality and ensure ethical HR practices.
- Work with the finance department to manage payroll processing, ensuring accuracy and compliance.
- Oversee employee benefits programs, including health insurance, retirement plans, and leave policies.
- Conduct market research to ensure competitive salary structures and benefits packages.
- Ensure adherence to employment laws, labor regulations, and University policies.
- Maintain accurate employee records, contracts, and HR documentation.
- Conduct audits and risk assessments to ensure compliance with labor standards.

- Maintain HR databases, employee records, and personnel files securely and efficiently.
- Generate HR reports and analytics to support decision-making.
- Advise university leadership on workforce trends, diversity, and labor market conditions.
- Serve as a liaison between employees and university leadership on HR-related matters.
- Work closely with department heads, faculty, and administrative teams to support HR needs.
- Partner with external agencies, recruitment firms, and legal advisors as needed.
- Monitor infractions to quality procedures and system and report them to individuals concerned
- See to it that each university personnel has an updated employment file

**8. Approval**

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Name</b> | <b>Position</b> | <b>Signature</b> |
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## **Financial Manager**

- 1. Job title: Finance Manager**
- 2. Last update: 04/02/2025**
- 3. Reporting structure: The Finance Manager reports to Vice President for Finance and Administration**
- 4. Supervises: the staff of the Business Office directly**
- 5. Salary: Commensurate with Qualifications**
- 6. Basic function:**

Appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the VPFA, the Finance Manager is responsible for overseeing the financial operations of the University, ensuring compliance with financial regulations, and providing strategic financial guidance to support institutional goals. Reporting to the Vice President for Finance and Administration (VPFA), the Finance Manager manages budgeting, financial planning, reporting, and auditing processes while ensuring fiscal responsibility and sustainability.

### **7. Qualifications:**

- Bachelor's or Master's degree in Finance, Accounting, Business Administration, or a related field.
- Professional certification (e.g., CPA, CFA, CMA) is preferred.
- Proven experience in financial management, preferably in an academic or institutional setting.
- Strong knowledge of financial regulations, budgeting, and accounting principles.
- Proficiency in financial software and reporting tools.
- Excellent analytical, problem-solving, and communication skills.
- Ability to manage multiple financial projects and meet deadlines.

### **8. Characteristic duties and responsibilities:**

The following specific functions are delegated to the Finance Quality at AUST:

- Develops, implements, and monitors the University's annual budget in coordination with the VPFA and relevant departments.
- Provides financial forecasts, budget projections, and cost analyses to support decision-making.
- Assists departments in preparing and managing their budgets effectively.
- Ensures that financial resources are allocated efficiently to meet strategic goals.
- Oversees daily financial transactions, including accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, and procurement.
- Ensures accurate and timely financial record-keeping in compliance with accounting standards.
- Manages the reconciliation of financial accounts and oversees cash flow management.
- Supervises financial staff and ensures efficiency in accounting operations.
- Prepares periodic financial statements, reports, and analyses for university leadership.
- Provides insights and recommendations on financial performance, risks, and opportunities.
- Monitors key financial indicators and prepares reports for regulatory agencies and accreditation bodies.
- Ensures compliance with financial regulations, tax laws, and institutional policies.
- Coordinates internal and external audits and implement audit recommendations.
- Maintains transparent financial records to support regulatory and accreditation requirements.
- Oversees procurement activities, ensuring cost-effectiveness and adherence to policies.
- Negotiates contracts and agreements with suppliers and service providers.
- Implements financial controls to prevent fraud, waste, and inefficiencies.
- Identifies financial risks and develops mitigation strategies.
- Supports strategic initiatives through financial analysis and long-term planning.
- Optimizes investment strategies and financial policies to enhance institutional sustainability.
- Works closely with academic and administrative departments to support financial decision-making.
- Serves as a financial advisor to the VPFA and University leadership.
- Liaises with banks, auditors, regulatory bodies, and external financial institutions.

## 9. Approval

| Date | Name | Position | Signature |
|------|------|----------|-----------|
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### University Lawyer

1. **Job title: University Lawyer**
2. **Last update: 04/02/2025**
3. **Reporting structure: The University Lawyer reports to the President**
4. **Salary: Commensurate with Qualifications**
5. **Basic function:**

Appointed by the President and approved by the Board of trustees, the University Lawyer is responsible for providing legal counsel and representation to the University, ensuring compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and institutional policies. This role involves advising the administration, faculty, and staff on legal matters, managing contracts, handling disputes, and mitigating legal risks. The University Lawyer reports directly to the President and works closely with the Vice Presidents, Deans, and other administrative units to safeguard the institution's legal and regulatory interests. The University Lawyer attends Board meetings in an ex officio capacity.

#### 6. Qualifications:

- Juris Doctor (JD) or Master of Laws (LL.M.) degree from an accredited institution.
- Minimum of 5–10 years of legal experience, preferably in higher education, corporate law, or public sector law.
- Admission to the Bar and eligibility to practice law in the relevant jurisdiction.
- Strong knowledge of education law, contract law, labor law, and regulatory compliance.
- Excellent analytical, negotiation, and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to communicate complex legal concepts clearly to non-legal professionals.
- Experience handling litigation, mediation, and dispute resolution.
- Strong ethical judgment and discretion in handling confidential matters.

#### 7. Characteristic duties and responsibilities:

The following specific functions are delegated to the University Lawyer Quality at AUST:

- Provide legal advice on a broad range of issues, including governance, employment, academic policies, contracts, and regulatory compliance.
- Ensure the University operates in accordance with national and international laws, accreditation requirements, and institutional policies.
- Monitor and interpret changes in laws and regulations affecting higher education institutions and recommend necessary adjustments.
- Draft, review, and negotiate contracts, agreements, and memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with external entities, including vendors, research partners, and government agencies.
- Ensure all contracts align with the University's objectives, financial interests, and legal obligations.
- Develop contract templates and guidelines to standardize agreements across departments.
- Identify legal risks and implement strategies to minimize liabilities related to University operations, academic programs, and research activities.
- Represent the University in legal proceedings, including litigation, arbitration, and regulatory hearings, as needed.
- Work with external legal counsel when specialized expertise is required.
- Provide legal guidance on faculty and staff employment matters, including hiring, termination, disciplinary actions, and workplace policies.
- Ensure compliance with labor laws, anti-discrimination regulations, and workplace safety standards.
- Handle cases related to faculty and staff grievances, disputes, and complaints.

- Advise on legal issues related to student admissions, academic integrity, disciplinary actions, and code of conduct policies.
- Assist in the resolution of student disputes, grievances, and appeals in accordance with institutional policies.
- Ensure compliance with regulations governing student data privacy and confidentiality.
- Provide legal guidance on intellectual property (IP) rights, patents, copyrights, and technology transfer agreements related to research and innovation.
- Ensure compliance with research ethics, grant agreements, and industry regulations.
- Support faculty and researchers in legal aspects of collaboration with industry partners and funding organizations.
- Assist in drafting and revising University policies, bylaws, and governance structures to align with legal and accreditation requirements.
- Advise the Board of Trustees, President, and senior leadership on legal aspects of institutional decision-making.
- Review and support governance-related matters, including institutional restructuring and partnerships.
- Handle and mediate conflicts involving faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders to prevent escalation into legal disputes.
- Participate in internal hearings and committees related to academic and employment matters.
- Ensure due process is followed in disciplinary and grievance proceedings.
- Conduct training sessions for faculty, staff, and administrators on legal compliance, ethics, and risk management.
- Develop educational materials and guidelines to enhance legal awareness across the University.
- Promote a culture of legal responsibility and adherence to policies among all stakeholders.

#### 8. **Approval**

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Name</b> | <b>Position</b> | <b>Signature</b> |
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# **Summary of the University Strategic Plan**

# **SUMMARY OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

**2023-2028**

ASPIRATION

ASSESSMENT

WHY A STRATEGIC PLAN?

## **I. Preamble**

Approach and Planning Process

## **II. AUST's Commitments**

- i. AUST's Mission
- ii. AUST's Goals

## **III. AUST and Its Environment**

- i. Student Challenges
- ii. Strategic Challenges
- iii. Financial Challenges
- iv. Security Challenges
- v. Governance Challenges
- vi. Staff Challenges
- vii. Faculty Challenges

## **IV. Goals: Objectives and Actions**

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V. Strategic Initiatives for the Next Five Year VI. Assessment of Progress

**The Aspiration**

The aspiration of AUST is to become a student centered respected contributor to Higher Education in Lebanon and the Middle East by offering needed academic majors within an American styled educational system at costs that are within the reach of the financially challenged students.

**Assessment**

The mechanism of assessment shall be developed in consultation with the various stakeholders (administrators, staff, faculty, students, alumni, industry, advisory boards and (if feasible) consultants in ministries and experts in education.

The process of assessment should have a clear vision of “where am I now” and “where do I want to go” ...and how.

**Why a Strategic Plan?**

A strategic plan that comes as a result of the collective vision of the stakeholders is likely to muster the support of these constituencies and will illuminate the route toward achieving the goals and objectives. In a country that is witnessing constant changes and strife in practically all aspects of life (educational, political, financial, social, confessional), it is essential to periodically measure where one is compared to others in light of the brisk changes that take place. To know where one is and where one hopes to be will make the “how to get there” easier especially if support is garnered by those concerned.

## **Preamble**

American University of Science and Technology was initially established as a university college and was licensed by the Lebanese Government to offer BA, BS, MA, MS and MBA degrees in the late 1990s. In 2007, the Institution was chartered as a university as by Decree # 677/2007.

University education in Lebanon began in 1865 when the Syrian Protestant College – the present day American University of Beirut – was established by Presbyterian missionaries from the United States of America. The French Jesuits followed ten years later with the Université St Joseph (USJ). The university scene remained divided between AUB & USJ until 1924 when American Junior College for Girls was established also by the Presbyterians. Public university education began in the early 1950s with the establishment of the Lebanese University; Beirut Arab University followed and the Higher Education scene was believed to be fully and adequately served by the aforementioned institutions for many years to come.

During the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) conditions on the ground necessitated the opening of branch campuses for existing institutions while associations, entrepreneurs and even individuals entered the fray of higher education. By 2000 the number of tertiary education institutions licensed by the Lebanese Government exceeded forty.

AUST was one of “the new universities” in Lebanon that was met with opposition and resistance from “the older universities”. From the onset however, AUST decided to chart for itself a unique course that was believed to bring it respectability and recognition locally, regionally and internationally. In time, and with great efforts, the negative attitude of many older institutions subsided and it is hoped that the opposition will completely be relegated to the past as the AUST graduates prove their worth in the market. In fact, the market is proving to be a fairer judge than the older universities because it has practically totally overcome earlier prejudices (engendered by graduates of “older universities”) after experiencing the good product of AUST and thus became a supporter of the Institution.

AUST is presently in four locations in Lebanon: Beirut, Zahle and Sidon and Bhamdoun. All four campuses are affected by political and financial turbulences that the Lebanese scene is subjected to. A foremost concern is how to steer the Institution to a safe harbor in case of local or regional turmoil.

In 2007, and after close to fifteen years of operation, AUST found itself in front of new givens dictated by the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah war. There were serious concerns that enrolment will recede and that faculty and staff members will have to be reduced. Fortunately, however, the fears were not warranted and enrolment did not drop. Consequently, confidence in the prevailing “system” increased and there was general satisfaction and faith in the course of action- especially academic and financial- that the University was following.

The international financial crisis that began in 2007 appeared -to many- to have missed Lebanon. This may have been true as far as the banking and construction sectors were concerned but it was certainly not true when many Arab and European tourists stayed put and opted not to vacation outside their countries. The effect of this decision was catastrophic to many enrolled students who worked in restaurants (and the like) in the summers and saw that they were laid off and thus could not raise enough money to pay their tuition fees. Still however, an enrolment drop did not materialize because the recruiting efforts more than balanced the loss in student numbers incurred by the financial downturn.

With Covid-19, the financial collapse, the political instability and the August 4, 2020 explosion of the Port of Beirut and the destruction of one third of Beirut with the death of over 200 persons (and over 6000 casualties), AUST found itself facing enemies and situations that it never faced before. In 2021, at the apex of the effects of the factors mentioned earlier, AUST got back to the drawing board to answer 4 important existential questions:

- a) Who are we?
- b) What do we want to become?
- c) How do we get there?
- d) How do we measure our success?

The four questions were to be discussed and analyzed by the faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, industry, advisory boards, educational experts, students and parents and a composite picture was to be drafted as the strategic plan for the years 2023-2028. It is to be mentioned that the first plan that expired in 2018 was originally meant to expire in 2015 but- upon study- it was stretched to 2018 since it was judged that most of the decisions and recommendations made were still applicable.

### **Approach & Planning Process**

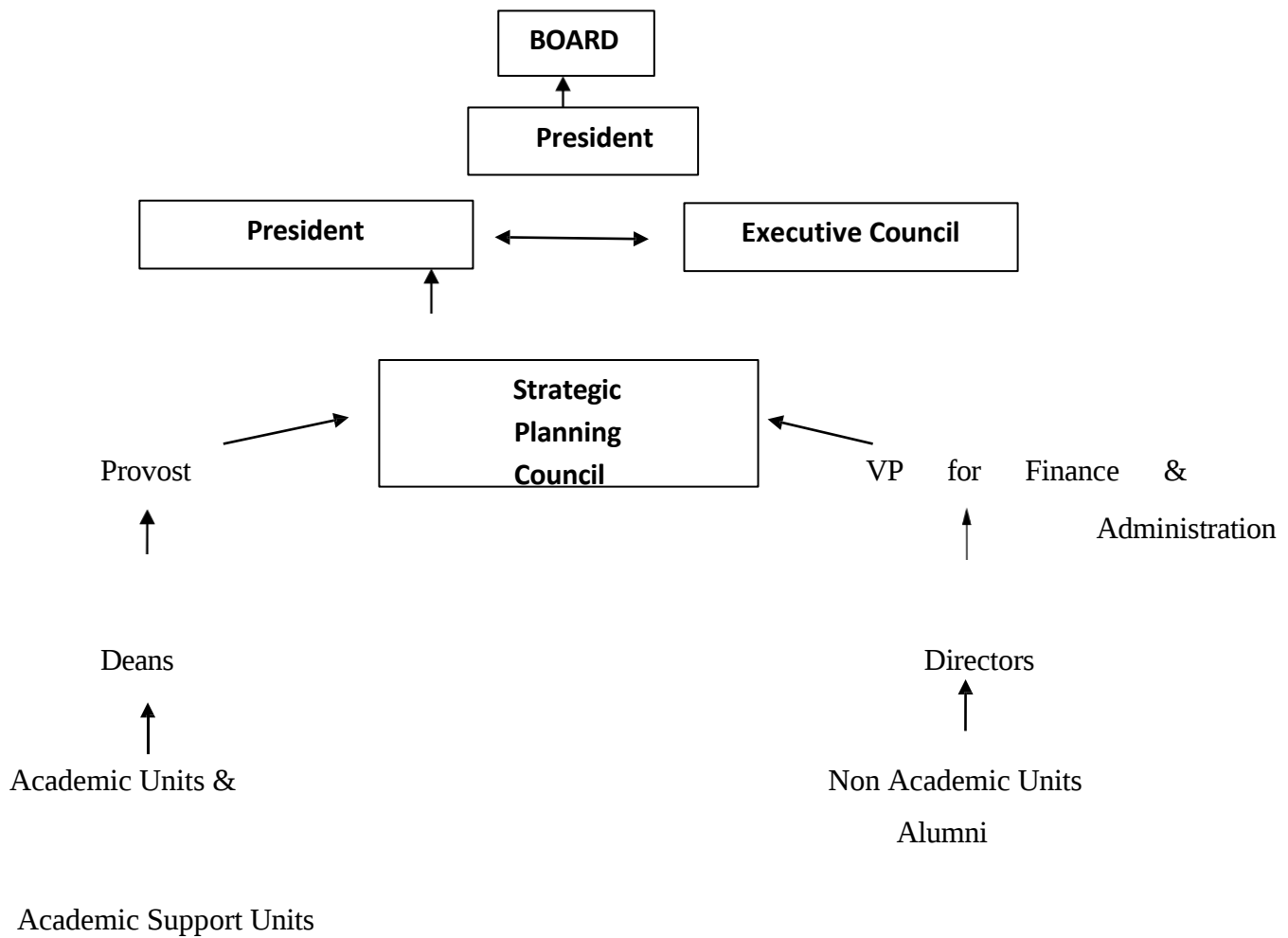
A Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) and the Advisory Boards was formed from the various components of the Institution. SPC consulted with the Boards of Advisors and the Alumni as important stakeholders in the future of the Institution.

The Committee was co-chaired by the Provost and the Vice President for Finance and Administration and it had faculty representations from the four Faculties through the Deans as well as representatives from the Staff and Alumni. In addition, the Dean of Students & Admissions and the Registrar were appointed to the Committee.

The members of the Committee were to bring to the meetings the results of the deliberations of their respective units regarding the 4 questions at hand. The Council coordinated the various reports and presented its findings and deliberations to the President who subjected all recommendations to the approval of the Executive Council which finalized the recommendations as they were taken to the Board by the President for final approval.

A two fork committee was formed. One fork dealt with the academic part and the other with non academic part.

Schematically the approach was as follows:



## AUST’s Commitments

The statement of Mission of AUST reflects the concerns of its founders that American – styled education should be within the reach of all qualified students. Hence, tuition fees are to be kept at a minimum level while providing financial aid to needy students without compromising the requirements for growth and excellence in academic delivery.

Quite simply: AUST is committed to provide very good value American-styled education at very affordable costs that do not jeopardize the academic process or curtail the adherence to the University’s Mission.

Note: The various stakeholders of the University believe that the Commitment of the Institution is still valid and will probably remain valid in the foreseeable future.

The depreciated purchasing power of the Lebanese family has made this commitment even more meaningful. The fact that some majors at AUST cost 50% and 75% less than their counterparts in “older institutions” was perceived by the stakeholders to engender two opposing effects:

- a. Students may join AUST because of the cost factor
- b. Students may shy away from AUST because they link the lower cost with a lower educational value.

All stakeholders believed that despite the young age of AUST, the market has favorably judged the graduates. Therefore, the gaining perception is that no trade off is taking place and that students are joining AUST to take advantage not only of the lower cost but also of the quality of education offered.

### **AUST’s Mission**

The University’s Mission was amended in May 2022 to read as follows:

In May 2022, the Board reviewed the Statement of Mission of AUST. The new statement rewrites the older statement in a clearer form and incorporates suggestions from the stakeholders as well as some recommendations made by the Evalag team of experts in 2019. These recommendations are included in italics and they are the last 4 bullet points.

The Board of the University defined in May 2022 the Mission of AUST as follows:

- The American University of Science and Technology (AUST) is a recognized institution of higher learning licensed by the Lebanese Government that is committed to excellence and freedom in teaching and research. AUST reflects the concerns of its founders that affordable American-styled education should be within the reach of all seekers without any form of discrimination or prejudice.
- AUST shall be a student oriented university that prioritizes learning, critical thinking, applied training and research based class work. It shall establish
- wide networks of cooperating universities for exchange and joint research and of potential employers who may provide part time and/or full time employment to students and who may be recruited to serve on the advisory boards of academic majors.

- The University shall offer high quality programs comparable to those offered in the USA including a liberal arts curriculum that is distinctive of American education.
- AUST shall strive to graduate highly competitive, proficient and motivated communicators, problem solvers, designers and entrepreneurs who enjoy high levels of tolerance for different opinions, who are promoters of human rights and intercultural dialogue and who are well versed in the new technologies.
- The University shall require internships in academic majors offered so as to shorten the distance between the classroom and the working place and it shall establish a career center to assist students in finding full time and part time jobs while studying.
- AUST shall avail the university community and the larger “society” with cultural and educational programs and activities that will support and complement the traditional classroom teaching and learning processes and provide an extended arm to the “society” to share and participate in the wealth of experience that the university can provide.
- *AUST shall offer academic programs needed in the market and not sufficiently offered by other universities.*
- *The University shall adopt a flexible scheduling system so as to allow working students the possibility of taking advantage of its full curriculum.*
- *AUST shall encourage applied research with effort to find solutions to existing problems.*
- *The University shall review its Mission Statement every 4th year (or before if circumstances require) and it shall consider the inputs of all possible stakeholders (boards, administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni, employers...).*

The various stakeholders believe that the updated Mission statement of 2022 is valid and does not need any changes.

## **AUST's Goals and present situation in 2022**

Based on consultations with the members of the various units of AUST's community, the Strategic Planning Committee developed the following goals for AUST:

1. Recruit, enroll, educate, and graduate students from recognized high schools in Lebanon and the Middle East. Make available to the enrolled students all possible requirements for success while underlining the development of analytical and innovative thinking, leadership traits, and entrepreneurial undertaking (same as 2010-2018 plan). Covid-19 and conditions in Lebanon, especially the financial collapse caused serious decrease in total number of students.
2. Recruit faculty members who are proficient in their fields and who are educators in addition to classroom teachers and researchers. Emphasis in the recruitment should be on American and European trained terminal degree holders with a proven record in teaching and research. Priority will be given to qualified Lebanese nationals who want to return to Lebanon to serve (same as 2010-2018 plan). Plan seriously affected by the financial collapse that began in 2019.
3. Recruit staff members who are university graduates with excellent communication skills in English, French and Arabic. Staff members are also to be computer proficient and, where necessary, well versed in technology same as 2010-2018 plan. Plan seriously affected by the financial collapse of 2020).
4. Nurture a research environment and provide the means and policies for faculty involvement in research which will become a Sine Qua Non condition for academic promotion. (same wording as plan of 2010-2018). Research is already a necessary SINE QUA NON requirement for promotion.
5. Enhance and strengthen the image of AUST with the public through engaging the public in special courses and events designed to further the academic proficiency of the general public and to bring the University closer to the public's attention. This is to be accomplished through a Continuing Education Program and through social and cultural events to which the public will be invited (same wording as 2010-2018 plan). AUST has come a long way in fulfilling the provisions and spirit of this goal.
6. Develop closer and tighter relationships with international universities by increasing their numbers and by strengthening the programs that AUST shares with them.

AUST is believed to have gained quick recognition and respectability because of the contribution of its international partners. Efforts to increase, diversify and strengthen the international network

was deemed by the Council as of paramount importance.

7. Improve and upgrade all aspects of information technology at AUST so as to be compatible with the academic process that is closely related to cutting edge IT.

Since the plan of 2010-2018, this goal has been realized qualitatively and quantitatively. Still, however, it remains a goal to constantly strengthen; given the speed at which IT is developing.

8. Seek regional and program accreditations from international agencies (preferably US agencies) to complement the accreditation accorded by the Lebanese Government (same wording as 2010- 2018 plan). ABET and IACBE accreditations were achieved and renewed. Evalag accreditation was granted until September 2023 and extended to 2024. AUST is presently applying for reaccreditation by Evalag.
9. Increase the offerings in academic areas not covered adequately by other universities.
10. Diversify the offerings of the continuing education program and attempt to reach new sectors of the Lebanese Society.
11. Attempt to establish AUST operations and/or programs in choice Middle Eastern countries.
12. AUST shall attempt to become the leading university in IT in Lebanon and the first choice among graduating high school students.

### **AUST & Its Environment**

The prevailing lack of security, the high price of fuel, the almost total nonexistence of electric power, the financial collapse and the multiplicity of nascent universities engaged in unethical illegal activities have left AUST in a very unenviable and difficult situation. The heterogeneous nature of the Lebanese society with all the complications that arise from religious, confessional and political differences place Lebanon and its institutions on dangerous fault lines that may erupt at any time. Consequently, AUST has to remain vigilant at all times. It is a blessing that AUST's four campuses have not encountered any serious problems from the security angle but the repercussions of the financial collapse have caused havoc in all the institutions. The flight of qualified faculty to foreign universities that pay better, the hesitation of highschool graduates to join a university that they cannot afford and the never present, non dependable electric power (and hence internet) pose serious challenges to any strategic futuristic planning. Given the precarious factors, the SPC has identified several challenges that AUST is facing and will probably face in the near future.

These challenges are summarized below:

1. Student challenges
2. Security challenges
3. Faculty challenges
4. Staff challenges
5. Financial challenges
6. Governance challenges
7. Strategic challenges

## Student Challenges

Lebanon's school population is unique. The number of students in the private sector is more than double the number enrolled in the public sector. Parents believe that students will get a better education in the private schools that were established by missionaries years before Lebanon became an independent nation. Despite the fact that private schools exact fees while the public school is free (and academically viable), parents prefer to have their children study in their old private school. Also, the private schools are not affected as much by disturbances that plague the public school that is totally dependent on the government's financial well-being.

The last 3 years have been difficult for the Lebanese in general and for the Lebanese middle class family (and below) in particular. The loss of the purchasing power of the Lebanese Pound resulted in the incapacitation of the average family to pay its children's tuition fees required by the private universities. The obvious alternative was to switch to the almost totally free public university, the Lebanese University whose faculty were continually on strike and whose students were left non attended for. Given the fact that more than half of the students enrolled at AUST work to help their parents and given that the majority have lost their jobs because of the financial collapse, there was a real problem...a problem that reflected itself in a steep decline (25 % loss) in the number of students despite all the measures taken by AUST in the last three years to alleviate part of the hardships the students (potential and active) had.

Considering all the measures that AUST has taken and the continued decline in enrolment, the SPC recommends that a special committee be formed and tasked with searching for funds (from outside the tuition fees) to increase the Financial Aid budget considerably. The present dilemma cannot be solved by decreasing fees because this will negatively affect the operation (purchases, faculty salaries, staff salaries, development...).

The recommendation sees that as tuition fees are adjusted, Financial Aid should increase by a greater percentage. Beside the financial challenge resulting from tuition costs facing students, there are two other factors that affect student enrolment and these are the cost of commuting to the university and the cost of rent if the student's family home is distant.

The price of gasoline has appreciated ten folds since the government removed all subsidy on gasoline and heating oil; at the same time apartment rents tripled thus causing an intolerable financial stress on students who have to commute on a daily basis or rent an apartment close to the university.

The Strategic Planning Council saw that recruiting students to AUST should concentrate on:

- a) Students enrolled in schools that are geographically close to the campus since the price of gasoline has become a determining factor in the choice of a university
- b) Devising an awareness campaign in schools regarding the majors in which AUST excels (Forensic Science, Clinical Laboratory Science, Fashion Design, Cybersecurity...)
- c) An aggressive recruitment campaign in Iraq, Jordan, Syria
- d) Finding and developing new areas/ countries where student recruitment to AUST is possible... (e.g. China)
- e) Strengthening relations with school principals and directors and running career counseling workshops for school counselors and students
- f) Trying to increase the Financial Aid budget through donations
- g) Strengthening and increasing contacts and relations with the parents with invitations and programs designed to familiarize them with AUST

Due to the insecurity factors that may mount and forbid students from reaching the campus, online delivery should be always a viable option that will guarantee delivery of subject matter even at the student's residence.

SPC recommends that faculty members diversify the mode of delivery of subject matter and thus be always ready to come up with proper assessment of the student in a particular class.

The profile of the AUST student is that of a seeker of knowledge with limited financial means.

Because of financial difficulties the student who joins AUST may have AUST as his second or even third choice. Excelling high school graduates are usually awarded scholarships to study in the more established older universities. AUST would like to become a first choice institution for all students regardless of the factors that may impose selectivity and possibly some biases (that should not be tolerated). Because of its professed policy of

offering programs that are needed but not offered by other universities, AUST may claim that it is a first choice institution in these majors but the hope is to be seen as a premium choice in other majors and not only in those where the competition is non-existent.

- h) Proposing scholarship and aid packages to excelling highschool students
- i) Continuing and improving the Open Friday activities (highschool students visit AUST campuses for orientation and familiarization)
- j) Increasing the outreach of AUST's social media so as to be directed to potential students in Lebanon and outside.

## **Security Challenges**

The security situation has been aggravating because of the lack of political stability certainly in Lebanon. The presence of armed forces outside the central government's control renders the security situation open to all possibilities. The war of Israel and Hamas and the involvement of armed Lebanese factions in this war exacerbate an already strenuous and difficult situation. Shaky security conditions forced French and Italian exchange students to leave Lebanon and to continue their course work online. Students who were in line to be the next batch of exchange students withdrew their applications. Some Lebanese student, who were already enrolled in courses at AUST preferred to leave the country at the insistence of their parents.

Exodus of Lebanese families with their college (or college bound) children continues at a fast pace.

Another dimension of the lack of security is strictly internal and it may be summarized in the inability of registered students and their teaching faculty to reach the campus because of demonstrations or forced closure of facilities because of strikes and social unrest.

The SPC debated the issue of security as it is a haunting issue and provided the following recommendations:

- k) There should never be hurried administrative/ academic decisions that may put any member of the family of AUST in harm's way
- l) In insecure situations changing to online delivery should be swift and decisive
- m) AUST should continually improve and update its online delivery systems
- n) Faculty members should be ready to give grades quickly hence they should increase and diversify their means and methods of evaluation and assessment
- o) Access to buildings and closed areas should be restricted to the members of the AUST family and the security and parking personnel should practice utmost vigilance

## **Governance Challenges**

The family that established AUST in 1989 opted to have the University run under the auspices of a Board of Trustees.

The founder of the university has presided over the Institution since its inception. She may at any time choose to retire leaving to the Board the task of choosing a new president as per the conditions spelled out in the Constitution and Bylaws. This should be a straightforward operation given the measures that have been taken to ensure sustainability and smooth succession. Still, however, family owned businesses are notorious for the unexpected and for feelings overcoming sound judgment.

The SPC considered the governance challenge and commended the work of the present president and her family in institutionalizing AUST and barring unexpected developments, the succession should pass with no problems.

## **Faculty Challenges**

Between 2019 and 2023, AUST lost many well qualified faculty members due to the financial collapse that Lebanon experienced and is still experiencing. The flight of faculty members to institutions outside Lebanon was coupled with a dryness in the influx of young graduates to Lebanon. The depletion which was easy to fill before 2019 became a serious problem and the pressure to fill the classrooms with faculty members ran into the necessity of hiring individuals who would not have been hired in normal circumstances.

The SPC identified five issues to be discussed regarding the faculty body. These are:

- i. Recruitment
- ii. Teaching loads
- iii. Salaries & benefits
- iv. Promotions
- v. Security conditions

## **Recruitment**

The SPC judged that the conditions spelled out in the faculty bylaws regarding recruitment are good but they need to be applied more strictly. The Committee stated that due to the exodus of Ph.D. holders from Lebanon, the University chose to accept non terminal degree holders in the classroom. Although these members may be excellent teachers, the SPC believed that the University should have made more effort to get terminal degree holders-albeit they are few- by enticing them with higher salaries.

The Strategic Planning Committee recommended that a quick filling of the vacant posts should take place.

The Committee recommended that AUST should take an active role (not a reactive role) in reaching out to potential faculty members. The SPC committee saw that the web page advertising section headed “careers at AUST” does not serve the purpose of good recruitment and it should be reviewed, amended and improved.

### **Teaching loads**

Compared to older universities that have amassed fortunes in endowment over the years, AUST, is a poor institution with no endowment that derives all operating costs from money paid by students as tuition fees. It is understandable that the teaching load may need to be higher than the older more established institutions but the higher load is an obstacle in new faculty members accepting positions at AUST. Coupled with the practice of paying less for low enrolled courses, asking faculty members to teach tutorials for free...etc. new possible full timers will hesitate to accept an extended offer from AUST.

Over the years, and especially during the period from 2019 until 2022, the faculty and staff of AUST have responded very positively to the efforts of the administration to keep the institution working and healthy. The administration, faculty and staff joined hands and worked in unison to deliver high quality education and to readjust salaries after the collapse of the Lebanese economy.

Cognizant and appreciative of this good will that undeniably permeates in the relationships at AUST, the SPC wishes to urge the administration to study the possibility of having the AUST faculty corps carry the equivalent teaching loads to their counterparts in older university and would like to urge the administration to earnestly and seriously work on establishing a development program and an alumni association tasked with fund raising so as to establish an endowment capable of supporting AUST in rainy weather.

### **Salaries and Benefits**

The SPC sees that salaries of full time faculty members are within the norms established in Lebanon. AUST's salaries are less than the older American styled institutions that have sizeable endowments and established, over the years, influential alumni associations that support the institution. In contrast, the hourly rate for part timers is quite often unacceptable. The SPC recommends an upward adjustment of the part timer's hourly rate.

The SPC noted that whereas staff members are covered by NSSF, the faculty members do not enjoy this coverage and would like the Administration to look into this issue.

### **Promotions**

As a result of meetings with full timers and part timers the Strategic Planning Committee believes that the Faculty bylaws spell out clearly the methodology of promotion of full timers and the criteria according to which they are evaluated. These criteria are similar to those enforced at many American institutions that enjoy stability and the luxury of planning and executing the plans. The SPC sees that whereas opportunities to apply are well repudated, the time factor involved could be restudied. Consequently, the SPC suggests that perhaps (for a fresh young PhD) six years is a long time to wait to be considered for promotion especially if he/she is a good teacher and researcher. Perhaps the 6 year period should be a guideline for normal cases but it could be waived to lesser years

(4 for example) in case of individuals who have proved themselves beyond a shadow of a doubt.

### **Security Conditions**

The SPC commended the way the university reacted to the serious security challenges that plagued the country in the last 3 years. Most noticeably was the interest of AUST in the safety of the university community. Paramount among the headaches of AUST was to ensure that students, faculty, staff and workers be kept well informed and safe at a time when the country was afflicted with sanitary and security challenges. Over the 3 years, AUST developed its communication and delivery systems so that anyone could be easily reached and the learning/teaching process can continue without necessarily having to commute to the offices and classrooms. Moreover, the SPC noted that the excellent relationship that exists between AUST and the security forces has proved to be essential in times of need and recommended that the good relations remain and even be strengthened. Lebanon's recent history has been riddled with strife, demonstrations and uncertainty. AUST, like all other institutions, suffered especially with the plummeting value of the Lebanese Pound. Slowly but surely, in a period of 3 years AUST was able to bring financial security to its family in a gradual commendable plan. In spite of the fact that the University did not possess any endowment to lean on the good will of the faculty and staff and the good management of the administration got the university saved and ready to face the future in quasi normal conditions.

The SPC recommends that vigilance should be practiced at all times and the security measures enforced during "alert days" be practiced at all times until Lebanon moves out of the present security rut it is in.

### **Financial Challenges**

During the period extending from 2019 until July 2023, the university was trying to adjust to life under financial stress. In Fall 2023, the tuition fees reached 86% of what they were in 2018-2019. The university breathed a sigh of relief because the salaries of faculty and staff could now be adjusted and (perhaps) the exodus of qualified faculty and staff could reach an end.

The SPC considered the reasons that led to the difficult financial state for 3 consecutive years and stated that although all universities were "caught unaware" in 2019 yet some had endowment and contingency funds that they could rely on and lessened the impact of the crash. Whereas AUST was totally unprepared. Accordingly, the SPC recommends:

- p) That a special endowment fund be established with money raised from donations and possible excess not spent from the yearly budget. This endowment fund is not to be touched except in great existential emergencies and with the permission of the Board.
- q) That the university's annual budget carry a contingency line (~ 10%) that can be dispensed only in existential emergencies by the president after the approval of the Board
- r) That the university budget be structured in such a way so that an excess be possible to throw into the endowment at the end of the year

- s) Establish a development office tasked mainly with the financial development of AUST through collecting donations for AUST
- t) Initiate a forceful beginning for an alumni association that could assist in the development efforts and strengthen the financial security of the institution.

### **Strategic Challenges**

With over 50 institutions of higher learning in Lebanon-all but one are private- there is fierce competition in the student recruitment efforts. The Lebanese University being almost totally free enrolls around 50% of all university students in Lebanon. The “Older” universities have their clientele which usually comes from the upper strata of school graduates. The remaining 48+ universities compete for the remaining highschool graduates.

Fortunately, AUST has secured a good standing for itself in the continuum of universities. It is positioned behind the older universities and ahead of the newer ones. Because AUST charges tuition fees that are 50%-75% less than the older, more established institutions it sits in the difficult position of being envied by the new ones and feared by the old one because it is cheaper and academically credible and therefore a viable alternative especially when family finances pinch badly.

The SPC saw that the course that AUST has charted for itself is commendable and it is working because even in the darkest tumultuous days the number of applicants did not see drastic drops. So, the SPC recommended to stay the course but to consider a vibrant immediate uphaul of the physical facilities. Many applicants are disappointed with the present physical facilities when they compare them to their high schools. In truth, the facilities could be improved but they are certainly adequate for an urban midtown university.

The SPC recommends that a more vigorous recruiting effort be exercised and to concentrate recruiting efforts in universities and neighborhoods that are geographically close to AUST.

The committee saw that the Iraq experience that began in 2021 may lead to higher enrolment figures in the graduate school if the obstacles that are enforced by the Lebanese and Iraqi governments are reckoned with and removed. Hence, the QS ranking which is conditioned by the Iraqi ministry of education must be worked on so that AUST gains a high rating at QS.

The SPC noted that efforts should be exercised with ambassadors of Arab countries to ensure that AUST is/ remains on the lists of acceptable universities for their students to study in. Apparently, some countries draft new lists of recognized universities every 5 years and it is the responsibility of the Lebanese universities to make sure that their files are updated.

With Saudi Arabia, serious work has to be done since KSA is still to send a team to look over AUST; this team from the Ministry of Education in KSA has to visit and write a report which has not yet happened despite submission of a complete file to the Embassy.

In the first strategic plan that ended in 2018, the SPC recommended that the number of International universities with which AUST signed cooperation and exchange agreements be increased to fifty. This recommendation has

been fulfilled and the number is more than sixty today.

As to recruiting students from outside Lebanon, SPC recommends that efforts be directed toward Syria, Jordan, Iraq and China.

## **Staff Challenges**

The staff of AUST are subjected to the Lebanese Labor Law whereas the faculty are under the Lebanese Law of Contracts and Obligations. The Labor Law requires that all staff members be covered by the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) which provides medical coverage and an indemnity at the end of service. The terms of NSSF could be better but they are acceptable (in fact they were acceptable until 2019 when the currency collapsed). Consequently, the major challenge facing the staff of AUST and the administration is a financial one that may be summarized by: How can a staff member retire with decent indemnity and how can the medical insurance part be reworked so as not to bankrupt the staff member in case of a serious health problem. Aside from the above the SPC noted general appreciation for the way the University dealt with upgrading the salaries after the economy collapsed. There was however a serious concern that salary adjustments took time to implement which caused several able staff members to resign and leave.

The SPC reported that staff members would like to see that they move up a scale if their performance is good. There was a complaint that they are unaware that an advancement scale exists. Staff members see that more should be done to stem nepotism and prejudice. In reality, there is a scale that should be made available to all to see. The administration will have to study the issue and come up with a new scale that takes into consideration the changes that have occurred in the last 4 years in the country.

The SPC reported that the general mood of the staff is rather anxious and worried about the future. This was ascribed to the general situation in the country. The future looks gloomy and the government does not seem to be in control. The staff members are worried about the future of their families. Many of them are thinking of emigrating or working outside Lebanon to better provide for their families.

The security situation in Lebanon is a cause of great concern to staff members who have to report on the job on time. Although, the University has been permissive in cases relating to security conditions, some staff members complain that more understanding is needed for cases where families and children are involved.

In general, it is believed that the situation in Lebanon has wreaked havoc in the serenity and tranquility of the life of staff members. Same was noticed with the faculty; AUST will continue to work to improve the lot of all concerned.

## **Goals: Objectives and Actions**

In the first strategic plan of 2010, AUST identified 9 goals that it was called upon to work on and perhaps fulfill in 5 years which was later stretched to 8 years until 2018. The various Faculties and offices restudied these goals with the SPC and concluded that they are still to be considered targets not only in this second all university strategic plan that will extend to 2028 but rather for all times since they constituted valid and safe improvement and growth aims as long as the university is engaged in teaching, learning, research and public engagement, As such the university needs to reinvent itself with the same topics but with different modes of delivery resulting

from rapid technological change.

In the period stretching from 2023 till 2028, the university is called upon to fulfill/ improve the following 9 goals through identifiable objectives that will be mentioned below:

1. Improving the Faculty Corps
2. Improving the learning and teaching educational process
3. Increasing the emphasis on research
4. Improving the physical facilities
5. Raising the competence of staff members
6. Diversifying its academic offerings
7. Intensifying and widening the scope of its public engagement and outreach
8. Extending and strengthening its cooperation with international universities
9. Identifying a special niche in Lebanon's educational and social picture

## **Improving the Faculty Corps**

The period between 2019 and 2023 was catastrophic regarding the improvement of the faculty corps. The university lost several of its academic leaders, deans and chairs and long serving faculty members. So, the item of “improving faculty corps” has grown in importance.

AUST should:

- a) recruit highly qualified faculty members with terminal degrees and with research experience
- b) Offer competitive salaries and restudy the fringe benefits that it offers
- c) Stem the attrition and increase the retention of qualified academic leaders even with provisions outside the general scale
- d) Promote research by constantly updating the procedures by which faculty could have better outcomes (e.g. more released time for research)
- e) Establish a research fund from donations to assist researchers with reasonable amounts
- f) Develop and implement new procedures to identify outstanding faculty members and researchers
- g) Increase support for holding international conferences at AUST and raise the contribution of the university for attending conferences outside Lebanon
- h) Maintain a diverse faculty corps

## **Improving the Learning and Teaching Process**

AUST should:

- i. Foster an atmosphere of learning and deductive reasoning through increased reliance on independent research and case studies
- ii. Increase the care provided to “weak” students
- iii. Increase the benefits that could be derived from the new technologies
- iv. Practice teaching as an enhancement of critical thinking

- v. Focus on the benefits that could be reaped from a strong liberal education program
- vi. Emphasize that the educational process is indeed student centered
- vii. Avail the university family with strong cultural programs in support of the learning process
- viii. Expose the faculty and staff to new ideas and new advancements in technology
- ix. Transform the university to a beehive of activities for independent growth
- x. Encourage classroom and out of classroom activities that foster human rights, tolerance and dialogue among people
- xi. Foster the spirit of entrepreneurship and team work in all fields and wherever possible
- xii. Encourage students to seek multidisciplinary growth by picking up courses in areas not strictly required in their programs
- xiii. Establish new multidisciplinary programs that have significant crossover among disciplines
- xiv. Develop summer programs in international settings
- xv. Continually revise the offered majors so as to update them and to weed them from obsolete info
- xvi. Maintain and strengthen the university's present practice of offering new majors not offered by other universities
- xvii. Offer new majors needed by the country but not offered by other universities

### **Increasing the Emphasis on Research**

- i. Promote interdisciplinary research
- ii. Encourage applied research especially on issues that could solve specific problems facing Lebanon
- iii. Seek special donations earmarked for faculty research
- iv. Increase the involvement of undergraduates in faculty research
- v. Increase and strengthen interuniversity research with faculty members from cooperating International universities
- vi. Encourage faculty researchers to tap international funding foundations
- vii. Facilitate and encourage intrauniversity multidisciplinary research
- viii. Gradually increase the requirements of research visibility for promotion purposes
- ix. Transform the classroom into a beehive of research
- x. Bring research thinking and methodology to every aspect of classroom teaching and learning

## **Physical Facilities**

- i. The university has recently given up the use of a part of the campus and consolidated all activities in a smaller area so as to decrease expenses in manpower and electric power. Still, however, there are certain objectives that need to keep in mind, they are:
- ii. Build an amphitheater that could occupy close to 400 persons. This will enhance cultural life on campus and the public mission of AUST
- iii. Build 4 or 5 meeting rooms that will have a working occupancy of 40 individuals. Perhaps, one for each Faculty
- iv. Embellish the facades of buildings and develop the green areas and the median on Naccache Avenue
- v. Build a sports center that will house the sports activities of the university
- vi. Take advantage and maximize the use of the facilities (especially kitchens and lecture rooms) found in Bhamdoun

## **Raising the Competence of Staff Members**

- i. Continue recruiting staff members with good communication and computer skills
- ii. Develop incentives for qualified staff members working in atmospheres similar to AUST to apply to AUST
- iii. Draft and implement yearly staff development programs so as to increase their general and specific acumen
- iv. Implement a viable system of reward and promotion so as to have staff members feel that they will not stagnate in one position
- v. Continue and emphasize the present practice of sharing expertise in the same office
- vi. Increase the involvement of staff members in Erasmus+ programs with European universities

## **Diversifying Academic Offerings**

- i. Update the academic offerings so as to include the recent advances in the field and the developments imposed by the new technologies
- ii. Offer needed specialization that no other university in Lebanon offers. Repeat the experience of Forensic science, Fashion Design, Optometry and Radiologic sciences
- iii. Take advantage on the long term lease that AUST has on the Hotel in Bhamdoun and offer a high end major in Hospitality and Tourism
- iv. Offer a new major in Quality surveying; much needed but no one offers
- v. Diversify the work and relations with international universities...investigate and implement double degree majors
- vi. In each Faculty, establish a major of excellence characterized by high standards, excellent faculty and leadership in research
- vii. Strengthen and diversify the offerings of the Continuing Education so as to offer certificates in quality high edge training especially in technology related fields
- viii. Increase and diversify relations with international universities in all continents and revitalize the agreements that have expired
- ix. Establish, implement and run “the Lebanese Culinary Institute”

### **Intensifying and Widening the Scope of Public Engagement and Outreach**

- i. Draft a yearly extensive program of public engagement and outreach and have it communicated widely through social media and the “antiquated” systems of communication
- ii. Draft and run programs for training student advisors in highschools.
- iii. Communicate the programs at least six months before implementation
- iv. Establish programs that project the caring image of AUST (weekly applied lectures to choose groups)
- v. Engage each Faculty in outreach efforts with the public

### **Extending and Strengthening Cooperation with International Universities**

- i. Update agreements already concluded. Several have expired and become inactive
- ii. Diversify the international universities to include all continents
- iii. Encourage and promote research among universities and AUST
- iv. Foster an atmosphere that encourage students to engage in exchange study
- v. Utilize the good working relations with international universities to hold joint conferences on topics of international importance (e.g. poverty, migration...)
- vi. Offer summer courses in touristic areas for students from several cooperating universities
- vii. Engage staff members in exchange activities in addition to faculty and students

### **Special Educational Niches**

- i. Establish at least one center of academic excellence in each Faculty (e.g. Fashion Design/ Abaya; Hospitality & Tourism/ Lebanese Culinary Institute; Forensic science, Neural Networks)
- ii. Support item a above by all means possible including cooperation with international universities

## Strategic Initiatives for the Period 2023-2028

In the many meetings that the Strategic Planning Committee had with the constituencies of AUST it came up with some strategic Initiatives that the university has to pursue in order to satisfy its futuristic aspiration as a premiere contributor to higher education in Lebanon despite its (rather) young age and its limited financial means.

AUST's first strategic plan defined certain goals and initiatives and the progress in implementation was studied by the various stakeholders only to conclude that there was partial success as well as a few failures and that the efforts should not abate in bringing about positive change and growth.

Was the first exercise worth it? The answer is yes because in the work leading to a strategic plan, groups interacted as never before and there was a euphoric spirit to achieve; but with time and with the many responsibilities that faculty and staff have the enthusiasm slackened and individuals reverted to their old ways of comfort.

The SPC spelled out 9 strategic goals for the period extending from 2023-2028.

1. Live up to the AUST's motto "Commitment to Excellence" in teaching, learning and services. To achieve this goal AUST shall:
  - a) Strengthen the faculty corps qualitatively and quantitatively
  - b) Continue emphasis on student learning versus faculty teaching
  - c) Continually update curricula by including all stakeholders when possible (faculty, students alumni, advisory boards) and colleagues from International universities
  - d) Maintain the Liberal Arts Core with adjustments so as to become multicultural instead of purely Judeo Christian
  - e) Emphasize the research spirit in all aspects of classroom teaching
  - f) Seek accreditation certain majors in Design, Forensic science, communications
  - g) Keep and strengthen the help program for weak students
  - h) Develop and implement a yearly program for staff development
  - i) Prop new majors within the existing policies

- j) Revive the Hospitality and Tourism major and make use of Bhamdoun facilities
- k) Diversify the outreach of the continuing education program
- l) Establish the Lebanese Culinary Institute which, if successful, will likely increase the visibility of AUST many folds

2. Invigorate the participative governance system by activating student participation

3. Improve and diversify the students recruitment efforts inside Lebanon and devise a plan to recruit students from neighboring countries.

Up till 2022 recruiting students was mainly carried out in Lebanon and to a much lesser extent in Jordan. The security relapses were always negative factors for non Lebanese students to consider studying at AUST. While the financial collapse had an opposite effect because the foreign currency could now stretch further; but the security factor proved to be a force that cannot be beaten.

Despite the fact that the security situation is not under the control of AUST, the university should have plans to improve and strengthen recruitment efforts because the student is the blood line of the institution.

- a) In the next 5 years AUST should have a strong enrolment management program. In fact, this has begun and staffing of the admissions office has been practically totally revamped
- b) Open Fridays should continue and more schools should be invited to attend
- c) Readymade recruiting audiovisuals for each major should be made and sent to possible applicants
- d) AUST should develop strong relationships (friendships) with the directors of schools and the secondary school advisors so that these may be AUST's supporters among their students
- e) Continue offering free English and computer literacy courses for college bound highschool students in the summers
- f) Create financial incentives to attract good new students
- g) Offer international students complete service packages that begin and end at the airport and include close follow up, mentoring and cultural, touristic lectures and trips

4. Transform, maintain and even build intelligent buildings, classrooms and studios. Since the students of today must study and learn for tomorrow, they must be provided with the latest technologies available.
  - a) AUST should become a paperless community
  - b) Technology should quickly replace the still practiced “older” modes of doing things (even though they are disappearing quickly)
  - c) Above (item 2) is to be done without jeopardizing the safety and quality of services
  - d) Continue the strengthening of online education especially to students in cooperating universities
5. Enhance the establishment of AUST’s Alumni Association and have it functioning by end of 2024.
  - a) Compile information on alumni, especially star graduates who can help AUST
  - b) Establish an alumni office on campus under the Office of Development which should be formalized as an independent office under the President’s jurisdiction
  - c) Utilize the willing alumni in the academic development of AUST
  - d) Involve the alumni in the various university boards (trustees, advisors...)
  - e) Establish branches for the Association in areas where alumni exist in reasonable numbers (Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar, Saudi Arabia...)
  - f) Organize yearly homecoming festivities for the alumni (class meetings, designated functions...)
  - g) Study the possibility of “guaranteed admission” to the children of alumni
  - h) Keep alumni constantly updated on what is going on with and at AUST
6. Develop, strengthen and publicize AUST’s advancements in IT.
  - a) Implement changes that will reflect an all IT spirit and practice at AUST
  - b) Make the university ID card the only item to have during the student’s presence on campus (purchases from bookstore and cafeterias, payment of fees, borrowing books, entrance to buildings and classrooms...etc.)
  - c) Strive to make AUST and IT synonymous in mind and practice

7. Increase the visibility of AUST through public engagement
  - a) Patronize a greening project in a mountainous area
  - b) Adopt a village and have the student transform it into a flowering clean garden
  - c) Beautify deserted corners and plant AUST's logos
  - d) Encourage the students to have a "greening club"
  - e) Through the Continuing Education Department, offer free courses that will enhance dialogue, communication and also embellishment of the city and streets
8. Develop and strengthen academic relations with International universities
  - a) Increase the number of international students who enroll at AUST (security is a problem)
  - b) Make sure that the agreements AUST signs are well respected and they work in 2 directions
  - c) Increase the number of international universities so as to widen the areas of common interest to AUST and the cooperating university
  - d) Increase the number of AUST courses that an international student can pick online while staying in his/her university
9. Make AUST a known and desired conference venue with the building/ hotel that houses AUST in Bhamdoun. AUST has a chance to become a leading conference venue in Lebanon. The ex-Sheraton Hotel building (now AUST) in Bhamdoun is an attractive site that has a theater, large meeting rooms, large dining rooms, kitchen and laundry facilities and hotel rooms than may be used for sleeping. The place is ideal for conferences. AUST still has to utilize what it has in Bhamdoun. This is a site that is furnished, equipped and waiting for a willing hand to maximize its use...it should be done.

**Assessment of Progress**

There shall be qualitative and quantitative indicators for following and assessing the progress of the goals, objectives and strategic initiatives.

In the next five years there shall be:

**A. Surveys**

- i. Faculty Surveys
- ii. Staff Surveys
- iii. Student Surveys
- iv. Alumni Surveys
- v. Employers Surveys

**B. Tracking of Progress (quantitative and qualitative) in:**

- i. Faculty hiring
- ii. Student recruitment
- iii. Networking with international Universities
- iv. Faculty research
- v. Faculty fringe benefits
- vi. Faculty teaching loads
- vii. Greening efforts
- viii. Diversity (students, faculty and staff)
- ix. Faculty councils
- x. Development efforts
- xi. Physical facilities and IT
- xii. Outreach and continuing education

# Introduction to Quality

The following section entitled “Quality Assurance” was included in the Self Evaluation Report to Evalag in early 2024.

Comparison of this section entitled “Quality Assurance” with the following part entitled “Quality Hand Book” shows the actual processes and ways in which AUST fosters and implements changes with the purpose of improving quality. Since the presentation (to Evalag) of the SER in January 2024, AUST has recruited one extra full timer to the Office of Quality Management raising the total to three and has made administrative changes so as to have the whole University Council- under the chairmanship of the president- responsible for the Management of Quality at AUST.

### **Quality Assurance Office**

The quality assurance office is comprised of 3 individuals. Dr. Vincent Mazraani, as manager, and two staff members marking an increase of one full timer since 2024. Dr. Mazraani serves on the Quality Assurance Committee headed by the president.

This office documents issues that are to be discussed in the QAC and oversees implementation with constant reporting by Dr. Mazraani to the University Council and/or the members concerned.

### **The Quality Assurance Concept**

AUST adopts a quality management system that mainly focuses on the effectiveness of teaching and student learning, the validity of the programs that it offers and the good running of the functions that ensure a smooth and safe life on campus. The evaluation of the validity of the program is within the jurisdiction of the concerned Faculty. The academic departments regularly evaluate the validity of their programs and report it to the Executive Council through the Faculty Dean. This is done through evaluating student learning outcomes from each course and from the whole program through variety of instruments such as course exams, course projects, senior projects, capstone projects, exit exams, students’ performance in exchange programs and graduate studies... Similarly, the Research Council evaluates the research programs and reports it to the Executive Council.

To support the quality management system, AUST established an internal quality assurance system that focuses on the development of quality assurance processes, and the communication between internal constituents at all levels. The Quality Assurance Department (QAD) documents processes and procedures with the concerned departments. It monitors the adherence to quality standards, and proper implementation of processes at all levels of the university as set by the concerned departments and approved by the Executive Council. It receives feedback on the quality of education from various stakeholders. It reports any quality non-compliances to the Executive Council for review and corrective action.

The scope of work of the QAD covers the following functional areas:

- Monitoring the execution of academic processes pertaining to the academic rules, regulations, and procedures, such as: presenting the course offering on set deadline, courses offered match the needs of students, courses' capacities are met, books are available for students on the set deadline, process of approving courses syllabi, course materials and syllabi are posted on line on the set deadline, process of hiring new faculty members, process of evaluating faculty members, process of submitting final examinations, proctoring of exams, process of posting of final grades, process of changing a grade, change major process, advising of students during advising periods, process of evaluating senior projects, process of execution of events, clearances for graduation process, process of make-up exams, branch visitations...
- Monitoring the execution of administrative activities pertaining to administrative rules, regulations, and procedures, such as: students' admission process, hiring of staff process, staff evaluation process, staff development process, students' registration process, students' financial aid process, collection of tuition fees process, schools orientations process, students' requests (absence, withdrawal, certificates, transcripts, counselling, make-up exams...) processes, graduation process, purchasing process, buildings and grounds maintenance...
- Monitoring the execution of services by staff and workers not directly concerned with the academic process (directly or indirectly) such as the functions of food services, parking, on campus security and safety...

### **Indicators and Collection of Information**

The QAD monitors a list of "Planned Semester Activities" pertaining to the processes and procedures that need to be conducted by each academic and administrative department. The activities are distributed over the semester to include the registration week(s) prior to the start of the semester, the 15 weeks of instruction, the final examination period, and the posting of grades period. A process manual was developed with concerned departments as well in order to map the proper implementation of these activities.

The departments' chairpersons/directors report the execution of these processes on a weekly basis (on Friday afternoon of each week) and submit the report to the QAD. The QAD gathers these reports and monitors whether the tasks listed for the specific week were performed and whether the performed tasks meet the standard as per the indicators that were developed. The indicators could be quantitative or qualitative in nature. Examples of quantitative indicators pertaining to academic activities are: the percentage of instructors who attended the faculty meetings, percentage of new students who attended the department's general orientation, percentage of senior students who received advising in order to graduate on time, number of contacts with the industry to ensure training and job placement to students and graduates..., and examples of qualitative

indicators are: the preparation of the preliminary course offering for the next semester, the revision of syllabi... Administrative departments as well report quantitative indicators such as the percentage of target schools visited by the admission's office for orientation, number of students issued acceptance letter by the Registrar, percentage of due tuition fees collected by the Bursar's office..., and qualitative information such as whether the Registrar's office sent the course offering on-time to the IT department to be posted online, whether the Bursar's office reminded concerned students of their tuition fees installment due dates...

Some tasks and processes that are listed in the "Planned Semester Activities" are interlinked between academic and administrative departments. For example, the Registrar's office sends the list of senior/graduating students to the academic departments in order for the latter to provide students with proper advising and graduation clearances, the IT department issues user name and password for each instructor and the academic department ensures that the instructors post the course material and syllabi on line...

The QAD collects feedback from other University constituents:

- the students who evaluate each course that they register for during the semester: Students' evaluation of their courses are conducted through a questionnaire that is posted to them on their on-line system.
- the graduates who provide information on their employment status and success in the job market: The information is collected through an online questionnaire that is sent to the graduates via their personal emails. This process started in the year 2017. The result of the questionnaire is reported to the academic departments to monitor the employment status of the graduates as an indicator for the validity of their programs.
- the job market that provides information on the performance of students and graduates whom they hired: Many companies that operate in Lebanon regularly approach the Job Placement Office at AUST to hire students and/or graduates for available job vacancies. The Job Placement Office works on filling these vacancies through matching the job description and required qualifications and skills with AUST students and graduates, and regularly follows up with the companies to get feedback on whether the students were employed. Any quality related issues are reported to the QAD. Very recently AUST purchased SIMPLICITY platform and is presently training all faculty and staff on its use.
- quality complaints from any of the University's stakeholders pertaining to non-adherence to set processes and procedures are reported to the QAD for corrective action with the concerned department.

### **Using Information for the Governance of the Institution**

The various quality assurance instruments that are detailed above are regularly and systematically used for quality assurance purposes. These instruments are used on a weekly, monthly, semester, and/ or yearly basis depending on the instrument. The “Planned Semester Activities” are used on a weekly basis, students’ evaluation are conducted at the end of each semester, data on graduate’s employment status is updated yearly, and feedback on students and graduate’s performance in the workplace is received regularly by the Job Placement Office as part of its daily task. The QAD reports the outcome of the various instruments to the concerned academic and administrative department and the Executive Council to close the feedback loop. Therefore, as per the quality principle “factual approach to decision making”, all analyzed indicators in addition to the results of regular process assessment are reported to the Executive Council and the concerned departments for effective and efficient decision making for continual improvement of the University.

Students’ feedback is incorporated as well in the decision making process. Students’ evaluation of courses is considered to be an essential criterion in the evaluation of faculty members’ teaching effectiveness. The Chairperson of each academic department conducts an evaluation of the faculty members in the department on a yearly basis. The evaluation is based on several criteria that include the faculty members’ performance in academic and administrative duties. The students’ evaluation holds 52% weight of the total score of the faculty member evaluation. A faculty member who receives a weighted score less than 3.0/4.0 will have to discuss the reasons behind this “low score” with the Chair and the Dean and a plan for improvement will be drafted and monitored by the chair. If the score of less than 3.0/4.0 persists in a subsequent semester the contract of the faculty member is not renewed.

AUST has started to incorporate students’ feedback in the evaluation of its Programs’ Educational Objectives (PEOs). In both the Faculty of Engineering and the Department of Computer Science, MS/Alumni representatives attend the yearly meeting along with the Industry Advisory Board members for evaluating the PEOs. The student representatives participate in the evaluation and approve the meeting minutes and the desired changes. AUST will start gradually adopting students’ feedback in the evaluation of its programs’ objectives in the rest of the academic departments.

Students who petition the Dean of Students and Admissions or the concerned Chairperson/Dean on any issue pertaining to academic or administrative matters receive a copy of their petition indicating the decision regarding the petition and the actions to be taken if applicable.

### **Fostering the Quality Culture**

AUST fosters the quality culture through the participative system that is adopted by AUST management as a whole. All Chairpersons, Deans, and Heads of administrative departments are involved in updating the process and procedures manual on a yearly basis. Such a participative system enables everyone in the institution to recognize the relevance of the quality processes and actively participate in its development and enhancement.

# Quality Handbook

## Quality Improvement and KPIs

### Introduction

A Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) or a Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) dashboard serves as a centralized tool for monitoring and evaluating a university's progress toward its strategic goals. It provides a visual representation of critical metrics across various domains such as academic performance, research output, sustainability, student satisfaction, quality improvement, resilience and operational efficiency (SEE APPENDIX 1).

The dashboard fosters transparency and accountability by offering real-time insights into the institution's performance, enabling data-driven decision-making and timely corrective actions. By aligning these metrics with the university's mission, vision, and objectives, the KPIs dashboard becomes an essential resource for administrators, faculty, and stakeholders to collaboratively achieve excellence in education, research, and community engagement.

Through its user-friendly interface and customizable features, the dashboard not only tracks progress but also identifies areas for improvement, paving the way for continuous enhancement and alignment with national and international standards. It is a vital instrument in ensuring that the university remains competitive and responsive to the evolving needs of students, staff, and society at large.

Collaboration with stakeholders is essential to defining operational objectives that are aligned with the strategic goals of the university. Engaging all relevant parties, including faculty, staff, students, and external partners, ensures that these objectives are comprehensive, practical, and reflective of the institution's mission and vision. Additionally, efforts will focus on identifying Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for all three categories of university processes: key processes that directly support core activities such as teaching and research, supporting processes that enable operations such as IT and administration, and management processes that ensure effective governance and leadership.

To facilitate this, a systematic and user-friendly approach will be implemented for collecting and managing data. This system will allow stakeholders to gather information efficiently, analyze it according to predefined frequencies, and interpret the results in a way that provides actionable insights. The ultimate goal of this approach is to promote a culture of continuous improvement, where data-driven decisions lead to enhanced performance across all areas of the university. This structured framework will not only support ongoing operational excellence but also ensure alignment with broader institutional and educational priorities.

## **University Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)**

This is a new committee that will assume work as of Fall 2025.

### **Membership:**

- University President as Director
- Vice Presidents (VPAA & VPFA as Assisting Directors)
- Deans
- Dean of Students
- Quality Assurance Manager
- Representatives of Academic Faculties, non teaching staff and students
- Directors of Campuses
- Registrar
- IT Manager
- HR Manager
- Director of Continuing Education

### **Duties of QAC:**

- a. Propagates and disseminates a culture of quality and continuous improvement throughout the university community.
- b. Monitors the implementation of the provisions of the Board Policies and academic rules and procedures
- c. Acts as a resource committee in providing guidance and assistance in internal, national and international accreditations
- d. Disseminates benchmark data that could support AUST's position in seeking accreditation
- e. Offers technical support in the university's efforts to improve institutional ranking
- f. Ensures that procedures that ensure same quality delivery on all campuses are implemented
- g. Participates in international conferences that deal with quality issues with the goal of introducing improvements where these may be due
- h. Holds internal training sessions for faculty and staff designed to improve and heighten the understanding and appreciation of the quality culture.

## **Levels of Quality Assurance practiced at AUST**

Quality assurance at AUST involves all aspects of university life (personnel, facilities, physical plant...etc.).

There are four “levels” of quality assurance to which the various sectors are subjected (some more than others).

These levels are:

- a. Internal...through the existing university management system
- b. External...through benchmarking with external institutions especially with universities with which agreements are signed
- c. Governmental...through the obligation to abide by governmental rules and guidelines that govern tertiary level education
- d. Accreditation...through internationally recognized and respected professional and academic agencies as well as pertaining governmental accreditation requirements

To varying degrees, all aspects of university functions are subjected to one or more (sometimes all) forms of quality assurance emanating from or required by the 4 levels mentioned.

The following lists the main functions that are continually checked to guarantee good and improved quality. These may be considered qualitative KPIs that one may choose from and transform to quantitative functions as shown later in this document.

### **Regarding Students**

The following functions are continually discussed, checked, updated, implemented and retested for validity of incorporated changes:

- i. Recruitment process, visitation to schools, open days on campus
- ii. Admission process, orientation, registration, computer and software training for new students (Blackboard)
- iii. Evaluation of faculty
- iv. Evaluation of courses
- v. Testing, writing term papers, researching
- vi. Student based learning
- vii. Measuring learning outcomes, examinations, exit exam for graduating seniors
- viii. Benchmarking with other universities through interuniversity student contests and competitions
- ix. Measuring employer satisfaction
- x. Extracurricular activities
- xi. Others

## **Possible KPIs that may be used in the evaluation of students**

Classroom evaluation; gpa...

Contribution to class discussions

Contribution to campus life

Involvement in societal/ neighborhood activities

Involvement in interuniversity competition

Involvement in varsity sports

Involvement in highschool recruitment program

Absenteeism and promptness

## **Regarding faculty members**

Similar to students the following functions apply to faculty members with the aim of improving the quality of teaching, learning and research:

- i. Evaluation of teaching by students and chair
- ii. Evaluation of course validity as per the inputs of the students and the faculty member
- iii. Research output as evidenced in papers delivered in professional conferences
- iv. Self-improvement and updating of course material
- v. Improving curricular changes
- vi. Publishing research results
- vii. Seeking funding for research from foundations and research centers
- viii. Visiting and participating in the improvement and growth of branch campuses
- ix. Establishing ties with potential employers
- x. Seeking, gathering and analyzing feedback from employers about the academic program and the performance of the graduates
- xi. Suggesting and implementing curricular changes based on input of alumni and employers (when feasible)
- xii. Community involvement
- xiii. Offering and participating in programs specifically built for highschool students who may become potential AUST students
- xiv. Services offered to the profession
- xv. Training on the use of Blackboard for new faculty members
- xvi. Providing training to all faculty so as to become Blackboard certified professionals (Leaders in the field brought in from Dubai)

- xvii. Assisting MA/MS holders in getting PhDs financially and released time
- xviii. Providing seed money and released time for Research
- xix. Sabbatical
- xx. others

Faculty members may ask for time release for engagement the KPIs that may be useful in deciding to grant/ or not may be Research record/ History of seeking Uni-Funding

Validity of the Project

Ability to apply for outside funding

Availability of funds

Recommendation of Faculty Dean & Research Dean

**The following lists some KPIs that may be used in evaluating and/or improving recruitment of students**

Number of schools visited

Number of schools and students invited to open house

History of recruitment success with schools visited

Forming special relationships with Directors of schools and senior class advisors

Offering special assistance programs to grade 11 & 12 students...English Language, Computer Literacy, games...

Classifying schools in categories based on history of feeding AUST with students

Building special relationships with certain schools for diverse reasons:

Location, identity of students (Palestinian found), Syrian refugees, Ain Ebel (and South district schools)

**Regarding staff members**

Staff members are an integral part of the University. They exist and are spread out in every office or center. Their continual improvement is an essential part of the good services that students, faculty and administrators require. Staff members are recruited so that the office or center they work at, will work efficiently. Like faculty members they should constantly seek improvement through programs offered by the University or by self updating in what may be new technological changes in their sphere of knowledge. The following topics summarize what is done for staff improvement:

- i. Attending special programs in cooperating universities. Several staff members were engaged in specially tailored programs in Lille, France, in Germany and in the USA
- ii. Benchmarking with staff members visiting AUST. Such visits took place from staff members from Villanova University, Florida State University, Université Catholique de Lille and others. Staff from similar offices in different universities meet for a week, compare notes and discuss possible ways of improving bilateral communication
- iii. Attending local, regional and international conferences (AACRAO “American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Offices”, Arab ACRAO and many others...)
- iv. Inviting earmarked individuals to train staff members on latest development in the software used in their offices
- v. Providing university assistance in released time and in financial assistance for academic growth of staff members (MS and PhD assistance)
- vi. The Administrative Council is the venue where the heads of non academic offices meet on a daily basis and they discuss campus/ facilities issues as well as the factors that guarantee good and safe running of the campus: functionality of classroom electronic boards, status of all computers used in the learning/ teaching process, complaints from students, faculty and staff, internet, electricity, parking...In short, they discuss, check and act to bring issues to a good end.



**Deming's PDCA Cycle**

The unknow soldier who keeps the wheels of the institution well oiled and running neatly and smoothly the worker gets a good share of the effort to improve the quality of the individual knowing that this will reciprocate on the total quality of service and the quality of the outcome. The kitchen staff, gardening staff, cleaning staff, parking staff and security personnel all get yearly training in English Language and etiquette. Computer training is also available for those who wish it. Over the years the effort to enrich and improve the status of the mentioned categories proved to bring a morale lift to those concerned coupled with a sense of personal pride and achievement.

In all the preceding functions (listed under students, faculty and staff) changes that will bring quality improvement essentially follow Deming's cycle (at times with alterations) which describes the engagement route to implement the changes which are intended to bring about positive quality improvement.

### **The internal management system**

(Chair, Dean, Provost/VP, President) acts as the first level of quality assurance. For example, the academic hierarchy is not only responsible for the running of the academic calendar but also for safeguarding and improving the academic standards by hiring proficient faculty members, accepting students who are likely to succeed and providing proper updated facilities that support the learning process. Constant maintenance, updating and improving the delivery will certainly bring about the desired change and the quality of the outcome (the graduate) will very likely be assured. In the case where a certain route does not bring about the desired result, a new plan will have to be applied, tested and checked for better results.

### **External Benchmarking**

Benchmarking with the national, regional and international universities that AUST liaise with or has signed agreements with provides a very good insight on how AUST is doing in certain specific aspects and whether a change (or changes) must be made. This benchmarking process is the external level used by AUST to assure quality.

The information received from exchange students (in both directions) is used to incorporate changes in course content and/or in technological training. Benchmarking with universities in Europe and the USA has provided reliable means for comparison of curricula. For example, students who go as exchange students for a semester or a year and report that their previous training at AUST is deficient in a certain aspect of a course will flash a red light alert for faculty members to meet and suggest modifications in course content. (such an example has actually happened). The input of alumni and the Boards of Experts are also reliable factors that are often used to plug deficiencies and effect changes that reflect the interest of the job market.

### **The government factor or “level”**

That contributes to quality assurance is the Lebanese Law on Higher Education and the directives of the Ministry of Higher Education. In addition to the strict requirements imposed by the Lebanese Ministry of Higher Education in order to allow the offering of new majors (or changes in the curriculum of an existing major) a process tantamount to local accreditation is carried out. This process examines the CVS of faculty members and the state of the laboratories, studios or computer facilities earmarked for the program. On top of all these requirements, the Ministry dictates that a student who has not passed the General Secondary Certificate may not enroll in any university program. The Ministry also specifies the number of credit hours required for graduation as well as the minimum number of courses that should be offered by a major.

Not to forget also that the Ministry dictates the number of Ph.D. faculty members per a certain number of full time students. The minimum built area per number of students and the area of green space that should be available. There are many other requirements and conditions, foremost among which that graduate study should be in the same line of the undergraduate major.

Some of these conditions have been recently enforced because there was a total chaos that ensued during the “unstable” times. Hopefully, there will be a revision of some of these conditions.

Lately, the Ministry is recommending that universities seek foreign international accreditation from recognized accreditation bodies...something that AUST has been engaged in for several years.

### **International accreditation**

Preceded the Lebanese governments’ recommendation and it began when ABET accredited the Computer Science program and the Engineering programs until Sept 30, 2014. After the initial accreditation reaccreditation proceeded with no glitches until September 30, 2022 and then till September 30, 2029. Similarly, the Bachelor programs in Business as well as the MBA program were accredited by IACBE in 2009 and reaccredited in 2014, 2019 and 2025.

For institutional accreditation the university chose Evalag of Germany which is recognized by the larger European Accreditation system. The first Evalag accreditation expired on September 30, 2023 but it was extended for a year at the request of AUST because of the security situation that prevailed (still prevails) in the Middle East. Reaccreditation was later awarded until September 30, 2030. It was decided by AUST to submit the academic programs offered by the Faculty of Health Sciences for accreditation by Evalag during 2025.

AUST also submitted its research laboratories for ISO certification as well as for GLO certification. Both certifications underline the commitment of AUST to be in the forefront on quality issues.

### **Management of the Internal Quality Assurance Level**

How does AUST manage its internal Quality Assurance?

AUST used to staff a special office under the title: “Office of Quality Assurance”. The staffing was thin and it was thought that this office cannot be a stand alone office without being fed the information from the various sectors that make the university. The role of the office was that of an independent office whose staff have the responsibility to identify the problems (or the issues that need improvement) and act on them without proper assistance from the individuals who manage the place where the problem resides. Consequently- and after several long hours of discussion- it was decided that the University Council where all Deans and heads of offices are represented shall itself act as the Quality Assurance Council and the Center will remain headed by a Director (with assistance) to coordinate the proper dissemination and follow up of the decisions of the

University Council as it acts in the capacity of a Quality Assurance Council. This change places the burden of monitoring on the management team where the deficiency exists or where the improvement is needed.

### **Accreditation**

National, Regional and International Accreditations of programs and of management practices are used to measure the validity of AUST's programs against nationally and internationally recognized acceptable set standards.

- All AUST degrees are recognized by the Lebanese Council of Ministers and accredited by the Equivalence Committee of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.
- On the basis of reciprocity, the Arab Countries recognize AUST's programs since these are recognized by the Lebanese authorities.
- The University has made a decision that all academic programs will be subjected to accreditation by respected international agencies.
- The Computer and Communication Engineering Programs (BS & MS) are accredited by ABET
- The Computer Science programs (BS & MS) are accredited by ABET
- The various Business programs (BS & MS) are accredited by IACBE
- The Institutional Management System is accredited by Evalag
- The University toxicology laboratories are ISO 17025 and certified by GLP
- Eight academic programs will be up for accreditation by Evalag: Forensic Science (BS), Clinical Laboratory Science (BS), Optics and Optometry (BS), Radiologic Sciences (BS), Nutrition & Food Science (BS), Nursing (BS), Communication Arts (BA/MA) and International Affairs (BA).

National, Regional and International accreditations have contributed to the credibility and excellence of the accredited programs as evidenced by increased enrolment and the elevated levels of trust of parents and industries with these programs as well as the employability of the graduates in the fields.

## **Dashboard**

To effectively monitor institutional performance and ensure alignment with strategic objectives, the university has developed a comprehensive set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) across all departments and functions. These KPIs serve as a management tool to evaluate operational effectiveness, support data-driven decision-making, and foster a culture of accountability and continuous improvement. Each KPI is linked to a specific operational objective and includes clear definitions of its indicator, target benchmark, data source, reporting frequency, and contextual comments. The following represents the breakdown of some indicators, organized by functional area, to facilitate ongoing performance review and strategic planning.

## **Executive Council**

To align with the university's strategic governance objectives, the Executive Council monitors key academic and administrative indicators. These include adherence to course offering deadlines, ensuring adequate course registration and minimizing disruptions such as late class openings or closings after Drop & Add. The goal is to ensure academic planning efficiency and compliance. The data are sourced from the Academic Affairs Office and Registrar's system, analyzed at the end of each academic term.

## **Academic**

The academic sector focuses on optimizing course delivery and student engagement. Indicators include the number of courses opened (by credit value), student registration numbers per course, and post-registration adjustments (classes opened/closed). Objectives focus on operational efficiency, aligned with strategic quality education goals. Sources include the registrar's database and academic scheduling records. Reporting is conducted per semester with planning reviews. Comments may include feedback on demand forecasting or faculty availability.

## **Proctoring**

To ensure academic integrity and timely evaluations, KPIs measure the percentage of grades submitted within the approved deadline and the number of proctoring incidents. These reflect the university's commitment to fairness and quality assurance. The source is the registration and records office and academic departments. Data are reviewed post-assessment periods. Comments may reflect action plans for incidents or delays.

## **Research**

To promote transparent and timely access to research support, KPIs include the percentage of eligible applications funded and average time to decision. The research committee maintains these records, reporting semi-annually. These indicators support research excellence and align with strategic research development goals. Comments include bottlenecks or changes in funding criteria.

**Academic Travel**

To streamline academic travel processes, KPIs track the approval rate within 10 working days and reimbursement processing within 15 days. Objectives focus on faculty satisfaction and operational efficiency. Sources include the HR and Finance Offices. Reports are generated quarterly. Comments may address travel volume peaks or system delays.

**Sabbaticals**

Sabbatical KPIs aim to support faculty development while maintaining academic continuity. Indicators include the processing time for requests and submission rate of post-sabbatical reports. Data are tracked by the HR Department and reported annually. Comments may cover reintegration support or faculty performance post-sabbatical.

## **Research Progress Evaluation**

To enhance research output, KPIs track the percentage of faculty submitting progress reports on time and the percentage of programs reviewed per cycle, and recommendations implemented within 12 months. Data come from the Research and Academic Affairs offices. Annual reporting informs institutional research planning. Comments capture delays or support needs.

## **DOSA – Admissions**

DOSA's admissions KPIs support the strategic goal of enrollment growth. Indicators include numbers of new applicants (admissions and pre-admissions), those with incomplete applications, and entrance exam participation. Filters allow disaggregated reporting (e.g., by program, region, gender). Source: Admissions Database. Reporting is weekly. Comments track trends and areas for promotional targeting.

## **Continuing Learning Department (CLD)**

To boost employability, CLD tracks relationships with employers through KPIs: number of new companies, job offers, applicants, shortlisted candidates, and those employed. Objectives align with improving student career outcomes. Weekly reporting ensures agile responsiveness. Comments highlight employer feedback or high-demand sectors.

## **Alumni Relations**

Alumni KPIs focus on expanding the alumni network and engagement. Main indicator: number of new alumni recorded, filtered by various demographics. Data sourced from the Alumni Office and updated weekly. Comments include engagement efforts or challenges in alumni tracking.

## **Registrar**

Registrar KPIs target efficiency in registration and record management. Metrics include registration completion rate, average wait time, record update time, and error rates in certificates/transcripts. Graduation metrics focus on clearance and error-free certificate issuance. Data from the SIS and reviewed each term. Comments may include process improvement notes.

## **Quality Management**

Quality Management drives stakeholder satisfaction and continual improvement. KPIs include the number of complaints resolved, satisfaction percentage, and frequency/impact of quality audits. Data come from feedback systems and audit reports, reviewed quarterly. Comments can address root cause analysis or action plan implementation.

**Social Responsibility**

This area focuses on community impact and sustainability. KPIs include the number of outreach programs, participant percentages and community involvement. These align with the university's social mission. Data are collected annually by CSR and Sustainability Units. Comments may note partnerships or green initiatives.

**Human Resources**

HR indicators support staff retention, performance, and recruitment. KPIs include turnover rate, appraisal scores, and resignation numbers during orientation. HR tracks these metrics and reports semi-annually. Comments may relate to policy revisions or onboarding enhancements.

**Information Technology**

IT KPIs emphasize security, continuity, and innovation. Metrics include security incidents, patch compliance, response time, user training completion, system uptime, support ticket resolution, and IT project delivery rates. Data are tracked by the IT Department with monthly or quarterly reviews. Comments may cover incident learnings or technology upgrades.

**Procurement**

Procurement ensures cost-effectiveness and compliance. KPIs track average cost savings, cycle times, supplier evaluation, on-time delivery, and supplier non-conformities. Data are gathered per procurement cycle. Comments include vendor performance or tendering issues.

**Finance and Accounting**

Finance KPIs monitor collections, refunds, bad debt, and financial aid distribution. Metrics include collected vs. due amounts, students barred from exams due to dues, and refunds post Drop & Add. Data are filtered by faculty/program. Reporting is monthly. Comments focus on collections strategy or aid fairness.

**Maintenance**

Maintenance KPIs support campus functionality. Metrics include average response time, resolution rate and equipment downtime. Data sourced from maintenance logs and reviewed monthly. Comments may reference seasonal demand or service vendor performance.

**General Services**

General Services KPIs optimize logistics and utilities. Indicators include on-time delivery rate, complaint rate, energy/water use per capita. Quarterly reviews from service logs and consumption meters guide resource use policies. Comments may cite infrastructure upgrades.

**Cleaning and Hygiene**

Cleaning KPIs ensure hygiene and resource availability. Metrics include audit scores, hygiene complaints, stock-out rates, and staff-to-area ratios. Data are collected by the facilities office and reported monthly. Comments address epidemic responses or vendor changes.

**Gardening and Landscaping**

These KPIs promote campus aesthetics and sustainability. Metrics include schedule compliance, stakeholder satisfaction, use of water, and biodiversity (native species). Data are gathered bi-annually. Comments may include eco-initiatives or maintenance cycles.

## Risk Management

### Risk Management Policy

The American University of Science & Technology (AUST) recognizes that effective risk management is essential for safeguarding its assets, reputation, and stakeholders' interests. This Risk Management Policy outlines the framework and procedures for identifying, assessing, mitigating, and monitoring risks across all aspects of university operations.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote a proactive approach to risk management that identifies and addresses potential threats and opportunities.
- Ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements related to risk management.
- Enhance decision-making by providing a systematic process for evaluating risks and implementing appropriate mitigation measures.
- Foster a culture of risk awareness and accountability throughout the university community.

This Risk Management Policy is subject to periodic review and revision to reflect changes in the university's operating environment, objectives, and risk profile. Feedback from stakeholders is solicited to inform updates to the policy and associated procedures.

### Definitions of Risks & Opportunities

**Risk** can be characterized as the influence of uncertainty on objectives. It is assessed through a blend of the probability of occurrence and the potential impact on objectives. The product of likelihood and impact yields the gross risk, facilitating comparative analysis.

An **Opportunity** is an uncertain event with the potential for a favorable impact on objectives, while a threat is an uncertain event with the potential for an adverse impact on objectives. These definitions underscore the significance of aligning risks with the objectives of a department or team, serving as a fundamental framework for comprehending and defining the risks encountered.

An **Accident** is an undesired event giving rise to death, ill health, injury, damage or loss.

An **Incident or near miss** is an event that gave rise to an accident or had the potential to lead to an accident.

**Hazard identification** is the process of recognizing that the hazard exists and defining its characteristics.

## Purpose of Risk Management framework

The purpose of the Risk Management Framework is to:

Create and protect value by integrating risk management in AUST strategic planning.

Set the risk management system within AUST is part of decision making process.

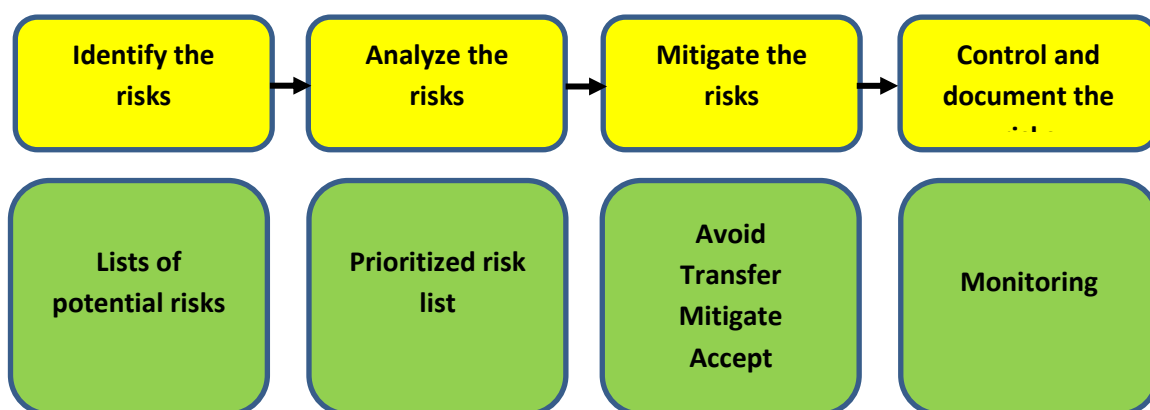
Explicitly address uncertainty by taking into consideration the nature of uncertainty in the risk management.  
That this uncertainty is based on the best available information.

Provide a systematic, structured and timely approach to the risk management by setting out a consistent way for controlling risks and describing the process for escalating and reporting risks.

- Risk identification:
  - The process of determining the specific risk factors that can reasonably be expected to affect your process.
- Analysis of probability and consequences:
  - The potential impact of these risk factors, determined by how likely they are to occur and the effect they would have on the process if they did occur.
- Risk mitigation strategies:
  - Steps taken to minimize the potential impact of those risk factors deemed sufficiently threatening to the process.

Control and documentation:

- Creating a knowledge base for the future based on lessons learned.



## Criticality Matrix

|           |   | Severity |   |    |    |
|-----------|---|----------|---|----|----|
|           |   | 1        | 2 | 3  | 4  |
| Frequency | 1 | 1        | 2 | 3  | 4  |
|           | 2 | 2        | 4 | 6  | 8  |
|           | 3 | 3        | 6 | 9  | 12 |
|           | 4 | 4        | 8 | 12 | 16 |

*ISO 31000 Risk Management - Guidelines*

*ISO 31010 Risk management – Risk assessment techniques*

*PMBOK Guide (Project Management Body of Knowledge – PMI)*

# Key University Processes

## **Academic**

### **Proctoring and posting of grades**

1. Office of the Registrar prepares exam schedule
2. Office of the Registrar appoints proctors of faculty and staff
3. The head proctor receives the exam papers from the Registrar's office and takes them to the Exam Room
4. All phones & electronic watches and laptop computers are left outside the exam room
5. A proctor is assigned to each group of 20-25 students
6. At the end of the session exams are collected and the head proctor delivers them to the Registrar's office
7. Faculty members will collect their exams from the Registrar's office and will have to hand in the grades within 48 hours
8. Grades are electronically posted and accessed by students at the same time they are submitted to the Registrar's office

### **Applying for University Research seed money**

1. Faculty member submits a request to the Chair, Dean of Faculty and Dean of Research summarizing the intended project
2. Request will have to show why the grant is needed
3. Once approval of the 3 persons is obtained the Research Council will deliberate on the issue and acts positively or negatively
4. A positive appraisal will be sent to the Provost and the President who will direct the Business Office to open an account for dispensing money as per need of the project
5. At the end of the period of the grant, the grantee should write a report to the Chair, Deans...

### **Travel to a Conference**

AUST subsidizes faculty (and students) travel to conferences only if the AUST member is presenting (speaking) in the conference.

1. Faculty member will write a request for support and submit it to the Dean of the Faculty and Dean of Research with clear indication how the lost time will be made up
2. If approval is obtained, the Business Office will be alerted to dispense the money as per the guidelines circulated each year
3. Maximum days allowed are travel days+ 2 days at the conference
4. The support will cover travel, room and board+ transportation to the limits allowed and communicated each year
5. If faculty members secure outside funding he/she will still have to make up the time lost

6. A short report is to be submitted to the Dean of the Faculty at the end of the conference

### **Request for sabbaticals**

Faculty members of the rank of Associate Professor and above may ask for sabbaticals every 7<sup>th</sup> year of service. The sabbatical year should be spent in an institution that provides fresh new experience to the faculty members in research or administration. Granting sabbaticals stipulates that funds are available, replacement of the faculty members is available and readiness of the faculty members to return back to AUST and serve for a period of 2 years.

1. The faculty member presents a request to the Dean of the Faculty detailing the why, when and where
2. Dean's approval is contingent on securing a replacement and on the funds being available from the Faculty's budget
3. Approval of Provost and President to be secured
4. Upon the return of the faculty member a report is to be submitted and a presentation of the work done during the sabbatical is to be presented to the members of the Faculty

### **Procedure for Evaluation of Faculty Research Progress**

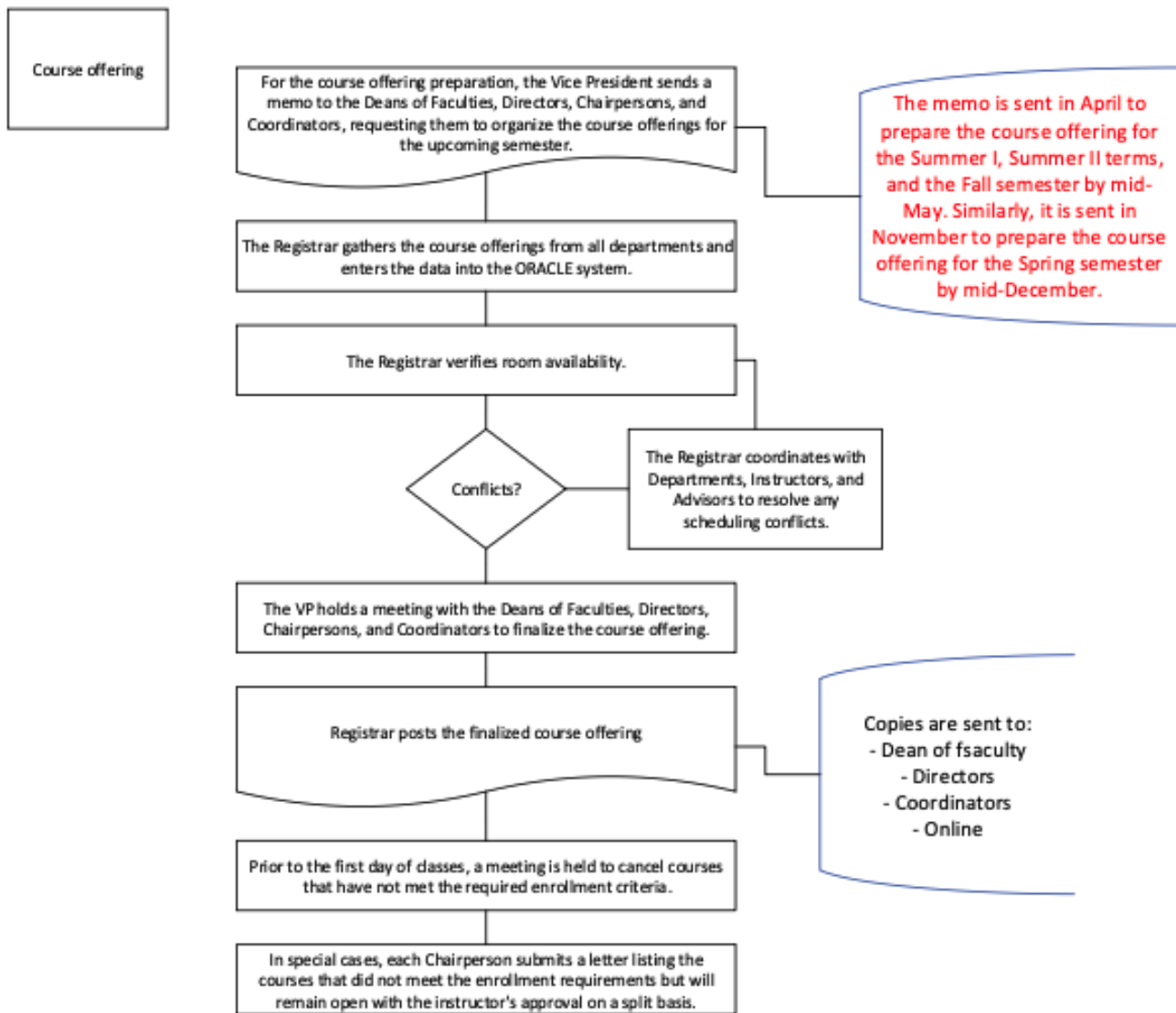
1. The faculty member presents at the end of each academic year an updated list of publications to the Chair
2. The Chair studies the changes made over one, two and three years periods
3. The Chair advises the faculty member as to the potential of the research performance vis a vis the upcoming promotion
4. If the performance is weak, the chair will recommend joint research effort with colleagues and/or will try to satisfy the missing needs for more productive research
5. The performance appraisal will be repeated every year. After 3 years of poor performance the faculty member will be issued an "eye opener" letter detailing the risks of continuing on the same path

### **Procedure for Program Review/ Change**

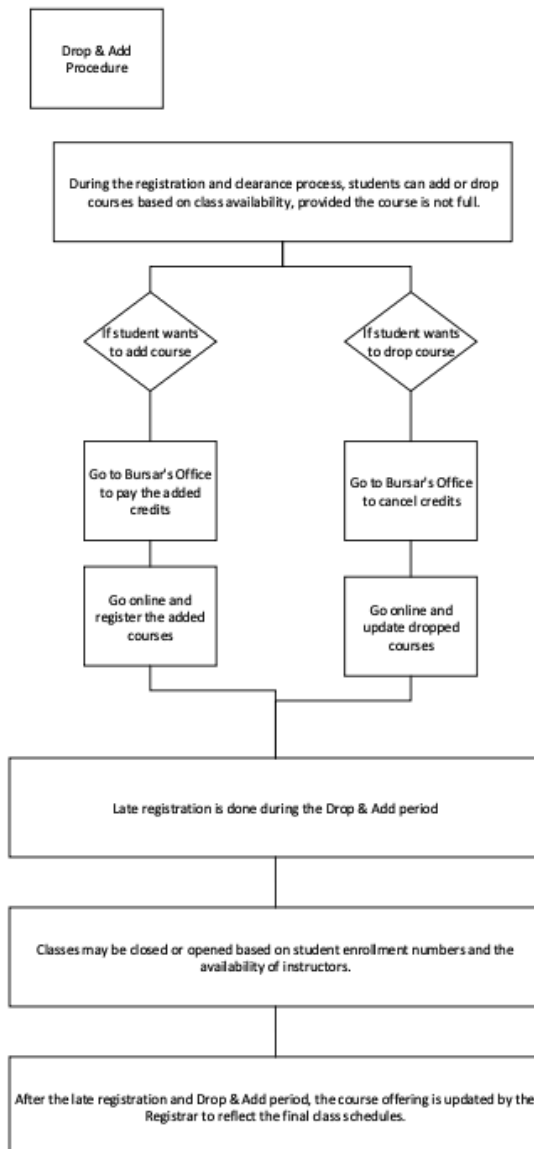
1. Faculty members suggest possible change to Chair (How and why) ...
2. Department approves, amends or rejects suggestion
3. Approval or amended program is presented to the Dean for input; Dean may consult the advisory Board
4. If approved by Dean, new program is presented to the Provost and Executive Council
5. Executive Council approves, amends or rejects changes
6. Approved or amended program presented to Registrar's office for archiving, dissemination and implementation

7. Suggested change is in University requirements then the curriculum council needs to study and approve the change

## Registrar Course offering



## Drop and Add



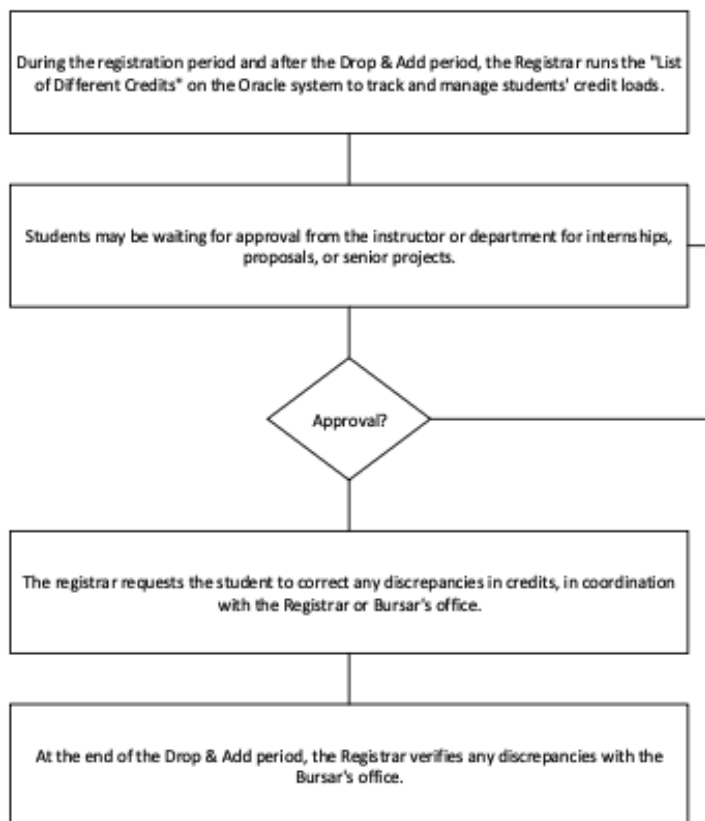
The Drop & Add period is announced on the university website and displayed at key locations, including the Bursar's Office, Registrar's Office, DOSA, and the cafeteria.

New, suspended, and probation students may drop or add courses manually during the Drop and Add period. This process is overseen by a team composed of the advisor, Registrar, and Bursar's representatives.

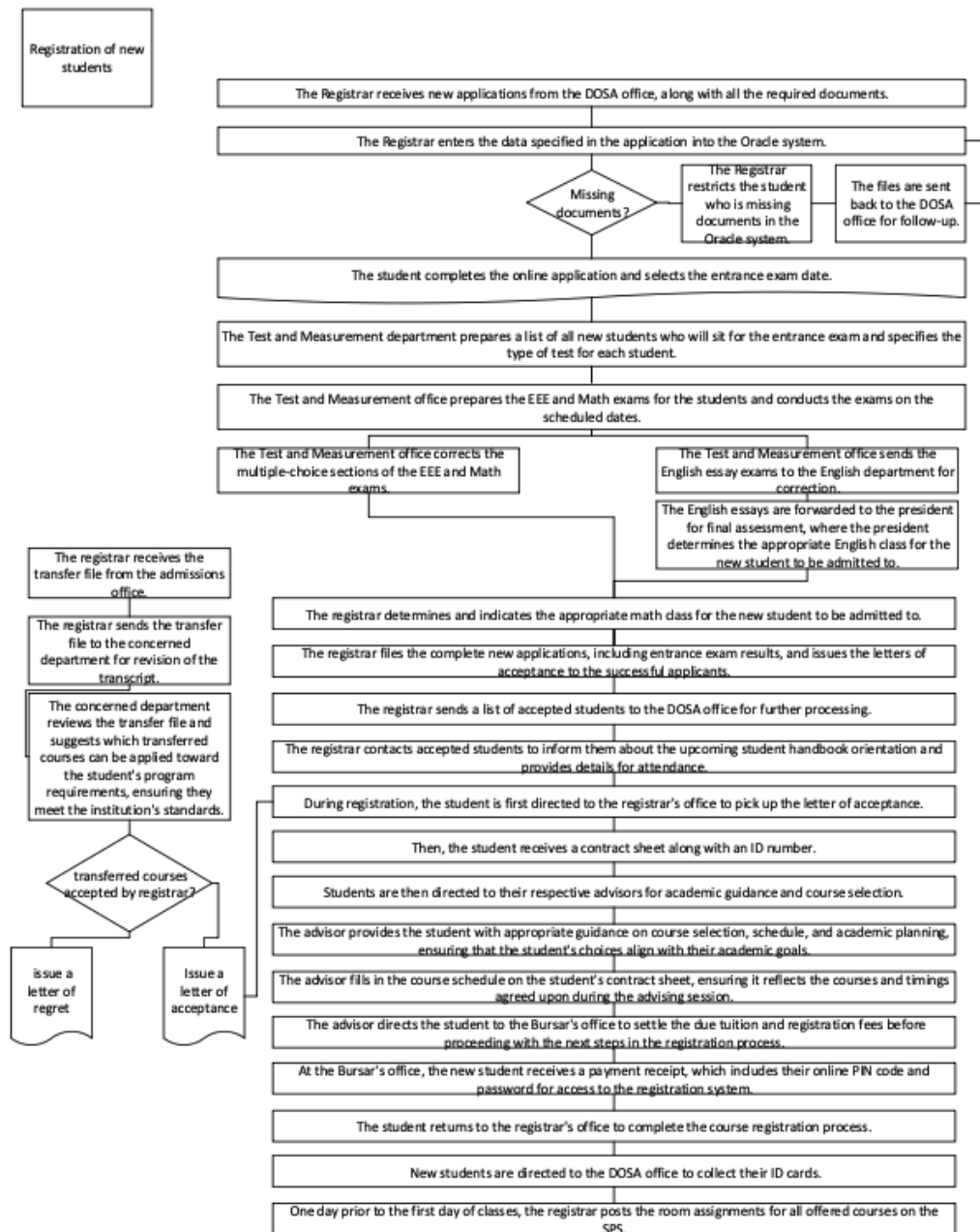
**Withdrawal refund policy**  
 Before the beginning of classes --> 100% of tuition fees, less registration fees  
 During the first week of classes --> 75% of tuition fees, less registration fees  
 During the second week of classes --> 50% of tuition fees, less registration fees  
 After the drop & add. --> no refunds are given  
 No refund of fees for the summer session

## Difference between a registration and bursar

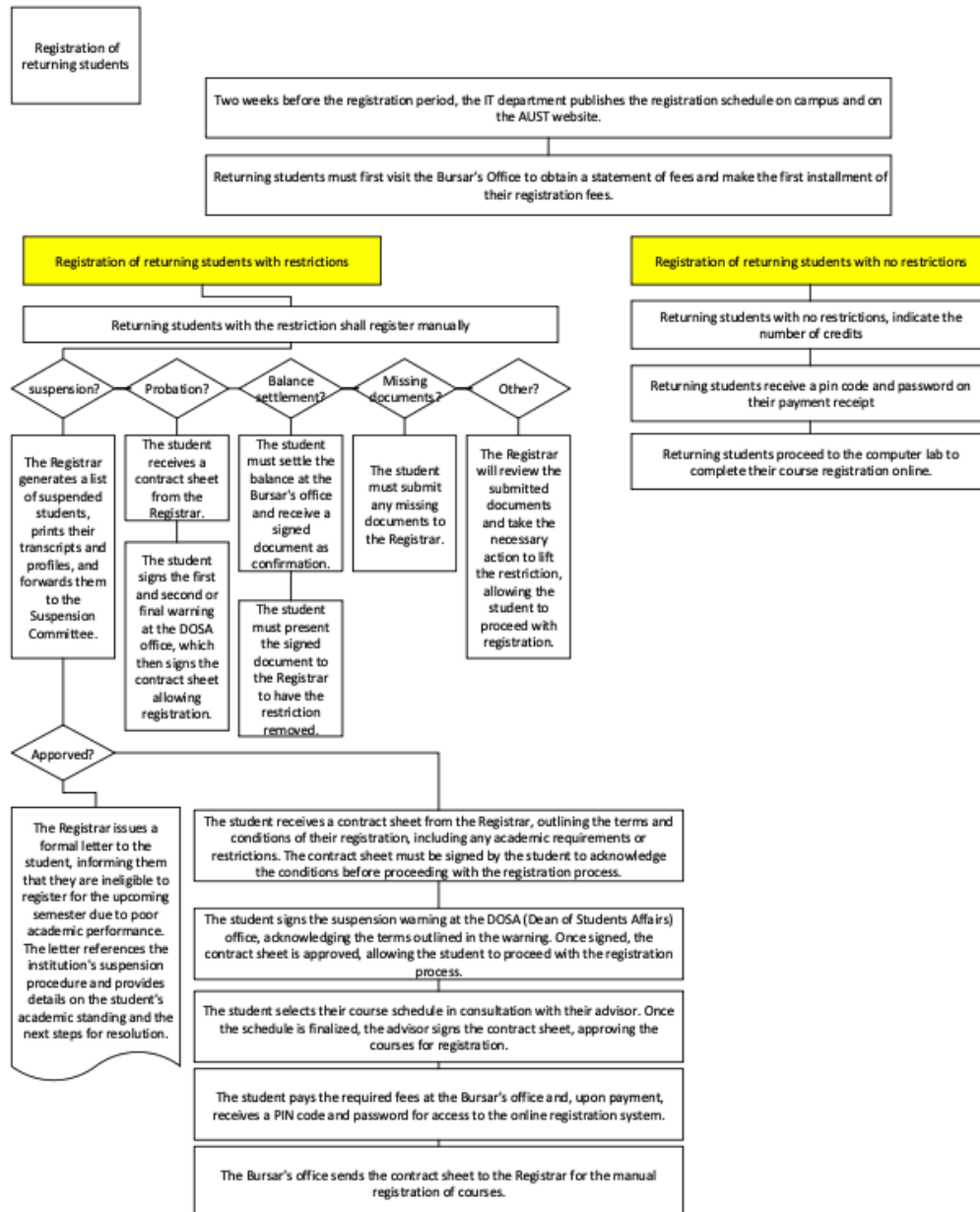
Differences between  
Registration and  
Bursar procedure



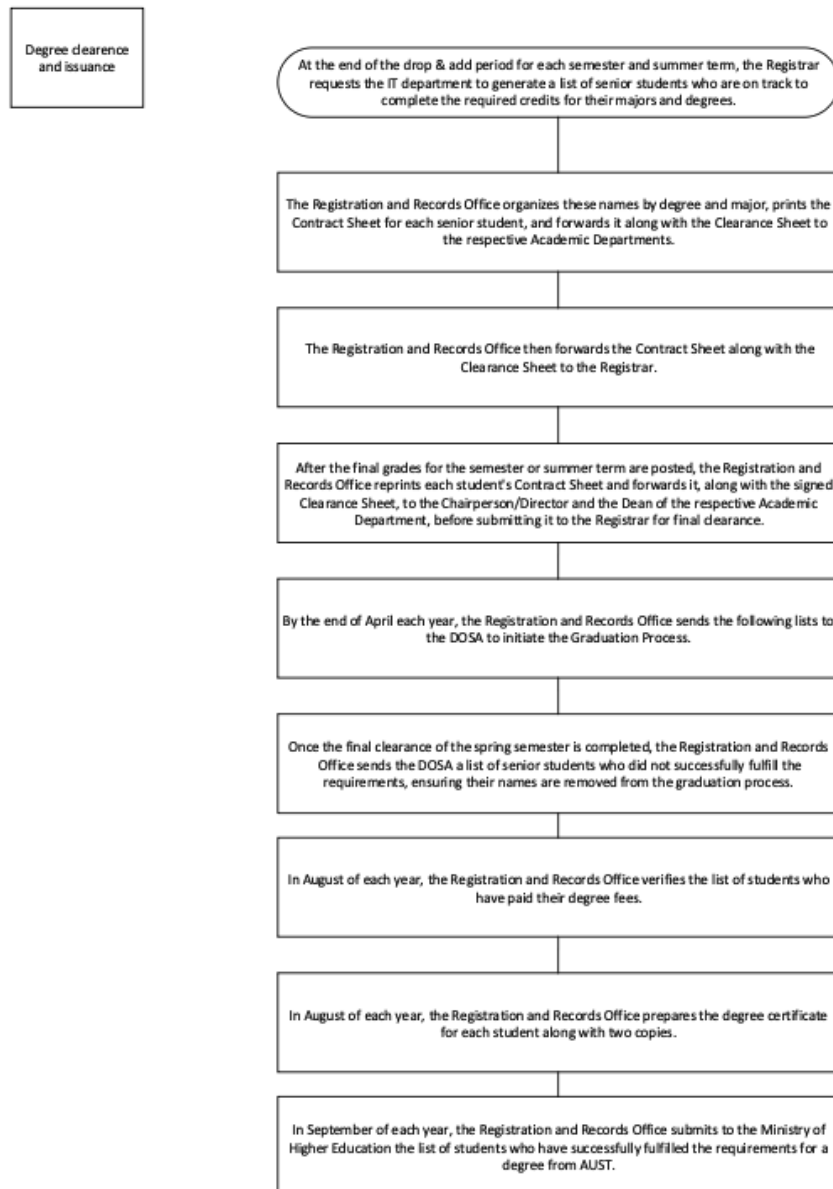
## Registration of new students



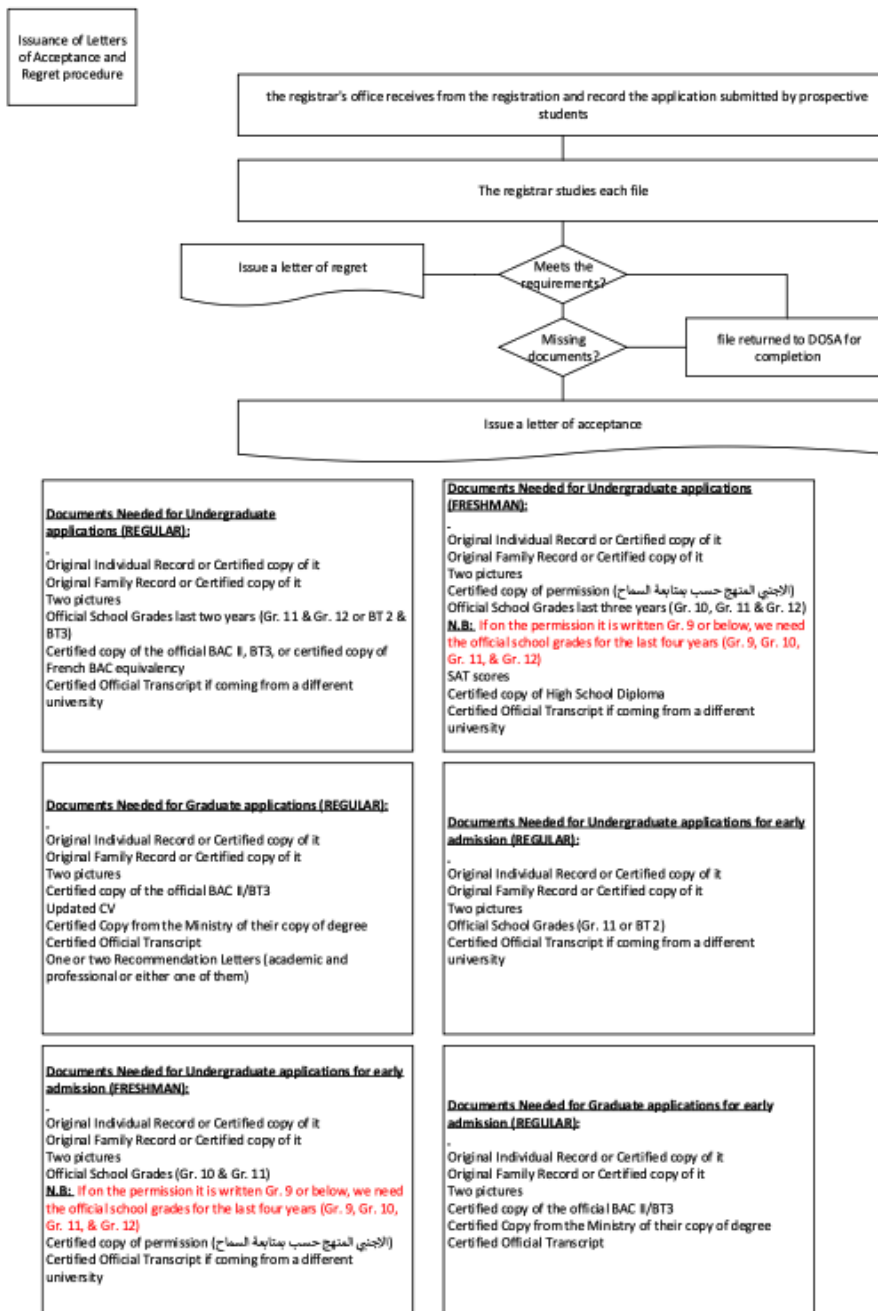
## Registration of returning students



## Degree clearance and issuance



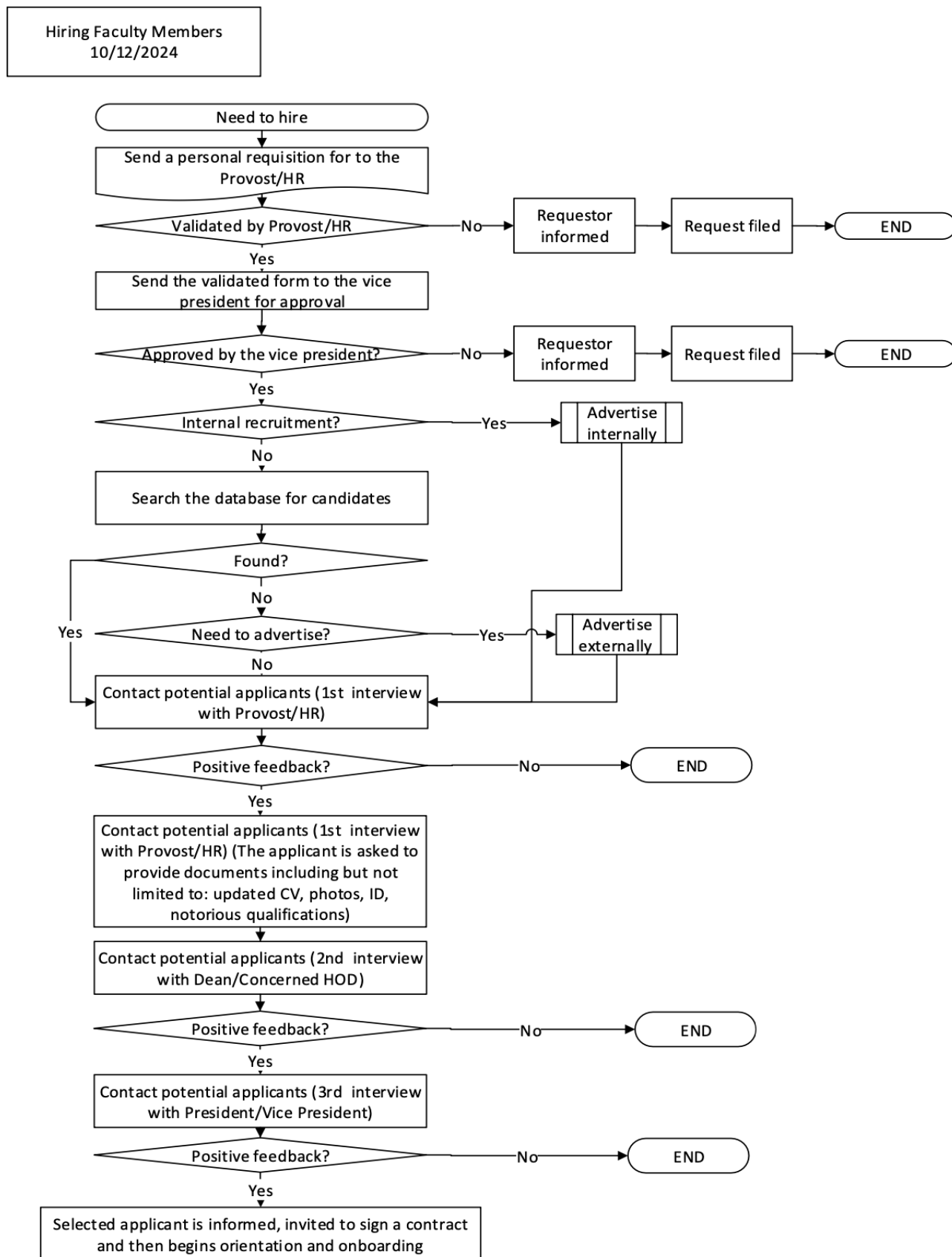
## Issuance of letters of acceptance and regret



## Supporting processes

### Human resources

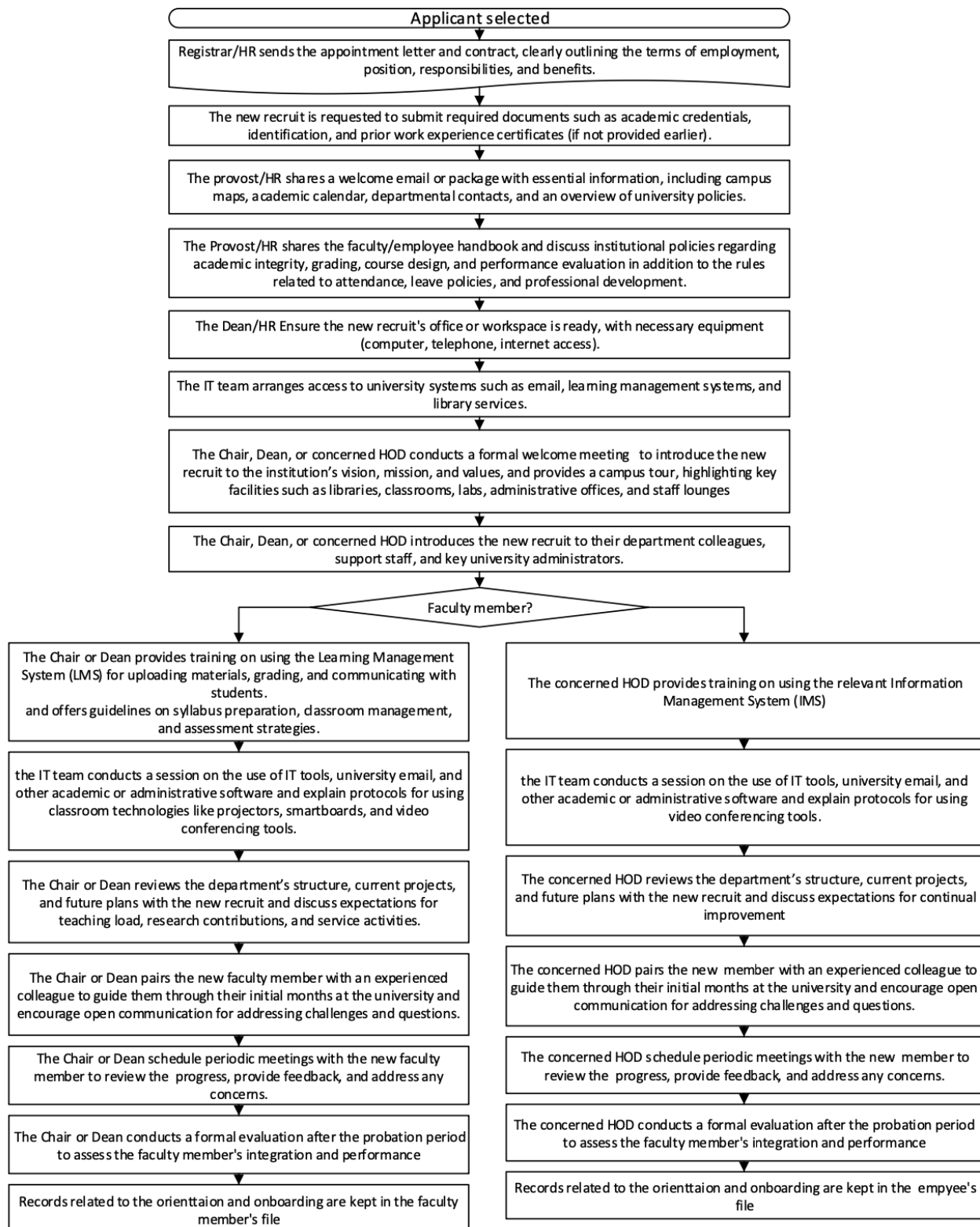
#### Hiring Procedure



## Orientation and onboarding

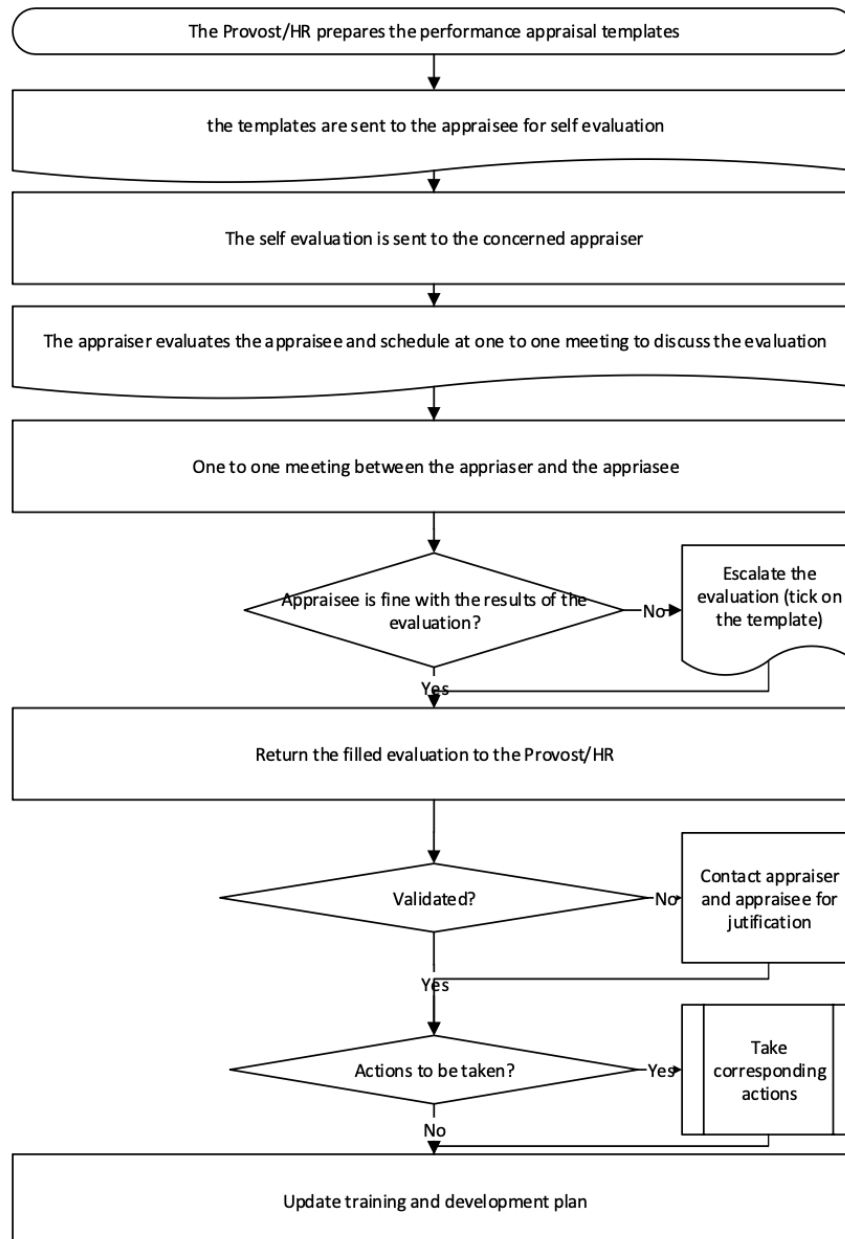
Orientation and onboarding  
10/12/2024

**The objective is to provide new recruits with the knowledge, tools, and resources needed to integrate effectively into the university's environment, policies, and culture.**

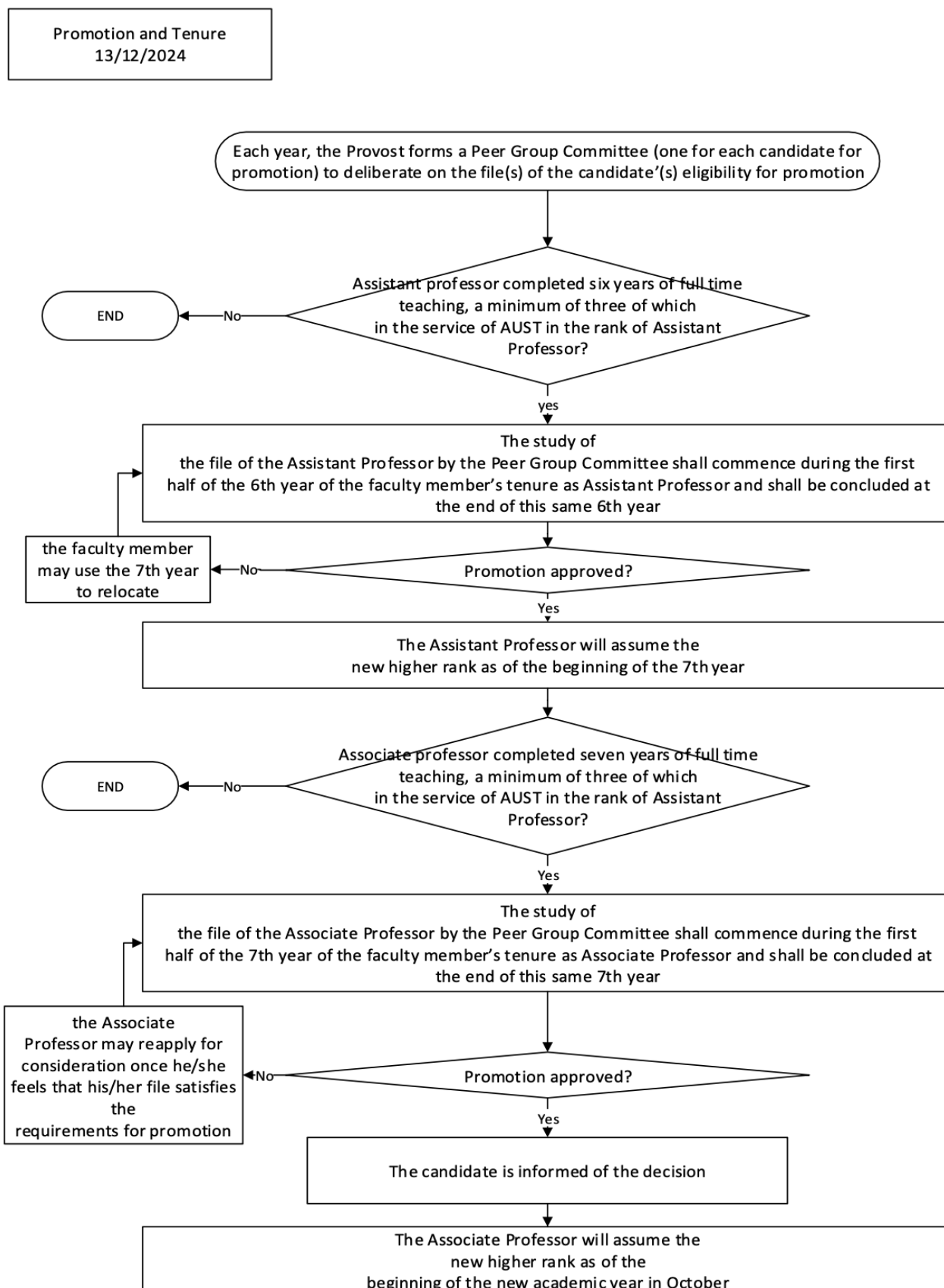


Performance Appraisal  
10/12/2024

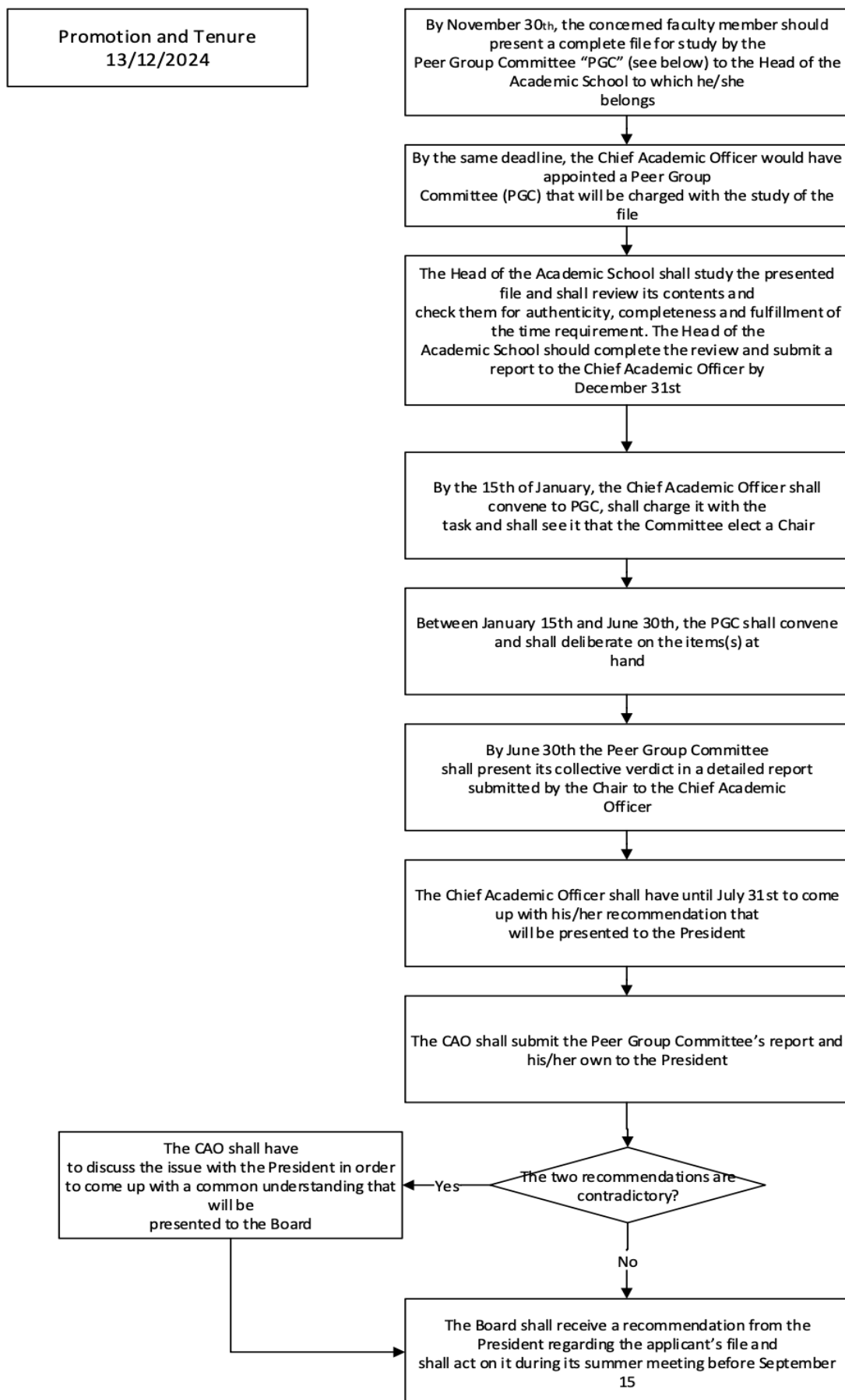
Performance appraisal is done  
once per year and according to  
need (at the end of a probation  
period)



## Promotion and tenure

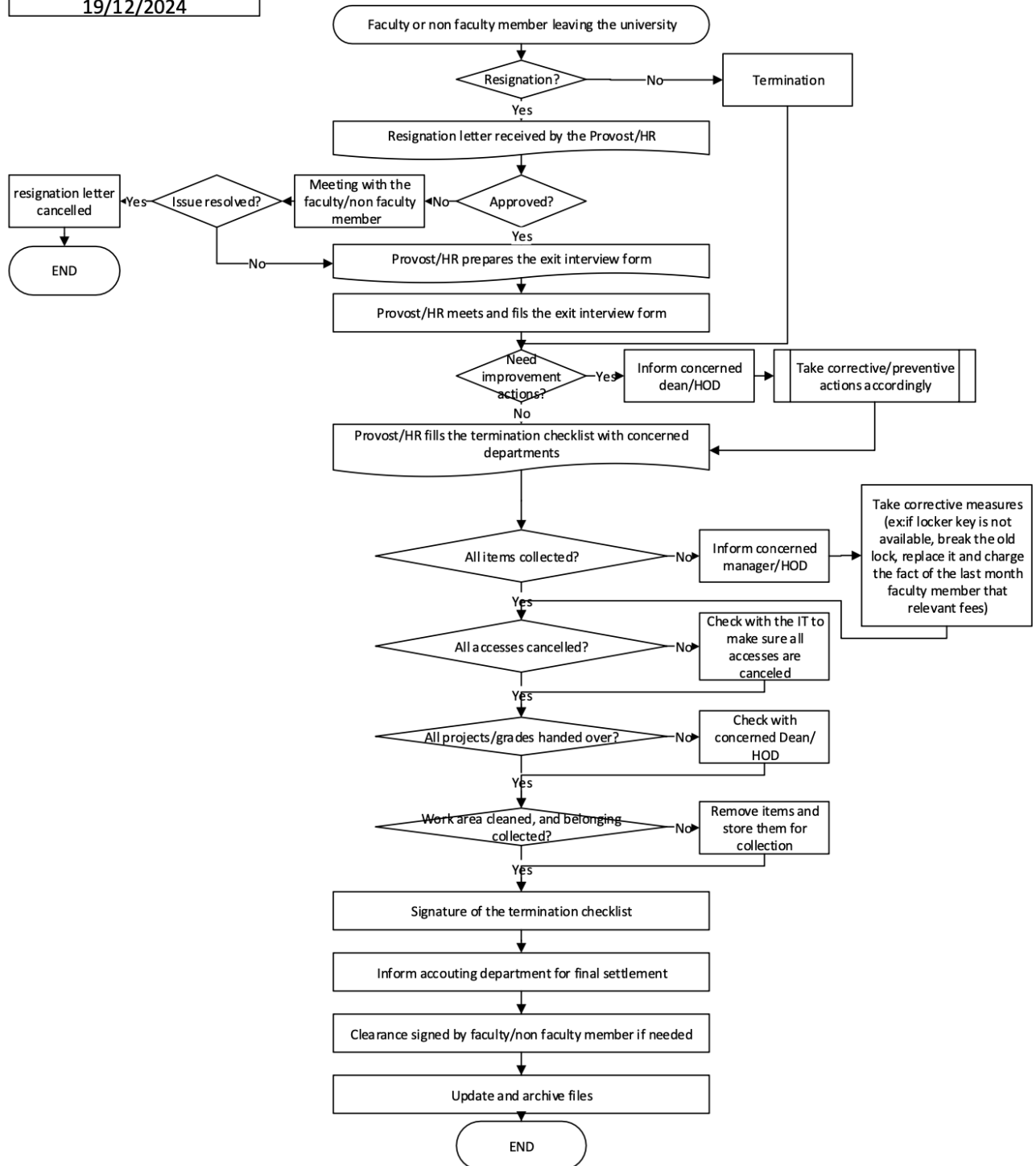


## Timeline for Promotion & Tenure

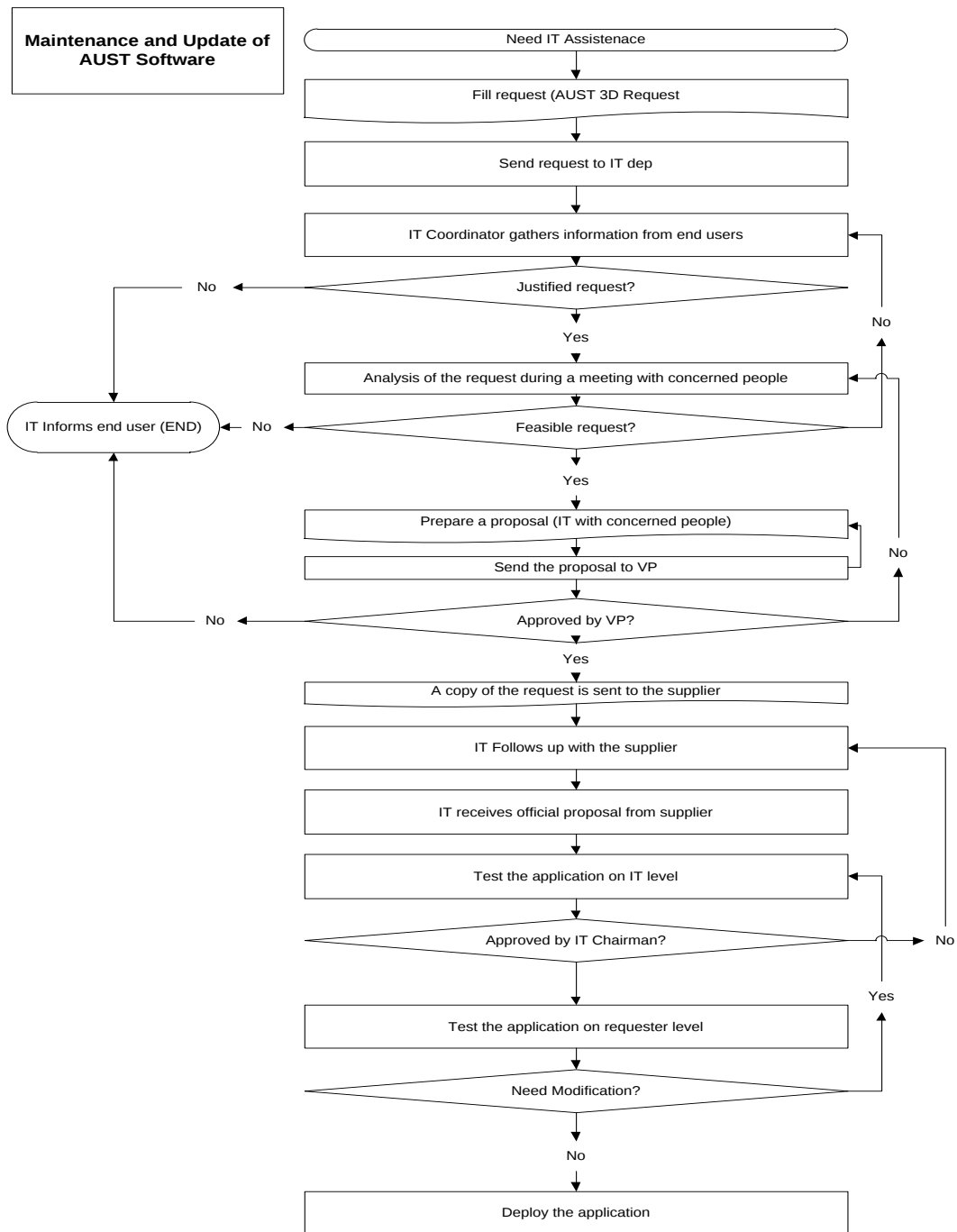


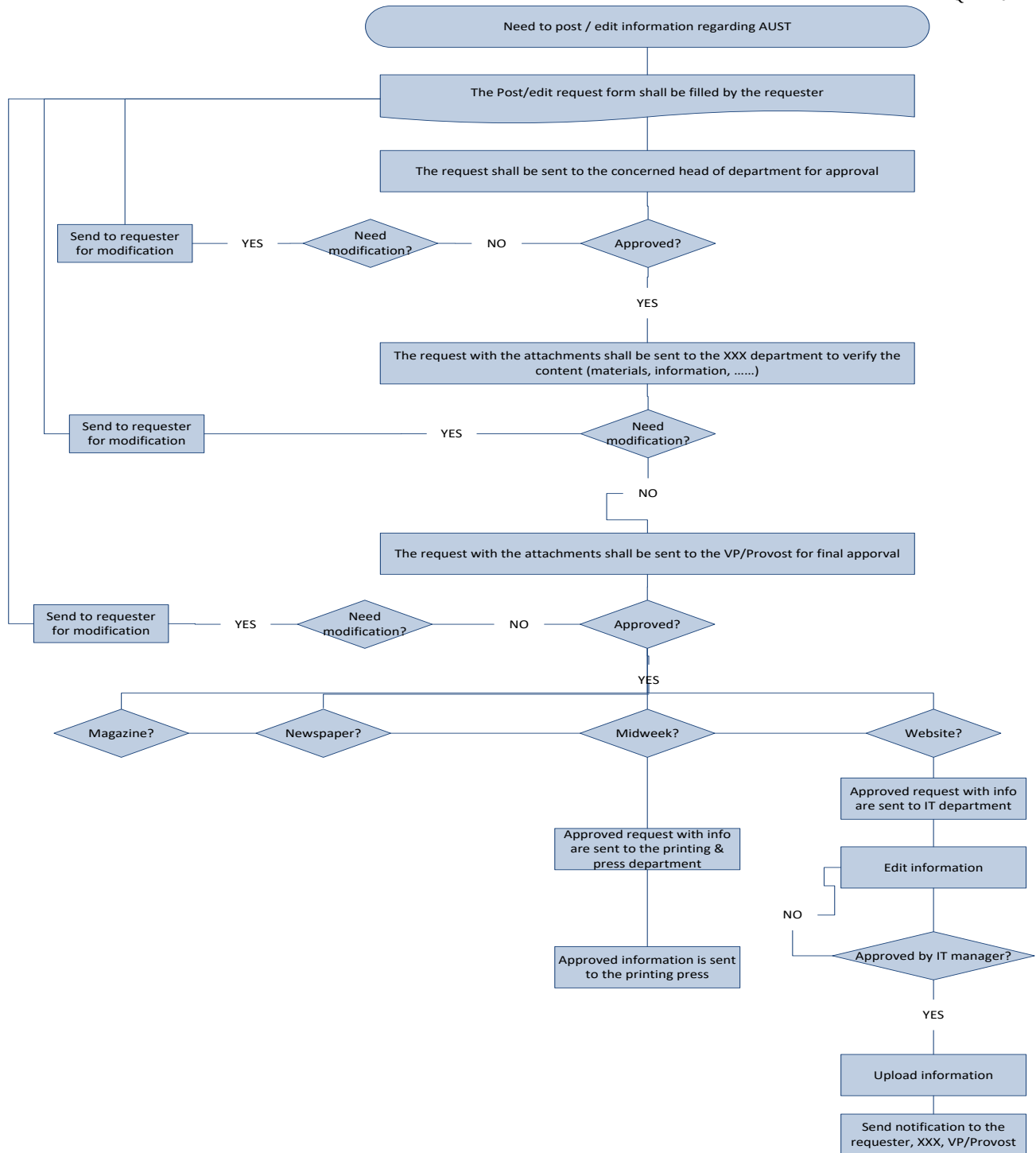
## Termination/Resignation

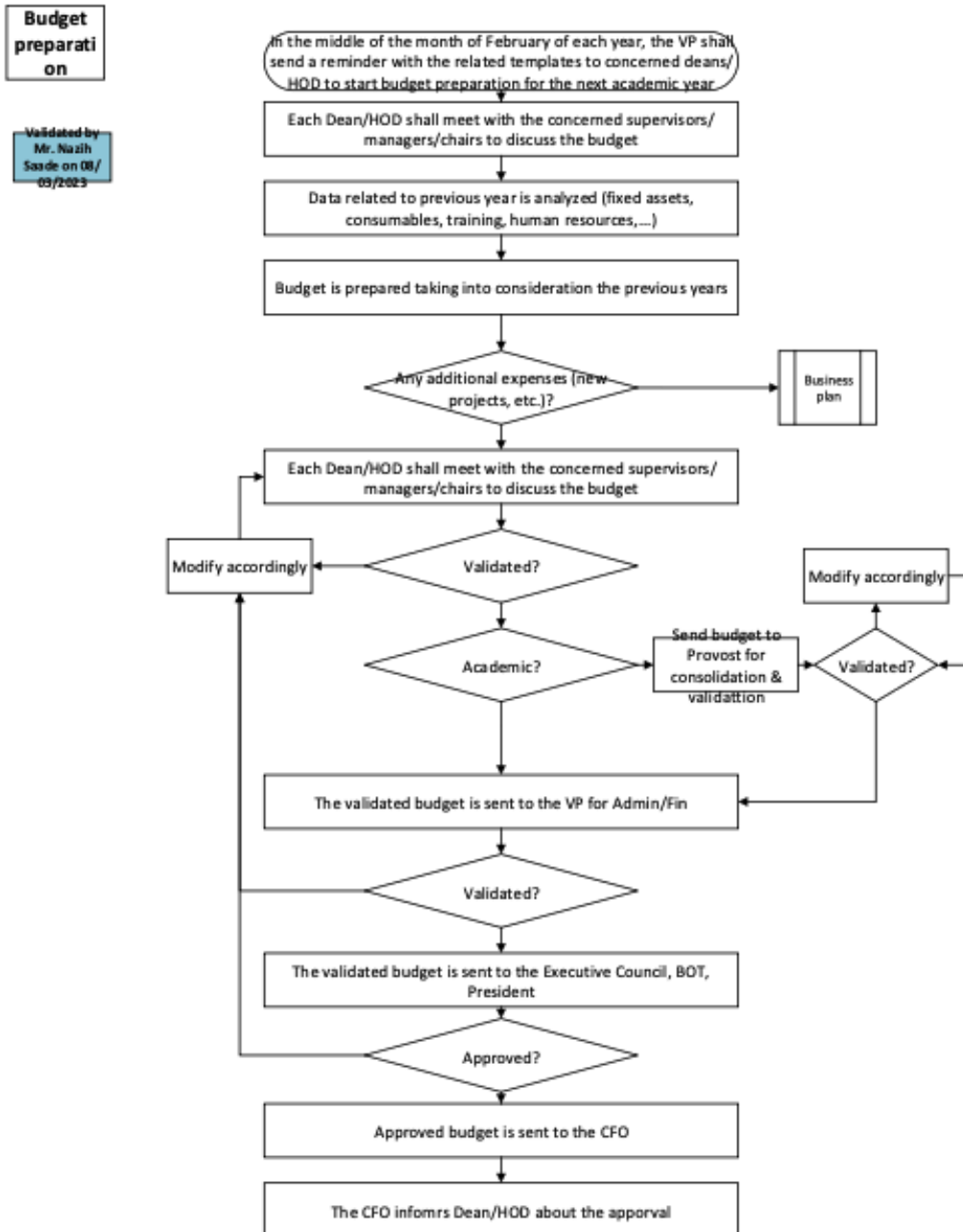
### Termination, Resignation & Exit Interview procedure 19/12/2024

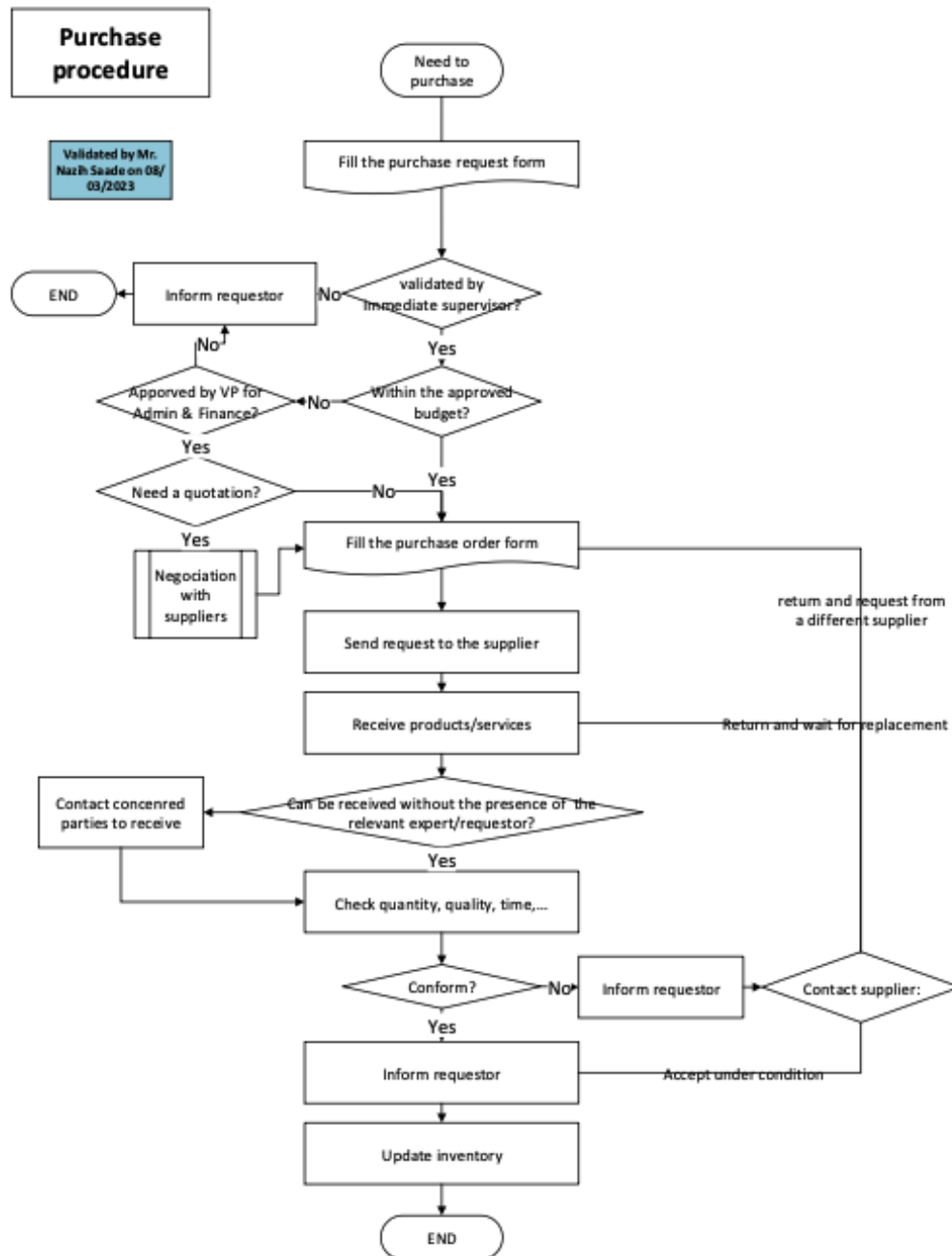


## Information technology







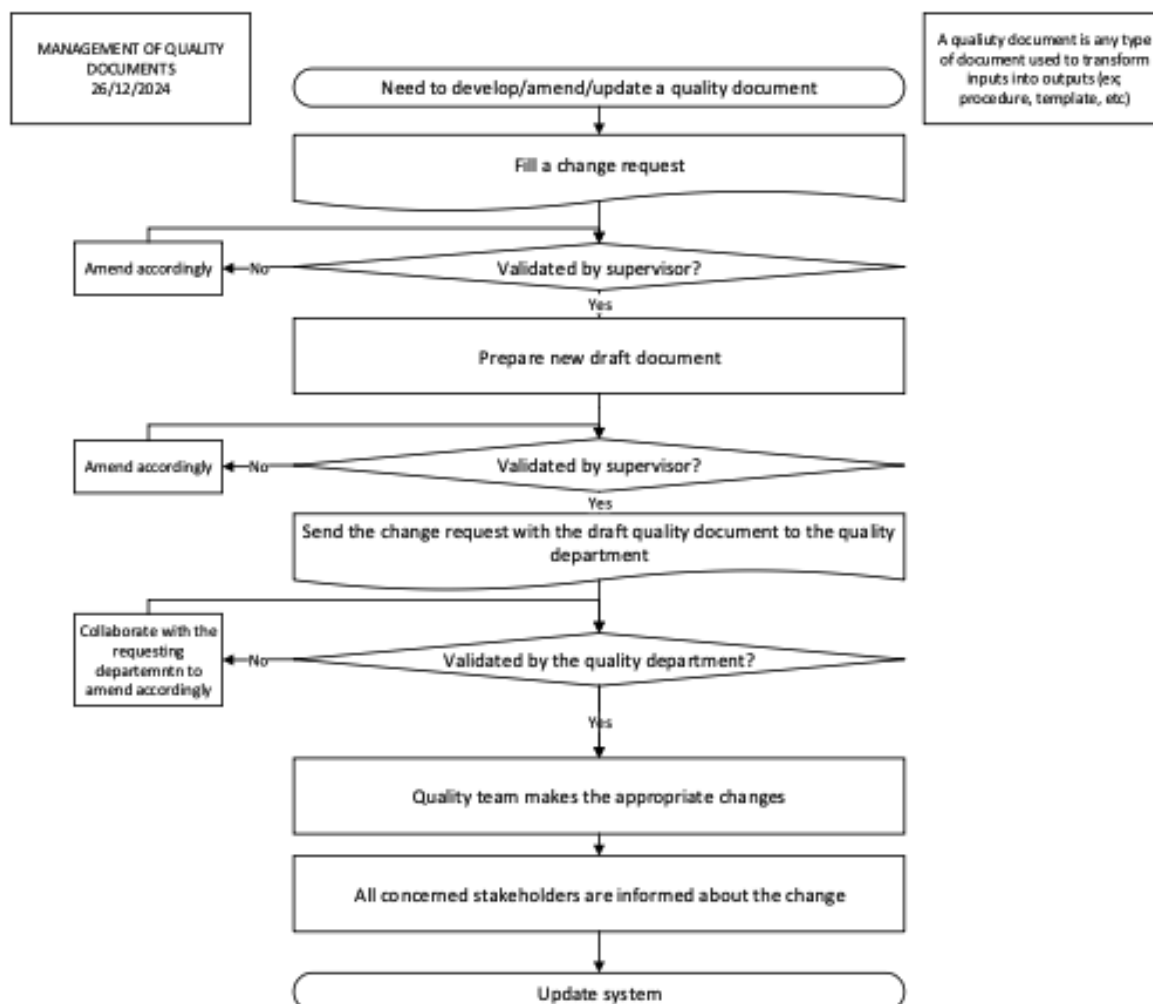


## Management processes

### Top management

### Quality management

### Management of quality documents





## Management of key performance indicators

