

Assessment Report

**International Program Accreditation
Nursing (B.Sc.),
Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.)**

**at the American University of Science
and Technology (AUST)
Beirut, Lebanon**

8 December 2025



Accredited from 12/2025 to 12/2031

Imprint

EVALAG
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I. Introduction

EVALAG's international program accreditation constitutes a rigorous external quality assurance procedure designed to evaluate the academic quality, structures, and effectiveness of higher education programs. It involves a structured peer-review process, comprising a written self-assessment report and an on-site visit conducted by an independent panel of academic and professional reviewers.

Through this procedure, international accreditation confirms that the study programs align with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area¹ (ESG), thereby evidencing their commitment to internationally recognised principles of academic quality and transparency. The reviewers evaluate the degree of compliance with each criterion in relation to the ESG by offering an external, independent, expert-based perspective, applying assessment levels, and providing conditions or recommendations aimed at the continued enhancement of the study programs. Upon successful completion, institutions are granted a quality seal and formal accreditation valid for a period of six years.

¹ https://www.engq.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf (accessed 17th July 2025).

II. HEI (profile)

Description of American University of Science & Technology (AUST)²

The present-day American University of Science & Technology (AUST) began its operations in 1989 under the name American Universal College (AUC) and applied for licensure from the Lebanese government. In August 2000, the institution was renamed American University College of Science & Technology (AUCST). Finally, in August 2007, the current name American University of Science & Technology (AUST) was officially confirmed, granting it all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of a fully accredited university.

The American University of Science and Technology (AUST) is a secular, private, and independent institution. Unlike many universities in Lebanon, AUST was not established by a religious order and receives no funding—neither partially nor fully—from any governmental agency or religious organization. AUST is an equal opportunity employer and upholds a strict non-discrimination policy across all areas of governance and administration. The university follows an American-style educational philosophy, requiring all students—regardless of their academic major—to complete a broad-based liberal arts curriculum. This curriculum includes mandatory coursework in languages, social sciences, humanities, as well as mathematics and natural sciences.

The main campus of the university is located in Beirut. Additionally, the university operates two smaller regional centers in Zahlé and Sidon and a new branch (licensed in 2022) in Bhamdoun; Mount Lebanon.

AUST offers undergraduate (32) and graduate programs (16) in four faculties:

- Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS)
- Faculty of Business and Economics (FBE)
- Faculty of Engineering (FOE)
- Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS)

Nature: Independent, Private, coeducational and secular
Official Address: Achrafieh, Alfred Naccash Ave. P.O. Box 16-6452; Beirut, Lebanon
Locations: 1. Beirut; Ashrafieh 2. Zahle; Bekaa Valley 3. Sidon; Southern Lebanon

² Facts and Figures, AUST; Academic Year 2022-2023 (figures quoted are for Fall 2022)

4. Bhamdoun; Mount Lebanon (New branch licensed in 2022)
Number of Students: Total 3666 HC; FTE: 2582 UG; 380 G ³ Beirut 2494 (2100 undergraduates-UG- in Fall 2022) ⁴ Zahle 833 ⁵ Sidon 339 ⁶ Bhamdoun (enrolment is embedded in Zahle)
Number of Faculty: 240 HC; FTE 174 FTE Student FTE Faculty=17.02
Number of Faculties (Schools): 4
Number of Academic Departments: 24
Number of Degree Granting Programs (Undergraduate): 32
Number of Degree Granting Programs (Graduate): 16
Number of Credit Hours: Needed for a Bachelor's Degree (starting Freshman class) 135 Needed for a Bachelor's Degree (starting Sophomore class) 105 Needed for a Master's Degree: 30-39
Number of Students who Graduated in July 2022 with BA/BS: 918
Number of New Students who Enrolled in October 2022: 1129
Number of Students who Graduated with Master's Degrees in July 2022: 159
Number of Students who Graduated with MBA Degrees in July 2022: 99
Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS); Dean: Gretta Abou Sleiman; Ph.D.

The Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) at the American University of Science and Technology (AUST)

FHS is committed to providing high-quality education in sciences and health care professions. The FHS does not deliver majors in areas that have reached career saturation but strives to offer majors of applied nature where professional development is key in advancing the academic process. Through its comprehensive programs, dedicated faculty, and state-of-the-art facilities, the FHS plays a vital role in advancing healthcare services and education in Lebanon and the Middle East.

³Male 2078 (56.7%), Female 1588 (43.3%).

⁴Male 1466 (58.8%), Female 1028 (41.2%).

⁵Male 420 (50.4%), Female 413 (49.6%).

⁶Male 192 (56.7%), Female 147 (43.3%).

The FHS encompasses several departments offering a diverse range of undergraduate programs:

- Clinical Laboratory Science (CLS)
- Optics and Optometry (OAO)
- Radiologic Sciences (RAD)
- Forensic Science (FOR)
- Nutrition and Food Science (NFS)
- Nursing (NUR)

Number of study programs: Undergraduate: 6 Graduate: 8 Postgraduate: 0
Number of students in the faculty: Undergraduate: 450 Graduate: 25 Postgraduate: 0
Part-time students: Grad: 22, UnderGrad: 210
1st year students (faculty level): 101 (undergrad: 95 Grad: 6)
Graduate (faculty level): 43 undergraduate students and 5 graduates
Drop-out rate (faculty level): 15.4%

III. Assessment procedure

On 12 December 2024, EVALAG was commissioned by the American University of Science and Technology in Beirut to carry out the international program accreditation for the following study programs:

- Nursing (B.Sc.)
- Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.)

The assessment followed a two-stage process, consisting of a written self-evaluation report, which was handed in on 01 August 2025, by the university. In light of the prevailing political circumstances in Lebanon, the site visit took place remotely rather than on site, on 09 and 11 September 2025 (for further details, see Annex 3). During the visit, the expert panel held discussions with representatives of the university and department leadership, academic and administrative staff, as well as students and alumni. A comprehensive impression of the on-site facilities was conveyed to the reviewers through the video and image material provided by the institution.

Following the site visit, the expert panel submitted the assessment report to AUST for factual review and institutional statement on 04 November 2025. The university's response is included in chapter VI (Statement of the university).

The reviewers and EVALAG sincerely thank the university for the open and constructive discussions, and for their excellent and highly professional support during the preparation of the meetings, throughout the site visit, and beyond.

Composition of the review panel

The study programs were evaluated by qualified and experienced university professors with expertise on Nursing, Nutrition & Food Science, quality assurance and the labor market as well as one student representative. The group of reviewers offering an external, expert-based perspective consists of:

- Prof. Dr. rer. cur. Sandra Bensch, Vice Dean for the Faculty of Healthcare and Nursing at the Catholic University of Applied Sciences in Mainz, Germany.
- Prof. Dr. Shoma Barbara Berkemeyer, Professor of Nutrition Science at the University of Applied Sciences in Osnabrück, Germany.
- Prof. Ass. Dr. Linda Ukimeraj Harris, Head of the Quality Office at Heimerer College in Pristina, Kosovo.
- Olha Lavro, PhD Student in Educational and Pedagogical Sciences at Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraine.

All reviewers declared to be free of any conflict of interest.

Criteria and Assessment Levels

The criteria guiding EVALAG's international program accreditation have been formally endorsed by the EVALAG Foundation Board (for further details, see Annex 1). Rooted in the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG, for further details, see Annex 2) for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, they incorporate a thorough analysis of Part 1 of the ESG. Where necessary, additional national frameworks and regulatory requirements may also be applied.

Through its international accreditation process, EVALAG verifies that the study programs conform to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, as of 15 May 2015), thus evidencing their alignment with European acknowledged standards of academic quality. The accreditation criteria encompass the following:

- Program profile
- Curriculum
- Student assessment
- Program organization
- Resources
- Quality assurance

Beyond ensuring compliance with academic standards commonly accepted within the European Higher Education Area⁷ (EHEA), the process also promotes the continuous improvement and strategic development of the programs. The reviewers assess the extent to which each criterion is fulfilled in accordance with the ESG, applying the following assessment levels:

- passed
- passed subject to conditions
- suspension of the accreditation procedure
- failed

Based on the degree of compliance with the accreditation criteria, the institution may be granted full accreditation, accreditation subject to conditions, or accreditation may be denied.

If the program does not meet certain relevant criteria, but it appears likely that the institution will be able to address the shortcomings within 18 months following the assessment, the accreditation procedure may be suspended until a new application is submitted.

The final decision on accreditation is taken by the independent EVALAG Accreditation Commission, drawing on the reviewers' final report. Following a positive outcome of the external review process, the Accreditation Commission awards the EVALAG quality label and submits a formal recommendation to the competent national authorities. The institution is issued an official

⁷ The European Higher Education Area is an alliance of currently 49 countries that have agreed on common standards and goals in higher education as part of the so-called Bologna Process.

certificate and authorized to use the EVALAG quality seal for communication and promotional purposes. The accreditation is granted for a fixed term of six years, contingent upon ongoing compliance with the established quality standards. The evaluation report will be published on EVALAG's website.

This assessment report is structured according to the six accreditation criteria applied by EVALAG. Each section provides a brief criterion overview, summarizes the current status based on the university's self-assessment and site visit findings, and presents the reviewers' evaluation and recommendations for improvement.

IV. Program assessment

1. Program profile

The program's objectives should align with the institution's profile and strategic goals. The reviewers evaluate the clarity, accessibility, and appropriateness of the intended learning outcomes, ensuring these outcomes correspond to the type and level of qualification awarded. Furthermore, the reviewers examine whether the learning outcomes are informed by academic and professional standards, societal needs, and labor market demands, and whether they enhance graduates' employability.

In addition, the reviewers consider the integration of research within the programs - specifically, the application of scientific methods in both theory and practice, as well as the extent to which teaching is research-based. They assess whether the program's profile and objectives meet internationally recognized standards. The international orientation of each program is also reviewed, as is the adequacy of academic staff qualifications in relation to the program's objectives and overall profile.

Nursing (B.Sc.)

Current status

The American University of Science and Technology (AUST) points out in the self-evaluation report that it recognizes the importance of the nursing profession. It is aware of the national, regional and international need for competent professional nurses, and the challenges facing the profession due to the acute and increasing shortage of the nursing workforce. This shortage is significant especially at the primary health care level (health promotion and disease prevention). The statistical distribution of nurses by region and workplace, as reported by the Order of Nurses in Lebanon, clearly reflects this shortage. Accordingly, the university decided to establish a nursing program in 2017 that responds to the needs in accordance with its mission and vision.

Upon taking the decision to establish the program, and alongside with the first building blocks, the founders were keen to benchmark with international and national accredited nursing programs and professional requirements. Although the licensing decree was issued on 25-07-2017, the Ministry of Higher Education start-up permission was not issued before Fall 21-22. This delay which was due to the political instability in the Country and the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on recruitment and enrollment of students.

The mission of the Nursing Department is described to emanate from the institutional mission of AUST. It is to graduate committed nurses with leadership skills to serve and improve the health of all society with no discrimination, including the underserved and rural populations. It also commits to raise its

students to core values such as professionalism, caring, leadership, quality and social service.

The nursing program at AUST is designed to graduate nurses who will positively influence the health of the society by guaranteeing excellence in nursing education, involvement in research, practice and service.

The outlined vision of the program is that the Nursing Department, through its dedication to positively influence health nationally, will expand to offer unique needed programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels and that it will be recognized internationally according to acknowledged professional standards.

Program objectives

- Prepare students to fulfill their expanded roles as care providers, educators, advocates, researchers, managers, and leaders in health care settings.
- Create a learning environment to help students acquire broad knowledge base ranging from humanities to social, biological, natural and nursing sciences.
- Enhance students' acquisition of competencies including managing and improving care outcomes necessary for establishing successful careers in nursing and for pursuing graduate studies.
- Expose the characteristics of patient-centered care and ensure that students apply them.
- Support students in developing and updating their evidence based knowledge and skills in order to keep up with the rapidly evolving health care systems.
- Empower students to become self-confident and develop the required communication skills in both Arabic and English.
- Engage students in inter-faculty and community outreach programs to become teamwork leaders and interact efficiently with all health care professionals.
- Promote a healthy work environment committed to develop intellectual skills for adequate critical thinking to ensure safe nursing care.

Learning outcomes

Students graduating from the Nursing (B.Sc.) program are supposed to be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

- Operate autonomously in different health care settings applying evidence based and safe care methodology.
- Use critical thinking and clinical judgment in the delivery of an evidence-based practice that integrates physical, psychosocial, and spiritual dimensions
- Identify contemporary issues in nursing education and practice.

- Demonstrate assertiveness by skillfully communicating with the individual/patient and family as well as all the members of the health care team.
- Reveal ability to communicate effectively, orally and in writing, both in Arabic and English.
- Analyze the health status of individuals/patients, families, and communities and demonstrate providing appropriate care.
- Ability to prove leadership strategies and promote health delivery systems.
- Describe the professional and ethical responsibilities in nursing.
- Reveal awareness of ethical, legal and regulatory structures as well as environmental and societal implications of the Nursing profession.
- Demonstrate a sense of belonging and accountability to the Nursing profession and a commitment to its advancement.

According to the self-evaluation report, the basic concepts of the Nursing (B.Sc.) program are the following: professionalism with focus on ethical practice, leadership abilities, community service, and critical thinking & clinical judgement.

The Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing (BSN) offered by the Nursing Department at the Faculty of Health Sciences at AUST prepares students to become leaders and integral health care providers in the Lebanese Healthcare system.

The program consists of 114 academic credits (American Credit System, acquired over a minimum of 3 years), a broad exposure to clinical training and a First Aid certificate granted by the Lebanese Red Cross.

The admission requirements include a Lebanese Baccalaureate or its equivalent, school grades and ranks, and entrance exams on English and Mathematics (or international exams such as IELTS, SAT or TOEFL).

The program and research

The nursing profession, like any other profession, is linked to research. Research is crucial for improving patient care, shaping healthcare policies, and advancing nursing practice. Nursing research spans various types, from theoretical development to practical application in clinical settings. The nursing process itself, a fundamental tool in clinical practice, is tightly linked to research and its findings. Therefore, nursing research is necessary for the evolution of nursing science and directly benefits patients.

Accordingly, the course “Health Sciences Research” introduces the students to the fundamentals of health sciences research. It covers various research methodologies, ethical considerations, data collection and analysis techniques, and the application of research findings to evidence-based nursing practice. By attending this course, the students develop the skills to critically appraise research literature and understand its relevance to clinical decision-making.

The Nursing Program theory and clinical teaching/learning depend on evidence-based education whereby it focuses on four components: evidence

from research, evidence from client's health assessment, information about client's preferences and values, and clinical expertise.

The program in relation to internationally accepted standards

Several major organizations set international nursing standards, including:

- International Council of Nurses (ICN): Develops and promotes global standards for nursing education, practice, and ethics.
- World Health Organization (WHO): Provides guidelines and frameworks to strengthen nursing workforce capacity worldwide.

These organizations establish policies, standards, and frameworks to ensure nursing education and practice meet global quality benchmarks.

Internationally accepted standards of nursing practice that are adopted by the Nursing Program at AUST are guided by several key frameworks. The ICN Code of Ethics provides ethical guidelines for nurses. Global standards for generic nursing education also serve as benchmarks. Additionally, professional nurse standards focus on critical thinking, therapeutic relationships, and professional conduct, ensuring a foundation for safe and effective practice. These frameworks collectively aim to promote high-quality nursing care globally. This is reflected in the conceptual framework of the Nursing Program mentioned in its profile.

The Nursing Program adheres in developing its profile and objectives to the definitions and standards of the International Council of Nurses. It acknowledges that "Nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all settings. Nursing includes the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled and dying people. Advocacy, promotion of a safe environment, research, participation in shaping health policy and in-patient and health systems management, and education are also key nursing roles".

The international dimensions of the program

The international dimension of the program is outlined by AUST with the following information: The Chair of the Department of Nursing is a member of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of the American University of Beirut School of Nursing. Sigma Theta Tau International recognizes exceptional nurses and nursing students for their academic achievement and investment in the future of nursing. She was elected as vice president after being chair of the standing committees. Also, the Chair was member of the Executive Committee and representative of the Lebanese Faculties of Nursing (2016-2019) in the Scientific Society of Arab Nursing faculties. Currently, she is the chair of the Education and Training Committee.

Qualification of academic staff

AUST provided CVs of the academic staff for the reviewers to understand the academic profiles of the instructors in the Nursing (B.Sc.) program. Regarding

the shortage of instructors holding a PhD and being involved in the teaching activities of the Nursing (B.Sc.) program, the AUST representatives could clarify during the site visit that the national regulations require higher education institutions to mainly rely on instructors either holding a PhD or the highest degree-level commonly available in Lebanon. Since there have not been any PhD programs on Nursing established yet in Lebanon according to AUST, the teaching activities have to be carried out by instructors holding a Master's degree in Nursing.

As for the practicum or clinical courses, clinical instructors and preceptors are selected from the clinical staff of the health centers in consensus with the nursing administration. This process breaks the gap between academia and practice or service. The Program organizes preceptor's workshops to unify standard procedures among the different preceptors in the different training sites

For further details, see chapter 5 (Resources).

Assessment

The reviewers find that the program's objectives are well-aligned with the institution's profile and strategic goals, thereby ensuring coherence with its overall mission and vision. The program profile and objectives are substantiated by intended learning outcomes that span the full spectrum of knowledge and skills required to address the multifaceted challenges of the respective subject area. The learning outcomes are structured into subject-specific competences, research skills, and transferable skills.

The reviewers further note that the learning outcomes are informed by academic and professional standards, societal needs, and labor market demands. This ensures that graduates are well prepared for employment locally or internationally in their respective fields and possess the competencies necessary for professional success.

An introduction to scientific work and research activities takes place in the study program. With regard to the additional involvement of students in research activities, the program representatives pointed out that the assessed program is an undergraduate program. Greater attention is therefore paid to the teaching of practical skills, for example through internships. Nevertheless, students generally have the opportunity to participate in research projects within the department. As an example, an epidemiology project was mentioned, which is open to students of all programs at AUST. During the site visit, the representatives of AUST held out the prospect of further expanding these opportunities for student participation in research projects in the future. The reviewers welcome this intent and continue to encourage AUST to set up a Master's degree program in the future that builds on the content of the accredited Bachelor's program, and possibly also a PhD program. According to feedback from the AUST representatives, such programs from the subject area of the peer-reviewed Bachelor's program are currently non-existent or

almost non-existent in Lebanon above the Bachelor's level. Through such an academic strengthening of the field, AUST could not only strengthen the research skills of the students, but also promote the further development of the corresponding professional field and increase the attractiveness of the Bachelor's programs among the newly enrolling students. Therefore, and in addition to the establishment of a Master's and PhD program, the reviewers also encourage the establishment of continuing education programs for graduates of courses in the field (e.g., microcredentials, microdegrees).

However, it became evident during the review process that the study program offers a highly practice-oriented education, which provides a sound preparation for entering the labor market according to the students and alumni.

The reviewers find that the program meets internationally recognized standards and thus possesses a clear international dimension, preparing students for global opportunities.

The qualifications of the academic staff are deemed adequate in relation to the program's objectives and overall profile, ensuring high-quality teaching by qualified professionals. The lack of lecturers with a doctorate in the Nursing (B.Sc.) program was explained by the AUST representatives by the fact that doctorates in this field have not yet been established in Lebanon or at least are not yet common. Against this background, the reviewers also consider it sensible for AUST to continue to promote the academisation of the field.

During the site visit, the shortage of highly-trained staff in nursing professions in Lebanon was addressed several times. In order to meet this social challenge, the reviewers suggest that AUST should find a way to transfer suitable nursing assistants to the Bachelor's program in Nursing.

In conclusion, the review panel judges that the program shows a high degree of compliance with academic and professional requirements, societal needs, and internationally accepted standards.

Recommendations

R1 AUST should consider the development and the set-up of a Master's and possibly also a PhD program building up on the reviewed Bachelor's program. Besides, AUST should consider offering additional qualification options for graduates (e. g. microdegrees, microcredentials).

R2 AUST should find a way to transfer suitable nursing assistants to the Bachelor's program in Nursing.

Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.)

Current status

The mission declared by AUST for the Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.) program is to provide an exceptional interdisciplinary nutrition graduate program through innovation, education and discovery. The program is designed to

prepare graduates to be future leaders in the nutrition and food science profession by providing them with educational learning activities, evidence-based knowledge, critical thinking, communication skills, and professional practice.

The vision that AUST pursues for Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.) program is to expand the influence of health professionals promoting healthier lifestyle habits. With the continued input of the faculty members, AUST remains committed to transform the next century of nutrition and dietetics practitioners to serve their global community.

Program objectives

- Provide high quality education and supervised practices to prepare qualified professionals ready to enter the job market
- Provide solid scientific and evidence-based knowledge to produce competent health professionals ready to promote wellbeing at an individual and a public level
- Produce graduates who are able to incorporate new evidence-based technology and knowledge into practice and eager for continuous learning
- Be able to develop and update knowledge and skills in order to keep up with the rapidly evolving nutrition and food sciences systems
- Develop the required communication skills to deliver health and wellbeing messages
- Provide nutritional care and consultation for sick and healthy people in private practice and hospitals.
- Manage and/or participate in the management of ready-to-eat food production units (hospital kitchens, commercial kitchens and catering)
- Support the students to develop the right attitude to become teamwork leaders and interact efficiently with all nutrition and food sciences professionals.
- Possess the right attitude to become teamwork leaders and interact efficiently with all nutrition and food sciences professionals.
- Prepare graduates who are able to pursue their studies in Master's degree in the field of human nutrition, food technology, food safety, public health nutrition, sports physiology and nutrition, food security

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the program, students are supposed to be able to:

- Become a knowledgeable, competent professionals to meet the employment need in Lebanon and beyond
- Promote the importance of nutrition in the prevention management, and treatment of chronic diseases.

- Provide solid scientific and evidence-based knowledge to produce competent health professionals ready to promote wellbeing at an individual and a public level.
- Develop the right knowledge to be proficient in the assessment of individual and group dietary patterns, identifying nutritional deficiencies, and recommending appropriate dietary modifications.
- Understand the principles of food chemistry, microbiology, and food processing technologies.
- Apply scientific methods to design, conduct, and evaluate experiments in food and nutrition.
- Identify and control biological, chemical, and physical hazards in food production and processing.
- Possess knowledge of industrial structures and food technology
- Develop or participate in the development and implementation of individual or community nutrition education and intervention programs, as well as lifestyle change programs.
- Promote the required communication skills to deliver health and wellbeing messages.
- Promote the importance of research that advances the understanding of nutrition, food science, and public health.
- Develop solutions to complex problems in nutrition, food production, and public health.
- Develop leadership and management skills to work in various professional settings, including public health, community nutrition, food industry, and research.

The program and research

During the Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.) program, many courses that introduce the student to the world of science and research are offered. The main course is Process of Research (1 credit) in which AUST covers the methodology of research and the scientific approach. This course will give students a comprehensive view of the research process, from formulating research questions to presenting findings. It includes the critical elements of research methodology including but not limited to problem definition, literature review, research design, data collection, results analysis and interpretation. The students will learn qualitative and quantitative research techniques, the ethical considerations of research and how to communicate research findings. Students taking this course will develop the skills to do research in academic, professional, and real-life settings, and help developing knowledge in academic areas

In addition, the Biostatistics and Epidemiology course (3 credits) in the general-science section allows the student to understand in depth all the statistical methods used to analyze and interpret extracted data.

Finally, every major course and even some in the general science section require, in addition to the exams, a project based on a literature review using

scientifically relevant references. These projects initiate the student to the practice of scientific research and form a considerable part of the final grade.

In the Nutrition and Food Science department, all the instructors are involved in a research project. The main topics of research in the department are epidemiology of eating behaviours and Lebanese olive-oil quality.

The program in relation to internationally accepted standards

The Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.) program follows international organizations and academic bodies that provide frameworks for quality education in nutrition and food science. These standards aim at ensuring that the program prepares students to work in nutrition related fields, such as public health, clinical nutrition, food industry, research etc.

- World Health organization (WHO): offering recommendations and guidelines for nutrition-related education and practices on a global scale. These guidelines focus on encouraging healthy eating, recognizing the importance of nutrition in preventing diseases, and tackling problems such as obesity, malnutrition, and deficiencies in micronutrients.
- European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians: promoting standards that foster the development of practical skills in community nutrition, clinical dietetics, and food safety systems, emphasizing evidence-based approaches.
- Société Française de Nutrition (SFN) in which the chairperson of the department is a member. The French society of nutrition objective is to promote nutrition in all its fields, contribute to training and information and to the advancement of knowledge in nutrition, particularly by financially supporting research.
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics which is the American association of dietitians that sets the standards and guidelines of the profession.
- International Union of Nutritional Sciences (IUNS) ensuring the curriculum addresses global nutrition issues, food systems, and sustainable practices.
- ISO (International Standard Organization) and HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points): including ISO and HACCP guidelines in the curriculum (especially in the courses principles of food science and food service management).

The international dimension of the program

According to the self-evaluation report, the directors of the Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.) program have started negotiations with different international universities and study programs to establish affiliations. The main ongoing discussions are with Ecole d'Ingénieurs du Littoral Cote d'Opale in France to create an affiliation that allows the students to pursue a degree in food engineering. This collaboration will allow the students who are

interested in pursuing their studies abroad or getting an engineering degree to do so with the support of the university. The discussions between AUST and Ecole d'Ingénieurs du Littoral Cote d'Opale are still ongoing and will be finalized soon according to the self-evaluation report, so that the selection of the eligible students can start.

On another note, the Nutrition and Food science department organizes a training every year for the students including HACCP level 3, ISO and internal audit, with a certification issued at the end of this training.

Qualification of academic staff

The academic staff in charge of the courses in the Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.) program mainly consists of PhD holders and few instructors holding a Master's degree. The CVs of the academic staff were shared with the reviewers of the study program accreditation. Among the teaching staff, the following academic disciplines are represented: PhD in Nutritional Sciences, PhD in Biochemistry, PhD in Physiology, PhD in chemistry, PhD in Biology, and M.Sc. in Food Science and Technology.

Assessment

Please refer to the cross-program evaluation provided under the Bachelor's degree program in Nursing above.

Recommendation

R1 AUST should consider the development and the set-up of a Master's and possibly also a PhD program building up on the reviewed Bachelor's program. Besides, AUST should consider offering additional qualification options for graduates (e. g. microdegrees, microcredentials).

2. Curriculum

The second criterion pertains to the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning methods applied within the program. The reviewers assess whether the curriculum is coherently structured to support the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and whether it imparts the requisite subject-specific knowledge and methodological competence relevant to the discipline(s) concerned.

Furthermore, the reviewers evaluate the organization of the learning process, with particular attention to the implementation of student-centered teaching and learning approaches that foster active learner engagement. They also consider the extent to which the program accommodates student diversity and responds to the varied needs of the learner population.

Current Status

Cross-disciplinary aspects: applicable to all degree programs

The academic calendar of AUST is based on two semesters per year each of a 15-week duration. Students accumulate a minimum of 105 credit hours in order to qualify for a Bachelor's degree starting the Sophomore class. Because the General Secondary Certificate is the result of 13 years of education, students who join AUST after successfully completing the 13 years may be given up to 30 credit hours of first year (Freshman) courses depending on their performance in the placement exams. In total a student needs 135 credit hours to receive a Bachelor's degree which is equated to the License degree awarded by the Lebanese University.

The Lebanese Law stipulates that students joining universities must have passed successfully the General Secondary Certificate exams or equivalent.

One credit hour is defined as 15 hours of face to face interaction between the student and the faculty member. Most courses are designated as 3-credit-hour courses, which means that students and instructors meet for a total of 45 hours per semester. A normal full-time load is 15 credit hours per semester (5 courses). Graduating students and students with a gpa ≥ 3.00 may be allowed to register for up to 21 credit hours. Grades given at the end of a semester are letter grades (A, B, C, D, F, W, AW). A grade of A carries 4 points, B carries 3 points, C carries 2 points, D carries 1 point and F carries 0 points. A student is considered in good standing if his/her grade point average (gpa) is $\geq 2.00/4.00$.

Since the evaluation of performance is based on class participation, attendance of class sessions is obligatory and only a few absences per course are allowed. Academic rules and procedures are set out in the Student Handbook 2023-2025

Since knowledge and understanding of rules and procedures are essential for success in academic life, AUST has established an academic course (HMS 201) in which students are advised as to the academic rules and regulations, the proper ways of taking notes, drafting a curriculum vita, preparing for an interview and having full knowledge of how to calculate the Grade Point Average etc. This course also introduces the Mission Statement to the students who are tested on its content.

In 2021, the HMS 201 course was reengineered and its scope of action was enlarged. The new course is now entitled "Work Ready Now" (HMS 300) and goes beyond HMS 201 in preparing the student in what is useful and necessary in preparation for a job search. HMS 300 is the result of an educational outreach program funded by USAID and it is now taught in several private universities in Lebanon.

Each course syllabus includes detailed course objectives, learning outcomes, assessment methods, and recommended readings.

AUST ensures affiliations with key centers in Lebanon, including the University of Beirut and major hospitals, providing students with access to the latest technology across all programs. AUST maintains partnerships with the most important clinical centers and hospitals, though for forensic science, affiliations are primarily with national institutions. These collaborations enable

students to complete extensive internships and practical training relevant to their majors at various centers, hospitals, or institutions. Many part-time faculty members are also practicing professionals at these affiliated hospitals, which further strengthens the connection between academic teaching and clinical practice. For the CLS program, appropriate laboratories are provided on campus. See also Chapter “Resources” for further details.

Nursing (B.Sc.)

Current status

Please refer also to the cross-disciplinary aspects outlined above: applicable to all degree programs.

The curriculum of the Nursing (B.Sc.) program is a content-based curriculum. However, the short-term plan is to modify it to become competency-based. The teaching and learning methods follow the student-centered approach with the focus being on prioritizing the learner's needs and interests, shifting the focus from teacher-led instruction to active student participation. This often involves project-based learning, collaborative activities, and personalized learning experiences. This approach aims to enhance students' engagement, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills by empowering them to take ownership of their learning.

Program in Relation to the Intended Learning Outcomes

AUST outlines that in order to ensure coverage of all learning outcomes by the curriculum, mapping allows identifying which courses address each of the learning outcomes.

Program structure

In total, the program requires the students to obtain 114 credits (College Requirements: 9 credits, Free Liberal Arts Electives: 9 credits, General Science Requirements: 28 credits and Major Requirements: 68 credits)

AUST explains in the self-evaluation report that the American credit system specifies the following: One theory credit (1 credit) is equivalent to 15 contact hours. One laboratory credit is equivalent to 30 contact hours. One practicum credit is equivalent to 45 contact hours.

The Nursing (B.Sc.) program can be covered in at least three years (11 months each year). The academic year is divided into two semesters (Fall & Spring) and a summer period. The practicum training starts in summer of the first year with NUR 250P (Service Training I).

The **first semester** in the first year of studies includes five courses with 3 credits for each one: Composition & Rhetoric I, Introduction to Chemistry, Introduction to Biology, Introduction to Nursing Profession, and Nursing Informatics. The **second semester** comprises six courses, five of them with three credits (Composition & Rhetoric II, Introduction to Physiology, Fundamentals

of Nursing, Introduction to Human Anatomy, and Introduction to Microbiology) and one with one credit (Ethical & Legal Issues). During the **summer period of the first year**, the students are supposed to take a three-credit course on Health Assessment and a three-credit elective. Besides, two credits are to be obtained for Service Training I.

The second year starts with the **third semester** that includes seven courses in total: Pathophysiology, Intro to Pharm & Therapeutic Modalities, Nursing Care of the Adult I, Nursing Care of the Childbearing Family & Gynecology, and English Communication Skills (three credits for each) and Practicum in Nursing Care of the Adult I as well as Practicum in Nursing Care of the Childbearing Family & Gynecology (two credits for each). The **fourth semester** consists of four courses with three credits (Human Growth and Development, Biostatistics & Epidemiology, Nursing Care of the Adult II, and Nursing Care of the Child), two courses with two credits (Practicum in Nursing Care of the Adult II, Practicum in Nursing Care of the Child) and a one-credit course on First Aid & Basic Life Support. The **summer period in the second year** is covered with the following modules: Nursing Care of the Elderly (one credit), Practicum in Nursing Care of the Elderly (one credit), Service Training II (two credits), and an elective course (three credits).

The third year starts with the **fifth semester** and six modules: Mental Health and Psychiatric Nursing, Critical Care Nursing, Health Sciences Research, and an elective course (three credits each), and the Practicum in Mental Health & Psychiatric Nursing as well as the Practicum in Critical Care Nursing (two credits each). The study program is designed to end with the **sixth semester** and five final modules: Nursing Care of the Community and Leadership & Health Resource Management (three credits for each of the two courses), the Practicum in Nursing Care of the Community and the Practicum in Leadership & Health Resource Management (two credits each), and an internship (six credits).

Knowledge and Methodological Expertise

According to AUST's self-description, the Nursing (B.Sc.) program develops the students' nursing expertise through the application and refinement of both theoretical and practical knowledge, significantly impacting clinical judgment and patient care quality. Health education competence, including nurses' knowledge, skills, and attitudes, is crucial. Training and organizational backing are key factors in improving these competencies. Research also explores the philosophical and methodological underpinnings of knowledge development in nursing.

The Nursing program cultivates its students' nursing expertise through a combination of education, clinical experience, reflective practice, and ongoing professional development. The key methods include:

- Theoretical Learning: Building a strong foundation in nursing sciences, pathophysiology, pharmacology, and ethics.

- **Clinical Experience:** Gaining hands-on practice in diverse healthcare settings to develop skills and clinical judgment.
- **Mentorship and Supervision:** Learning from experienced nurses who guide problem-solving and decision-making.
- **Reflective Practice:** Regularly analyzing clinical experiences to improve understanding and adapt approaches.
- **Continuing Education:** Participating in workshops, seminars, and advanced degrees to stay current with evolving practices.
- **Evidence-based Practice:** Applying the latest research to clinical decisions to enhance care quality.
- **Critical Thinking and Problem-solving:** Developing analytical skills through case studies, simulations, and scenario-based training.

Together, these elements foster the development of expert nurses capable of providing high-quality, evidence-informed care.

Students' Learning Experience

AUST explains in the self-evaluation report that, in line with the mission of the university, and because “it 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”, the student body of the Nursing Department is diversified. Students with different nationalities come to study at AUST: Palestinians, Syrians, Iraqi, and British in addition to Lebanese.

According to AUST, understanding the students' needs is crucial for attracting and retaining students, with a focus on what they expect from their higher-education trajectories. AUST states that it is aware that students require universities to be student-centric, offering quality teachers, and a positive learning experience and that they seek academic success courses, experiential learning opportunities, and practical application through practicums, and laboratory classes. AUST points out however, that due to the socio-economic crises in Lebanon, most if not the majority of the Nursing (B.Sc.) students need to work in order to pay their tuition fees and running expenses. Accordingly, these are their most perceived needs.

AUST states in that regard, that student work has many benefits that include gaining professional experience, and developing transferable skills. Working provides networking opportunities and teaches valuable life lessons about independence and responsibility. However, finding flexible employment that accommodates a student's schedule can be challenging due to limited shift availability and employer flexibility. The university understands the challenges that the students face. Therefore, extra effort is exerted to provide them with support.

Student-Centered Teaching and Learning Methods

Student-centered teaching and learning methods encompass various approaches that prioritize student engagement and active participation in the learning process. The methods that AUST uses include jigsaw activities, inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, and flipped classrooms. These approaches encourage students to take ownership of their learning, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

As to practicum courses, mentors and preceptors are always present for student support. The plan is to establish academic service committees. These committees aim at enhancing and nurturing collaboration between the Department of Nursing at AUST and the nursing department in each clinical site. This collaboration is expected to foster academic standards of nursing education and quality of nursing care.

The Students' Role in the Learning Process

AUST emphasizes that student-centered learning requires the students' participation in the entire education process. The students get actively involved by presenting case studies, organizing community-based projects, client teaching and counseling, and evaluating their clinical or practicum training in addition of evaluating the clinical sites.

The student clinical evaluation considers specific key elements that are applied in every course. To pass the course, the student must show satisfactory practice in all marked key elements by the end of the semester. This evaluation is completed and signed by the student and the preceptor.

The evaluation is formative and summative.

1. The formative evaluation is continuous throughout the clinical training. It is documented by a midterm evaluation graded as 'Satisfactory', 'Needs improvement' or 'Unsatisfactory'. The evaluation is discussed with the student stressing on the areas for improvement.
2. The summative evaluation takes place at the end of the clinical course; it is graded as Pass (P) or Fail (F). It represents the final clinical evaluation of the student.

Assessment

The reviewers assess that the curriculum of the study program is coherently structured and effectively supports the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. It imparts the requisite subject-specific knowledge and methodological competences relevant to the disciplines covered.

The organization of the learning process demonstrates a clear commitment to student-centered teaching and learning approaches, fostering active learner engagement. According to the reviewers, the program appropriately accommodates student diversity and addresses the varied needs of the learner population. The structure of the program presents a logical sequence

from introductory courses, through elective options, to the final examination phase.

In order to give the students opportunities for individual professional or academic profiling, the reviewers recommend that specializations should be offered towards the end of the Bachelor's curriculum, for instance in the last year of study. These specializations should also be compatible in terms of content, either in Master's programs at partner universities or at other universities in Lebanon or in a possible future Master's program at AUST itself (see the corresponding recommendation in the assessment section of the chapter on the program profile). Even though the students already have several electives to choose from, the option of specialisations is likely to further strengthen their individual education path and emphasise the individual training profile even more strongly to the outside world – for example on the labour market. For this reason, the reviewers recommend that the university should establish specialisations, while at the same time taking into account the availability of opportunities for the students to follow their chosen specialisation further in subsequent study programs.

The reviewers confirm that the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is applied appropriately, with a clear and transparent distribution of credits. Student feedback indicates confidence and enthusiasm for the program, highlighting the practical skills that the curriculum emphasizes. Since communication is an essential aspect in nursing and medical care professions, the reviewers consider it useful to further strengthen the students' communication skills in the curriculum in order to make it easier for them when interacting with patients for the first time. This suggestion was welcomed by the students and alumni during the site visit and was considered useful for future student cohorts.

Overall, the panel regards the curriculum as coherent, well-structured, and aligned with the intended learning outcomes, providing a strong foundation for academic and professional development.

Recommendations

R3 AUST should put additional emphasis on the communication skills in the training of the students in the program.

R4 For the students to sharpen their individual academic profiles, AUST should consider offering specializations in the final-year of the curriculum that can be followed up in a Master's program, either in a Master's program to be developed at AUST or an established Master's program at partner universities and other higher-education institutions.

Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.):

Current status

Please refer also to the cross-program aspects outlined above: applicable to all degree programs.

Program Structure and Relation to the Intended Learning Outcomes

The duration of the Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.) program at AUST takes between three and four years, depending on the individual pace of the students and the required prerequisites. The main topics in the program include human nutrition, food science, public-health nutrition, therapeutic nutrition, food safety, and food analysis. According to the self-evaluation report, graduates will have developed both knowledge and practical skills and being prepared to be skilled professionals in the field. The core courses focus on nutrition and food science basic topics, while elective courses enable students to explore additional areas of interest.

The learning methods are varied and include interactive techniques like discussions, debates, prob-based learning, flipped classroom techniques etc. The learning outcomes and teaching methods are mentioned for each course and each session in the corresponding syllabus.

AUST points out that the methods used to assess the students' progress and their achievement of learning outcomes are structured and fairly divided to represent in the best ways possible the efforts showed by the student. These include:

- Examinations and quizzes to test theoretical knowledge
- Practical assessments involving lab-based evaluations or clinical practices
- Assignments, reports and presentations based on research, case studies or projects to demonstrate analytical and communication skills
- Internship evaluation to assess the practical experience through supervisor feedback and performance evaluation during internship

The program consists of 105 credits in total that are divided as follows: 18 credits of college requirements, 6 credits of free elective courses, 28 credits of general sciences, 47 credits of major requirements, and 6 credits of technical electives.

In the first year, the credits of the **first semester** are spread across six courses: Cells & Molecules, Chemical Principles & Analysis, Computer Literacy, Composition & Rhetoric I (three credits each), and Cells & Molecules Laboratory as well as Chemical Analysis Laboratory (one credit each). The **second semester** comprises seven courses: Composition & Rhetoric II, Introduction To Physiology, Organic Chemistry I, Human Nutrition I, Principles of Food Science with three credits for each one and the two one-credit courses Introduction To Physiology Laboratory and Organic Chemistry I Lab. The

summer period during the first year is supposed to be spent with two three-credit courses, one on Western Civilization and one elective course.

The second year of studies starts with the **third semester** and six three-credit courses: Human Nutrition II, Introduction To Microbiology, Introduction To Biochemistry, Nutrition Status Assessment, Food Processing, and Nutrition in the Life Cycle. In the **fourth semester** the students take eight modules according to the study plan proposed by AUST: General Pathology, Biostatistics & Epidemiology, Food Chemistry, Food Microbiology, and Community Nutrition (three credits for each one) as well as three one-credit courses: Food Microbiology Laboratory, Menu Planning, and Food Chemistry Laboratory. The **summer period of the second year** is filled with the three-credit module *Work Ready Now* and with a three-credit elective.

The third and final year starts with the **fifth semester** and eight modules: English Communication Skills, Therapeutic Nutrition I, Food Analysis, and Therapeutic Nutrition II (three credits for each one) and Process of Research, Therapeutic Nutrition I Laboratory, Food Analysis Laboratory, and Therapeutic Nutrition II Laboratory (one credit for each one). The **sixth semester** comprises a course on Food Service Management, a technical elective on cooking techniques, and an internship in Food Science (three credits for each one) and a course on special topics in Nutrition (one credit).

Knowledge and Methodological Expertise

AUST explains that Nutrition and Food Science is a multidisciplinary field where students will develop comprehensive knowledge along with methodological techniques throughout all the disciplines taught during the program. The disciplines studied extensively are: Nutritional sciences, human nutrition, food science, food safety, food service, food microbiology, community nutrition and therapeutic nutrition. The application of this acquired knowledge will prepare the students for different positions in the health care sector or food and beverage industry, where they will be able to promote health through evidence-based science. With the following table, AUST outlines the knowledge and methodological expertise for Nutrition and Food Science courses.

	Knowledge	Methodological expertise
Nutritional Science	Nutrients: Structure, function and metabolism of macro and micronutrients (NFS 201 Human Nutrition I, NFS 301 Human Nutrition II)	Dietary assessment tools: Food Frequency Questionnaires, 24-hour dietary recall, food records etc... (NFS 290 Nutritional Status Assessment)
	Biochemical processes of digestion, absorption, and utilization of	Design and implementation of research projects related to nutrition and

	nutrients in the energy production. (BIO 420 General Pathology)	health outcomes (cross-sectional, cohort studies, case reports, intervention studies....). (CLS 470)
	Human physiology: The impact of nutrition on body and health (BIO 213, BIO 420, NFS 201, NFS 301)	Anthropometric analysis: using different body composition analysis techniques. (NFS 290)
	Nutritional assessment: Evaluation of dietary intake, nutrient status, and body composition using different methods. (NFS 290)	Biostatistics and epidemiology: statistical analysis tools to assess nutrition-related information, and interpret the relationship between diet and disease. (BIO 320)
	Dietary guidelines and public health nutrition: Recommendations for disease prevention, and nutritional interventions. (NFS 260)	
Food science	Food chemistry: chemical properties of food, and the effect of treatments like processing, storages and cooking on the food matrix. (NFS 230)	Food analysis: laboratory techniques for determining the composition of food (s chromatography, spectrophotometry). (NFS 330)
	Food processing: methods used in food processing and their effect on quality and safety. (NFS220)	Food microbiology: testing of food pathogens in the microbiology lab (NFS 310)
	Food safety and hygiene: principles of food safety, foodborne illnesses, food handling procedures, regulations and quality assurance programs. (NFS 210, NFS 410)	Sensory evaluation: taste tests.... (NFS 230)

	Food additives and contaminants: Their use and health effect (colorants, preservatives, flavor enhancers, pesticides, heavy metals, mycotoxins...) (NFS 230, NFS 210)	
	Sensory evaluation: Organoleptic evaluation of food characteristics.	
Public health and community nutrition	Nutrition for the prevention and management of diseases. (NFS 260)	Community nutrition: assessment methods like surveys to evaluate the nutritional status of a population.
	Community nutrition: Global nutrition-related issues including under- and overnutrition and food security. nutrition projects	Epidemiology: All the designs of studies to assess the relationship between diet and health at a population level (cross-sectional , cohorts...)
	Nutrition through the lifecycle: nutritional needs of special population groups (children, pregnant women, breastfeeding women, elderly...)	Community interventions: design, implement, and evaluate community nutrition programs
		Nutrition counselling and behaviour change: counselling techniques to promote healthy eating patterns and behavioural change on an individual and population level.
Clinical Nutrition	Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT): Dietary interventions to treat and manage medical conditions like diabetes, hypertension, chronic kidney disease, heart	Clinical assessments of patients

	failure, cancer, gastrointestinal disorders, inborn errors of metabolism(NFS 360, NFS 460)	
	Nutritional support: Enteral and parenteral nutrition indication, formulation and monitoring. (NFS 360, NFS 460)	Nutrition Care Process: Assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation and evaluation of the patients.
	Assessment and monitoring of the patient's nutritional status using clinical, biochemical and anthropometric data (NFS 360, NFS 460)	Patient counselling: provide dietary and lifestyle advices to patients.
		Biochemical/laboratory monitoring: Knowledge of laboratory biomarkers to monitor clinical parameters such as blood lipid profile, anemia, renal function etc.

Source: Self-evaluation report, p. 30-32

Students' Learning Experience

The teaching in the Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.) program includes both theoretical concepts along with practical applications to equip the students with the right skills for careers in the field of nutrition and food science. During their studies, students are exposed to a large variety of learning settings that promote critical thinking, practical skills, and professional growth. AUST's approach in teaching aims at equipping the students with a solid knowledge in all the essential scientific subjects such as physiology or biochemistry, allowing them to build a solid understanding of the scientific foundations of nutrition and food systems.

The curriculum explores different teaching techniques to communicate the knowledge effectively with the students. Among the methods used there are: lectures, interactive seminars, group discussions, and case studies, allowing students to link theoretical ideas to practical applications. In addition, experimental lab courses and field visits enable students to explore the practical side of their major. Finally, problem-based assignments promote critical

thinking among the students putting them in real-life situations where they will have to deploy the knowledge they gained.

Beyond traditional classroom learning, students gain hands-on experience through laboratory classes and internships. Additionally, students are required to develop and execute nutrition interventions to tackle public health issues related to nutrition, providing them with valuable skills in program development, assessment, and communication. This diverse approach to learning cultivates an inclusive educational setting that brings students from different academic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds all together with the ultimate goal of success.

Furthermore, another priority in the curriculum according to AUST is the development of research skills. The students are encouraged to participate in research projects within the faculty, allowing them to develop critical thinking, making evidence-based decisions, and contributing to the progression of their discipline. The faculty members will guide the students throughout their studies to cultivate a fruitful educative atmosphere and environment through discussions, counselling, and constructive feed-back regarding their academic performances and career path.

Finally, the program emphasizes on inclusive and differentiated learning, in which teachers modify their methods according to each student's unique needs. This point is particularly crucial at AUST since the students come from various backgrounds with different learning styles and language skills. Additional office hours (mentioned in every syllabus), academic advising, tutoring or language assistance are offered by the faculty to guarantee that every student can engage fully in the curriculum. The program also integrates online learning platforms and assistive technologies, offering to students the easiest ways to interact with peers, access course materials, and participate in every module in a flexible and accessible way.

AUST points out that every instructor in the department is considered a mentor for the students, available to help and guide the students through their academic paths. The chairperson is available and ready to receive students in her office and provide assistance in any issue related to the program or any difficulty encountered. In addition, through the regular evaluation the students assess each instructor to receive their feedback in a detailed and transparent way and take actions accordingly. This is a constant dialogue between students and faculty, making learning collaborative. In addition, the students maintain a role in curriculum development and quality assurance processes, with their perspectives taken into account for continuous improvement. Thus, through this inclusive and participative model, the students are empowered to become autonomous learners and holistic professionals.

During their studies, the students can explore different career paths and professional settings through internships, research opportunities, community projects. These experiences in different fields like clinical nutrition, public health, food science, and the food industry will enrich the students and make

them gain cultural competency, communication skills, and professional competencies.

AUST emphasizes that the overall learning experience of the Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Food Science is intended to be thorough, integrative, and hands-on, ensuring that graduates have the competencies, knowledge, skills and competencies needed to excel in a variety of nutrition-related careers.

Assessment

Please refer to the cross-program evaluation provided under the Bachelor's degree program in Nursing above.

Recommendations

R3 AUST should put additional emphasis on the communication skills in the training of the students in the program.

R4 For the students to sharpen their individual academic profiles, AUST should consider offering specializations in the final-year of the curriculum that can be followed up in a Master's program, either in a Master's program to be developed at AUST or an established Master's program at partner universities and other higher-education institutions.

3. Student assessment

The third criterion relates to the organization of student assessment. The assessors review how the assessment of intended learning outcomes is structured and whether the number, type, and scope of assessments are appropriate in relation to the program objectives. In addition, the reviewers evaluate whether the requirements for the final thesis are aligned with the qualification level of the degree. The transparency and consistent application of assessment criteria are also examined. Further aspects under review include the qualifications of teaching staff responsible for conducting assessments, as well as the examination regulations—particularly with regard to the clarity and fairness of rules concerning student absence, illness, and other mitigating circumstances.

Current Status

Cross-disciplinary aspects: applicable to both degree programs

Organization of learning outcomes

In the FHS, each program has its own clear and defined learning outcomes that, according to the self-evaluation report, align with its objectives, the mission of the university, and the qualifications set by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

Prior to the start of the semester, each program chairperson or coordinator conducts a meeting with its respective faculty members. This meeting

focuses on reviewing the nature, objectives, and learning outcomes of each course, ensuring alignment between the syllabus and the course content. The meeting also focuses on discussing the assessment methods to be applied throughout that specific semester. In addition to the standard three exams per course, assessment methods may include quizzes, term papers, oral presentations, and/or projects.

The Registrar's Office is responsible for setting the examination schedule for all four faculties at the AUST. The scheduling process takes into account all courses registered by each student to ensure that no student has more than two exams on the same day. This standardized protocol is applied consistently across all three examination periods: Exam 1, Exam 2, and the final Exam.

Two weeks before the exams, the chairperson or coordinator collects all exam papers from the instructors. Exams are reviewed to ensure alignment with the course content and appropriateness for the students' academic level. After the exams are administered and graded, the committee reconvenes to review the results. This post-exam review includes verifying student grades and evaluating the fairness and consistency of the grading process.

To ensure the clarity, rigor, and measurability of learning outcomes, instructors will incorporate the three domains of Bloom's taxonomy: The cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains with their respective levels. The six cognitive levels of the Bloom's taxonomy – Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating courses. Whereas the levels of the affective domains are: Receiving, Responding, Valuing, Organizing, Characterization, the psychomotor domain focuses on student's ability to physically accomplish tasks and to communicate non-verbally. As a result, assessments will be designed to align with this taxonomy and to be course sensitive. At the cognitive level exams are structured as follows:

- Part 1: (lower-order thinking, covering Remembering and Understanding): This section may be assessed using multiple-choice and short-answer questions.
- Part 2: (higher-order thinking, covering Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating): This section may include assessments such as case studies and problem-solving exercises.

Student theory course assessment, in all programs, follows the 4 scale Grade Point Average (GPA) system, using the letter grading system. Each letter is associated with a certain number of points from which the GPA is calculated. The table below explains the meaning of the letter grade.

Letter Grade	Numerical Grade	Equivalent Assessment	Points
A	90-100	Excellent	4.00
B	80-89	Good	3.00
C	70-79	Satisfactory	2.00
D	60-69	Passing	1.00
F	Below 60	Fail	0.00

The following grades or connotations are not counted in the GPA

I - Incomplete: It is given when a major part of the course has not been completed

P- Pass: It is a credit granted for remedial courses.

R- Repeat: It appears next to repeated courses.

T- Transfer: It appears next to transferred courses.

W- Withdrawal: It is given when withdrawal takes place by the student within the withdrawal period deadline

AW- Academic Withdrawal: It is given by the instructor for excess absenteeism.

AU- Audit: This appears next to an audited course.

IP - In Progress: It appears next to currently registered courses.

The GPA is the sum total of all points accumulated, divided by the total number of credits for which the points were earned.

$$\text{Cumulative GPA} = \frac{\text{Sum of points for all courses taken}}{\text{Total number of credit hours for the above courses}}$$

When a student repeats a course, the higher grade obtained will be used in computing the grade point average.

At the FHS learning outcomes are assessed at both the course and program levels to ensure academic rigor and continuous improvement, and the program curriculum is mapped out in a matrix which displays the program learning outcomes and the courses which satisfy these learning outcomes.

Course assessment

During the first week of the semester, instructors provide students with the syllabus for the course, laboratory course, or practicum and the student evaluation form. The syllabus serves as a contract between the university and the student in which the description, objectives, learning outcomes, deadlines, examination type and schedule, and grade distribution of the course are stated clearly. Usually, the syllabus and evaluation form are discussed in the classroom during the first session.

Theoretical course grade distribution

The grade distribution of all 3 credit courses at the FHS is shown below:

Attendance & Participation	5%
Drop Quizzes	15%
Assignments	15%
Cumulative Exam Grade (Exam 1 and Exam 2)	30%
Final Comprehensive Exam	35%

The Cumulative Exam (CE) grade is calculated using the results of exams 1 and 2. The highest grade between exams 1 and 2 will account for 70% of the CE grade, and the lowest will account for 30%.

Laboratory course grade distribution

Most of the 1 credit labs at the FHS follow the below grade distribution:

Attendance & Participation	5%
Reports	20%
Drop Quizzes	10%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	30%
Practical Exam	10%

Practicum grade distribution

The grade distribution for practicum courses varies among the different majors of the FHS.

The practicum syllabus for senior-level practicums in Clinical Laboratory Sciences, Optics and Optometry, Radiologic Sciences, and Forensic Sciences, and the student evaluation forms are provided as an attachment.

Attendance & participation

Students registered at AUST are expected to attend all classes and laboratory sessions. Any student who absents herself/himself from any class or laboratory session will be held responsible for the work done, and for all announcements made in the class or in the laboratory session. Individual instructors must keep attendance records for all classes and laboratory sessions and must report absences to the administration on a weekly basis. Make-up work is only allowed in case of major illness or emergency, and after the approval of the Office of the Dean of Students and Admissions. Students cannot miss more than the equivalent of 3 weeks of instruction in a course and still receive credit for the course. However, instructors have the right to impose specific attendance regulations in their classes provided that the number of absences allowed does not exceed nine class sessions. AUST has the right to contact the student's parents or guardians for issues related to unexcused absenteeism.

In addition to attendance, students must actively participate in class. Class may include responses to pop-up questions, preparation for lectures, engagement in class discussions, and involvement in debates – all of which are strongly encouraged.

Drop quizzes

Instructors are required to administer around 8 quizzes throughout the semester. In line with the assessment policy, the lowest quiz grade is dropped from the final average. Quiz formats typically mirror the variety of question types used in exams, helping students become familiar with exam-style assessments.

Assignments

In addition to research skills, the FHS is committed to developing students' communication abilities, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the practical application of theoretical knowledge to real-life and real-world

scenarios. The faculty also prioritizes fostering teamwork, collaboration, and nurturing creativity and innovation.

These essential skills are cultivated through a wide range of assignments integrated into FHS courses. This systematic approach is intended to ensure that students are not only meeting course-specific objectives but are also progressively acquiring the broader graduate attributes.

Program assessment

The below table represents the passing grade for all FHS majors:

College Requirements	The minimum passing grade for the college requirements is “D” except for the ENG 201 and ENG 202 courses (minimum passing grade is “C”).
Free Electives	The minimum passing grade for the free electives is “D”.
General Sciences	The minimum passing grade for the general sciences is “C”
Major Requirements	The minimum passing grade for the major requirements is “C”
Technical Electives	The minimum passing grade for the technical electives is “C”

Exam procedure

Proctoring regulations

During exams period, the registrar’s office finalizes all exams schedule and proctoring schedule. Part-time instructors are required to proctor exams per the below:

Every 3-credit course	2 exams to be proctored	3 hours in total	Condition for exams 1 and 2
Every 3-credit course	1 exam to be proctored	2 hours in total	Condition for final exam
Laboratory courses	The laboratory course instructor is responsible for proctoring his/her midterm, final and practical exams.		

Accordingly, AUST team, staff, part-time instructors, and full-time instructors, are responsible for the success of each exam period. This integrity in proctoring schedule is maintained by regular staff trainings and workshops. In addition, meetings for the staff and the full-timers are held prior to each exam period in order to clarify any conflicting points.

Make up exams

Approval of student petitions for a make-up exam requires a three-step process. First, the petition is reviewed by the dean of students who forwards it to the relevant chairperson or coordinator for recommendation. Following their review, the petition is then forwarded to the dean of the FHS who provides the final decision on the matter.

In accordance with the university’s rules and regulations, make-up exams are permitted only under the following conditions:

- Admission to Hospital (Emergency)
- Death of a parent or a close relative
- Accident on the way to the University
- Court appearance
- Emergency travel

Academic regulations

Probation regulations

New students admitted to the university will not be placed on academic probation irrespective of the grades they obtain during their first semester of study at AUST. Probation regulations will be applied when a student has completed a minimum of 12 credit hours, excluding the Remedial and Intensive courses.

- A student will be placed on probation if his/her cumulative average (while carrying a minimum of 12 credit hours) falls below 2.00.
- The student can remove the first probation in the following semester if he/she receives a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.00.
- A student is placed on second probation if he/she fails to remove the first probation in the following semester; i.e., earns a cumulative GPA below 2.00.
- The student can remove the second probation in the following semester if he/she receives a minimum cumulative average of 2.00.

Probation regulations will not be applied while students are registered during summer sessions. Probation may also be given for disciplinary reasons upon the recommendation of the Disciplinary Council and the approval of the Executive Council.

Academic suspension

A student is suspended from the university for the following reasons:

- Failure to remove a probation in two consecutive semesters
- Obtain a cumulative average, for his/her second semester on probation, below the cumulative average obtained at the end of the previous semester
- Found in serious breach of AUST's regulations as per the decision of the Executive Council (Breaching of university regulations, cheating on exams and quizzes, plagiarism...)
- Failure to complete a minimum of 12 credit-hours successfully during the first academic year (Excluding all preparatory courses) of his/her tenure at AUST.

Students on probation are not subject to suspension at the end of any semester in which they achieve a GPA of 2.00 or more, even if the cumulative GPA is still below 2.00.

A student will not be suspended in the event that he/she earns a cumulative GPA which is below 2.00 during the 2nd probation period, provided that a considerable improvement in the cumulative average has been achieved.

Suspension may also be given for disciplinary reasons upon the recommendation of the Disciplinary Council and the approval of the Executive Council.

Graduation

After completing all the requirements for graduation, students are then placed on the prospective graduate list. The department checks all the names and confirms the list to the registrar's office.

Graduating students can be placed in either of the below 4 categories:

- Graduation requires completion of all requirements with a cumulative GPA ranging between 2.00 and 2.99.
- Graduation with honors requires completion of all requirements with a cumulative GPA ranging between 3.00 and 3.49.
- Graduation with distinction requires completion of all requirements with a cumulative GPA ranging between 3.50 and 3.79, in addition to a recommendation by the concerned department.
- Graduation with high distinction requires completion of all requirements with a cumulative GPA ranging between 3.80 and 4.00, in addition to a recommendation by the concerned department.

The overall examination procedures and regulations are set in the program handbooks. Comprehensive information on examinations, requirements, recognition, repetition of examinations, and the grading system is outlined in the student handbook, which is made available to all students from the outset of their studies. The Students' Handbook is also available on the AUST website⁸.

Nursing (B.Sc.)

Current Status

Please refer also to the cross-program aspects outlined above: applicable to all degree programs.

For the Nursing program, students have to complete 114 credits to graduate. The final assessment for the students in the NUR program is based on the following:

- Internal colloquium exam: The preparatory exam for NUR students which mimics the National colloquium assessment examination.
- Practicum internship assessment: Students need to cover 270 hours of training in a hospital setting. The preceptor will finalize an evaluation

⁸ www.aust.edu.lb

form related to each student. Students will then finalize a report and a final presentation.

Assessment

The assessments are organized in a transparent and well-structured manner, responsibilities are clearly defined, and students are adequately informed about the assessment methods through the syllabi and at the beginning of each semester. The academic freedom of lecturers in designing assessments and their individual components is maintained.

The reviewers further note that the number, type, and scope of examinations are appropriate in relation to the intended learning outcomes. The requirements for the final examinations of the Bachelor's degree are clearly outlined in the students' handbook and relevant regulations, and adequately reflect the qualification level of the degree. Assessment criteria are applied transparently and consistently, with reliability further ensured by using the American grading scheme.

The reviewers also confirm that the teaching staff are suitably qualified to conduct assessments, as evidenced by the CVs and discussions during the site visit. Formal rules governing the examination procedure are in place, including clear and equitable provisions for student absences, illness, and other mitigating circumstances. According to the reviewers, these measures ensure that assessment procedures are conducted fairly, reliably, and transparently.

The reviewers consider that all the requirements of the third criterion regarding student assessment are fully met.

Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.)

Current Status

Please refer also to the cross-program aspects outlined above: applicable to all degree programs.

For the Nutrition and Food Science program, students have to complete 106 credits to graduate. The final assessment for the students in the NFS program is based on the following:

- Internal colloquium exam: The preparatory exam for Nursing and Food Science students which mimics the National colloquium assessment examination.
- Food Safety and Quality Control: Students need to cover 2 weeks of training in large Lebanese food retail companies such as Gray Mac Kenzie, with the quality control and food safety department and catering department. Following the end of this training, the quality control manager completes an evaluation form for each student.

- Food Production and Quality Control: Students need to cover 1 month of training in LBACC, the only company providing meals for the Middle East Airlines in Lebanon. Following the end of this training, the quality control manager completes an evaluation form for each student.
- Final report: Students have to write a report summarizing the major cases, procedures and technicalities learned during the practicum.
- Final presentation: Students have to present an oral presentation summarizing their work in the internships, and the final report.

Assessment

Please refer to the cross-program evaluation provided under the Bachelor's degree program in Nursing above.

4. Organization of the study program

This criterion addresses the implementation of the study program. The reviewers evaluate the appropriateness of the admission requirements as well as the regulations for the recognition of qualifications, particularly in accordance with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. They examine whether the structure and organization of the program enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

In addition, the reviewers assess to what extent the university administration and teaching staff take into account the diversity of the student body and respond to students' individual needs. The allocation of roles and responsibilities in the management of the program is reviewed, along with whether the workload is appropriate in relation to the intended learning outcomes and the standard period of study. Furthermore, the reviewers consider the organization of the student life cycle - from enrolment through to graduation - including both administrative processes and the quality of interaction between students and the institution. Student support services, such as academic advising and counselling, as well as cooperation with internal and external stakeholders (where applicable), are also part of this assessment.

Current Status

Cross-disciplinary aspects: applicable to all degree programs

According to the SER, AUST fosters a safe and inclusive environment where academic integrity, ethical conduct, and diversity are emphasized.

Admission requirements

AUST is in full compliance with the Lebanese government's rules on admission to universities and graduation from universities.

The list below summarizes each acquired degree and specifies whether remedial courses are required to meet the entry qualification criteria for the FHS.

Official Lebanese Government Secondary Certificate (Previously Lebanese Baccalaureate part II)	Life Sciences	No remedials
	General Sciences	BIO 200

	Economics & Sociology	BIO 200 CHE 200
Technical Baccalaureate BT3		Only candidates who passed the BT3 official degree in scientific tracks are allowed to join the scientific majors at the FHS. Four remedial courses are required: PHY 101 CHE 101 BIO 101 MAT100X
TS Degrees		All students who have successfully completed the TS program within the scope of the majors present in the FHS, may apply for those majors in the FHS. (a maximum of 50% of passed courses may be transferred, if the grade is 12 or above, and the remaining 50% of the credits required for a Bachelor's Degree must be completed at AUST).
Freshman		Freshman students need to fulfill the below conditions in order to be qualified for an FHS major. - 4 obligatory science courses - SAT score equivalent to 950 or more

The programs include students with different basis of admission including Lebanese Baccalaureate, French Baccalaureate, and/or Freshman. In addition to holding a secondary degree, applicants seeking undergraduate admission are required to take placement tests in English and Mathematics and must achieve the required scores, or equivalent. The Admissions Committee reviews applications based on academic performance over the final two years of high school and successful completion of the National General Secondary Exams. Once admitted, students attend an orientation session that introduces them to academic policies and university life, which are all outlined on the AUST website⁹. In order to ensure that all students are on the same educational level, several entry criteria have been established. Students holding a Lebanese Baccalaureate other than the Life Sciences section should complete Biology and Chemistry remedial courses. In addition, students with language difficulties receive English remedial courses.

Each program has a dedicated page on the university website containing all essential information. The admissions section clearly outlines entry requirements, application procedures, and necessary documentation. The FHS works closely with the university's IT department to regularly update the faculty's web pages, ensuring that changes to courses, academic policies, or admission timelines are communicated promptly and accurately to current and prospective students.

Each student is assigned an academic advisor and receives a program contract sheet detailing the courses required for graduation. Additionally, all new

⁹ www.aust.edu.lb.

students are required to complete training on the university's learning management system, Blackboard, before attending classes.

Test	Score	Placement Status
AUST English Entrance Examination (EEE)	Score between 300-350	Remedial ENG 000
	Score between 351-450	Remedial ENG 000
	Score between 451-500	Remedial ENG 001
	Score between 501-550	Remedial ENG 200
	Score above 551	English remedial courses exempted
AUST Math Placement Test	Score between 0-49%	Remedial MAT200X
	Score above 49%	Math remedial course exempted
English SAT scores	Below 500	Student has to repeat the AUST EEE
	500 - 599	Student has to repeat the essay part of the AUST EEE only
	600 - 800	No entrance exam required – English remedial courses exempted
Math SAT scores	400 - 525	Remedial MAT200X
	526 and above	Math remedial course exempted

Recognition of qualification

Candidates transferring from recognized institutions of higher learning to AUST must have met similar admission requirements to those of AUST in their previous institutions. Moreover, they should pass the AUST English Entrance requirements. A maximum of 55% of total credits may be transferred, and the remaining 45% must be completed at AUST. Transfer applicants may be given transfer credits for courses in which they had obtained a grade of C (70%) or above, on condition that the concerned academic units evaluate the course content and approve it is equivalent to AUST counter courses.

Desks are comfortable, classrooms are air-conditioned, and cleaned both in the evening and once during the day. Each classroom is equipped with an electronic smartboard that replaces traditional black, green, or whiteboards. These boards are internet-connected and serve as both a writing surface and a computer interface, enhancing the learning experience.

AUST faculty, staff, and students also have full access to the EBSCO online library service, which provides a wide range of academic resources. Training on how to use EBSCO is offered individually to new faculty and staff, and in group sessions for all new students. In addition, the library staff is always available to assist and train anyone in need of support.

Throughout their academic journey, students at FHS receive structured and ongoing support to promote engagement, academic achievement, and professional preparedness. At the start of the academic year, they are provided with a student handbook containing important academic regulations, assessment procedures, advancement guidelines, grading systems, and behavioral standards.

In addition, faculty provide comprehensive course syllabi each semester, outlining weekly topics, learning objectives, assessment methods, and recommended readings.

Each student is also assigned a faculty advisor who offers at least one in-person advising session per semester, with additional meetings available upon request, to support academic success and career development. Advisors assist students with course selection, understanding program requirements, tracking academic progress, and addressing probationary or graduation-related concerns.

Furthermore, the faculty conducts department-level orientation sessions at the beginning of each semester, particularly for new and transfer students. Under the guidance of department heads and program coordinators, these sessions provide essential information on academic structures, registration procedures, clinical training expectations, available student services, curriculum learning objectives, assessment methods, and the importance of professionalism in healthcare.

Beyond classroom comfort and academic resources, AUST places great importance on student life and physical activity. The Sports and Activities Office (SAO) oversees non-academic campus life, manages all student-organized clubs, and ensures that AUST actively participates in inter-university sports. Each student club is assigned a faculty advisor, selected by the club's members. Club options include the Social Club, Cultural Club, Music Club, Dance Club, Chess Club, Backgammon Club, Cheerleading Club, and Horseback Riding Club.

AUST also boasts competitive male and female varsity teams in basketball, football, volleyball, tennis, table tennis, hip hop, futsal, and handball. These teams regularly achieve top placements in national competitions and have proudly represented AUST in international university tournaments held in countries such as Jordan, Iraq, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Austria, Poland, Russia, and others. Students are usually encouraged to help fund part of their travel expenses through fundraising events, while AUST covers the remaining costs.

Moreover, SAO organizes trips for students to archaeological, cultural, and touristic sites—primarily across Lebanon, but also occasionally in Europe and neighboring countries—fostering cultural appreciation and community engagement.

Currently, most of the courses are held on campus. However, some technical courses that require input from multiple instructors are offered partially online. This ensures that instructors who are not based in Lebanon can still participate. As part of its commitment to accessible and flexible education, AUST has implemented a course recording policy. Instructors are required to record each session, allowing students who are unable to attend—due to personal circumstances or work commitments—to revisit the material at a time that best suits their schedule. This initiative supports inclusive learning and

ensures that all students can stay on track, regardless of their individual situations.

In compliance with its mission, AUST aims on helping students on the financial level. For this purpose, AUST has established the Student Financial Aid Program to provide qualified students with financial aid. Furthermore, the FHS actively upholds these values, particularly through its student advising process. Advising begins as soon as a student joins the FHS and selects a program. New students meet with their advisor to discuss their study plan from the first semester through to graduation. These advisory meetings are held before the start of each semester to ensure the students' academic and personal needs are addressed. Furthermore, if a student is employed, becomes employed during their studies, or simply needs to reduce their course load for valid reasons, advisors are always available to offer personalized study plans. These plans are designed to meet both the program learning outcomes and the students' circumstances.

In addition to addressing students' needs, advisors at the FHS closely monitor students' academic performance after each examination period. The Chairperson or Coordinator reviews all grades within their respective departments to identify students who may be falling behind. Meetings are then scheduled with these students to discuss their academic progress and determine the reasons behind any low performance. This ongoing academic follow-up, combined with regular advisory meetings at the start of each semester, helps ensure a balanced distribution of students' workload and supports their overall success.

At the FHS, classes are not solely theoretical; instead, theoretical components are complemented by practical lab sessions. These practical labs provide students with valuable experience even before they graduate.

During practical lab sessions, the FHS guarantees that each student works independently, with their own bench and equipment. To effectively blend teaching and hands-on experience, lab courses are developed for a small number of students. This enables instructors to provide individual support while closely monitoring each step of the practical activity.

Hands-on experience at FHS begins in the first semester, when students are enrolled in introductory lab courses. Completing these labs is required to continue through the FHS curriculum, as they are part of a systematic sequence of prerequisites and corequisites. For example, in their first semester, students typically register the BIO 210 – Cells & Molecules course, along with its corequisite lab, BIO210L – Cells & Molecules Lab. This course serves as a prerequisite for more advanced classes such as the BIO 310 – Introduction to Microbiology and CLS 320 – Molecular Genetics. By following the prerequisite and corequisite structure across all FHS majors, students are able to achieve the program learning outcomes.

Managing student workload is the responsibility of the academic advisor at the FHS. Advisors ensure that students follow the correct course sequence, proper course workload, and approve the exam schedule. These three key

components help guarantee that students are enrolled in the appropriate courses needed to successfully progress into the following semester.

Advisors can evaluate the nature of the workload, the level of continuous engagement required, the number and frequency of quizzes, the types of assignments given, and the amount of time allotted for self-learning. This allows advisors to collaborate with instructors to make any necessary adjustments to the course structure—such as reducing excessive workload or increasing opportunities for independent learning. In addition, advisors monitor students' exam schedules to ensure a fair distribution of assessments, making sure that no more than two exams are scheduled on the same day.

AUST is committed to upholding its non-discrimination statement. On campus, students of various nationalities, ethnicities, religions, and backgrounds interact with mutual respect and ease. Diversity often focuses on race, religion, gender, and nationality, overlooking students with academic, physical, or mental challenges. FHS supports them through the 'A Students Club'. It allows academically strong students to support their peers through mentoring and tutoring, offering guidance and motivation. This peer-to-peer support system not only helps struggling students improve their grades but also fosters a sense of community, responsibility, and collaboration among all students.

The Learning Support Office at AUST is responsible for two service programs, the Learning Enhancement and Assistance Program (L.E.A.P.), and the Learning Support Service (LSS). L.E.A.P. is a 3-year program that was established at AUST in 2007 to help students with learning difficulties reach a certain level of independence and be able to work and make a living. L.E.A.P enrolls 20 to 30 students per year and the feedback from parents is very positive. The LSS is a new service designed for students who apply to AUST, and who might need certain accommodation due to any Learning Disability (LD) or certain academic difficulties. The Learning Support Office follows certain steps in identifying and addressing special learning needs of students in mainstream classes. This is done in consultation with AUST administration. There are four essential steps that form the core of the procedure for designing and providing appropriate accommodation for students who might need them.

As part of their academic trajectory, the students are required to complete a set number of hours dedicated to community service and volunteer work, which are embedded throughout their major courses. For instance:

- Clinical Laboratory students offer free blood testing services to underserved communities.
- Optics and Optometry students organize mobile eye clinics across the country - especially in underserved areas - and distribute free eyeglasses.
- Radiology students participate in public health campaigns, including breast and prostate cancer awareness and screening events.

- Forensic Science students engage in drug awareness campaigns and educational outreach.

Student's life cycle and student care services

All FHS students are encouraged to actively participate in faculty-wide events such as the Truth Rally Paper, Open Doors, and Health Days. Through these experiences, students not only reinforce their academic knowledge but also develop a strong sense of civic responsibility, empathy, and real-world problem-solving skills - essential qualities for future healthcare professionals.

In its commitment to student development, the FHS offers a variety of courses, technical electives, and external qualifications designed to enrich students' academic and professional experience. These opportunities are made accessible and feasible for all FHS students depending on their majors to register and benefit from. In 2023, AUST partnered with Coursera to offer students a technical elective that includes a recognized Coursera certificate upon completion. This collaboration allows students to gain additional skills through globally recognized platforms. Given the importance of practical health training, the FHS also provides Red Cross certifications, ensuring students acquire essential emergency response knowledge. Forensic Science students benefit from specialized workshops with external reviewers such as Anthropology and the Criminal Mind, allowing them to explore niche areas of their field and gain hands-on experience beyond the classroom. Through these initiatives, the FHS ensures that its students graduate not only with academic knowledge but also with valuable, real-world competencies that enhance their readiness for the job market.

Recruiters from AUST actively engage in outreach by visiting over 400 schools across Lebanon, where they introduce students in the two final years of high school to AUST and its wide range of academic programs. Additionally, senior students are invited to attend the university's open doors usually on Fridays, during which they tour the campus facilities and have the opportunity to interact with AUST faculty members to explore potential academic paths.

Moreover, the FHS hosts a recurring event called the "FHS Truth Rally Paper", where visiting students explore all the departments within the faculty through interactive activities, lab work, and games. Participants have the chance to win prizes, in the form of financial aid upon registration, while learning about the various health sciences disciplines, making the experience informative, engaging, and providing the students insight to the nature of their future career.

Students' application can be submitted by mail, online, or hand delivery. On successful completion of studies an annual commencement ceremony takes place. Despite that AUST maintains an Alumni Association.

The Dean of Students' Admission (DOSA) office is considered one of the main student care services at AUST.

In coordination with academic advisors, they closely monitor students' academic progress. Under the umbrella of DOSA, students also have access to a clinical psychologist for support with interpersonal conflicts, family issues, or personal challenges that may require professional care or ongoing follow-up. The Continuing Learning Department (CLD), also part of DOSA, assists students in finding part-time jobs during their studies and full-time employment after graduation. Additionally, AUST organizes an annual Spring Job Fair, bringing companies to campus in search of qualified candidates among the student body.

Students may register for courses each semester through the Student Information System (SIS), either remotely, from campus, or with the assistance of their advisor. While many senior students prefer to register independently, most students feel more confident having their selections reviewed by an academic advisor. SIS can flag scheduling conflicts or prerequisite issues, but the advisor's check - followed by a final screening by the Registrar's Office - ensures a smooth academic path with no unexpected complications before graduation.

Final grades are made available online through SIS at the end of each semester. If a student wishes to challenge a grade, they may submit an appeal up to the level of the Executive Council. Students can access and review their transcripts online at any time (view-only), while official transcripts can be requested from the Registrar's Office and are typically dispatched to their destination within 24 hours.

Commencement is a landmark event at AUST, marked by ceremony and celebration. Attended by government officials, diplomats, distinguished guests, faculty, staff, students, and parents, the event receives significant media coverage. Over the years, keynote speakers have included the Maronite Patriarch, the Prime Minister, Army Commanders, former Presidents, Ministers, Members of Parliament, and university leaders from around the world.

DOSA also oversees the Career Center, which compiles and shares job opportunities from Lebanon and the Gulf region. The Career Center provides training in CV writing, interview preparation, and professional etiquette. Additionally, all students are required to complete the Work Ready Now (WRN) course, which equips them with the practical skills necessary to succeed in the professional world.

Moreover, FHS implemented advising forms for every program to improve student advising even more. Students receive these directly, making the advising process more organized and transparent.

The faculty actively participates in alumni networking events and job fairs, providing students with practical insights and preparing them effectively for entering the healthcare industry. AUST's alumni frequently return to campus to share their experiences, mentor current students, and maintain their connection with the university. While these interactions are meaningful, AUST continues to work toward more structured and comprehensive alumni engagement in the future.

Faculty management

The FHS is organized based on a certain hierarchy to ensure strong academic management, high-quality education, and adhere to the faculty and program learning outcomes.

The dean of the faculty is the chief academic and administrative officer, reporting to the university's provost. The dean enforces AUST's policies and regulations. The dean guides academics in conveying the department's vision, mission, and goals to alumni, professionals, and other stakeholders. She keeps the faculty on track and focused on achieving the desired results.

The departmental chairperson at the FHS is the program director, who reports to the dean of the FHS. Additionally, the chair may oversee grant-funded programs linked to their respective programs. The chair is in charge of planning, coordinating, evaluating, and assessing the instructional program, advising and supervising students, reviewing peer performance, preparing department reports, administering the department budget, and communicating administrative directives to faculty and students.

The departmental coordinator has three main responsibilities: providing administrative support to the chairperson; managing and coordinating events and projects in the program area, such as mobile clinics and meetings that promote evidence-informed innovation in healthcare organizations and connect healthcare leaders with strategic priorities; and providing general program assistance and coordination to the team, including the creation of briefing documents to assist with planning and program development. These duties can fall under the responsibilities of the Chairperson in case the department does not have a current coordinator.

At the FHS full-time and part-time instructors are responsible for delivering the courses to the students, evaluate and provide timely feedback on students' assignments, presentations, and projects, encourage students on extracurricular activities and community service, and finally, respond to students' requests as much as feasible.

The assistant supports the Dean, Chairperson, and Coordinator, handles alumni affairs and public relations, prepares correspondence and reports, coordinates automation activities, maintains files and records, compiles Dean's Office reports, brochures, and printings, and provides backup to office staff. Handled diverse administrative tasks including event planning, student advising and registration, preparing official documents (MEMOs and MOUs), supporting academic leadership, coordinating course offerings, and maintaining communication with part-time and full-time instructors.

All of the academic staff from the dean to the administrative assistants are responsible for aiding the students, from advising to following up on abiding by the program. This is made more possible specially at the FHS, which follows the open-door policy. All personnel should remain accessible beyond their posted office hours.

AUST internal support

All the students at AUST have access to immediate support just by accessing the website or the mobile app. Students can submit any type of petition through the online portal. Those petitions can be:

Withdrawal: This petition is accessible for all students wishing to drop from a specific course. After talking with their academic advisors, students may take this step to drop from a course, for several reasons, such as low grades, inability to attend, or to deliver deadlines.

- Make-Up Exam: Students who miss any of the three exams on the course level, or two exams on the lab level, can submit a petition to sit for a make-up exam.
- Absence: If in any case students are not able to attend a specific session, they can submit an absence petition to be exempted.
- Financial Aid: in alignment with AUST's mission, applying for the financial aid is accessible for all students.
- Student Petition: Students may use this petition, to apply for any help, or guidance. They may use this petition to drop from a semester, and if they decide to uphold their studying for later or to withdraw from the university.

Petitions are first processed by the Dean of Student Affairs office. The DOSA office may call students for a meeting to follow up, call hospitals or doctors to check the validity of medical reports and have one on one meeting with the students and their advisors. With the help of the DOSA, the FHS is able to help students abide by the program.

AUST external support

At the FHS and in the mission of continuing development, the FHS advisory board was developed. This advisory board has a lot of roles and responsibilities such as:

- Provide insights and recommendations on the faculty's strategic direction, including academic programs, research initiatives, and community engagement.
- Help updating and defining the long-term goals and vision for the faculty.
- Assist in the review of curricula and academic offerings and suggest improvements to ensure they meet industry standards and student needs.
- Encourage innovative teaching methods and interdisciplinary approaches.
- Facilitate connections with industry partners, alumni, and other stakeholders to enhance opportunities for students and Faculty.
- Act as ambassadors for the faculty, promoting its strengths and achievements.

- Support fundraising initiatives whenever possible, and provide insights into grant opportunities for the up keeping of Faculty development and research.
- Support efforts to maintain and enhance academic quality and accreditation standards.
- Provide feedback on program assessment and evaluation processes.
- Offer mentorship to Faculty members whenever possible, especially early-career educators and researchers.
- Support Faculty development initiatives, including workshops and training programs.
- Encourage Faculty involvement in community service and outreach programs that benefit both the faculty and the local community.
- Promote public understanding of the faculty's role in societal development.
- Gather and relay feedback from external perspectives regarding the faculty's performance and reputation in the community and industry.
- Provide counsel during challenging times or crises, offering perspectives that can guide effective response strategies.

In addition, to the role of the advisory board, the FHS is keen on updating and signing Memorandums of Understanding, with various facilities in the Lebanese health sector. Those MOUs include agreements with hospitals, private laboratories, imaging centers, F&B sector, ISF, primary healthcare centers, optical shops, and edging and dispensing laboratories. Those MOUs are another way for the faculty to allow the students to get used to work environment, enhance their communication skills, and allow them to see the various possibilities of their job.

Signing MOUs and having students finalize their trainings and internships is crucial but monitoring them throughout the process is as important. Preceptors appointed by the FHS are responsible for monitoring students as they are completing their trainings and internships. Preceptors are experienced employees working in the specified sector, appointed by chairpersons and coordinators to follow up on students, help them in knowing and understanding the work environment and eventually grading their general and specific performance.

Financial needs

Students with financial needs are encouraged to apply for financial aid. DOSA evaluates the financial situation of the student and accordingly provides discount percentage. Scholarships are also provided to students with high academic standing encouraging them to maintain a high GPA throughout their studies. AUST also encourages students to join different sports clubs in return of financial discount.

The Faculty of Health Sciences also provides discounts for the students who work as laboratory assistants. Students are given a 1% discount for each one hour of work per week. The laboratory assistantship not only helps students

financially, but also develops their work ethics, shapes their personality, and allows them to grow professionally. It also helps students gain the technical skills needed in CLS.

Advising and career guidance

Students benefit from dedicated academic advising throughout their studies, ensuring they are guided in course selection, research opportunities, and career planning. Faculty maintain open-door policies and regular office hours to support individualized learning needs. Career workshops and the HMS 300 "Work Ready Now" course further prepare students for employment through soft skill development and job market orientation. A high percentage of the students already work to support themselves financially. They are also driven by the thirst to gain, as much as possible, experience in order to excel in their respective field. The departments help students in finding suitable opportunities to meet their expectations.

Students' diversity

Building on AUST's mission to provide quality education to everyone regardless of their economic, educational, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The university fosters an inclusive learning environment, providing scholarships and support systems also for students from underprivileged backgrounds. Moreover, diverse faculty members bring international expertise, allowing students to learn from professionals with varied backgrounds. The departments attract students from different nationalities. They mainly come from Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Iraq. Were the country politically stable and more secure, student diversity would be wider to include more nationalities.

Nursing (B.Sc.)

Current status

Please refer to the cross-program aspects outlined above: applicable to all degree programs.

Assessment

The reviewers conclude that the implementation of the study program at AUST is effective and fully supports the achievement of intended learning outcomes. The program structure and workload, as well as the number and density of examinations, enable students to complete their studies within the standard period. When asked by the reviewers, the students and alumni indicated during the site visit that the workload can be managed.

The institution demonstrates a strong commitment to a student-centered learning environment. Students benefit from comprehensive support services, including individual academic monitoring, open-door policies, and guidance for internships. Extracurricular offerings, such as sports facilities, further contribute to students' personal development. Faculty members are highly

accessible, both during office hours and via email, and provide dedicated supervision, guidance, and support throughout the study process. The open-door policy, according to which instructors are available to answer questions and other concerns promptly and without the hassle of scheduling an appointment with them beforehand, was positively emphasized by the students and alumni during the site visit.

Besides, the students consistently reported high satisfaction with the quality of teaching, advising, and overall academic experience during the site visit. The proportion of working students is higher than at comparable institutions, indicating that the support structures effectively enable students to balance academic and professional commitments. Counselling services are available for students who work part-time and they also have the option of extending the duration of their studies.

The reviewers positively note that cooperation with external partners at AUST is well organized and effective. The university maintains strong affiliations with major hospitals, clinical centers, and other health-related institutions which provide students with extensive opportunities for internships and practical training.

Moreover, the reviewers positively recognize that the university demonstrates a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion across its study programs and administrative structures. Students from diverse cultural, social, and educational backgrounds are welcomed and supported, and the institution takes deliberate measures to ensure that their individual needs are recognized and addressed.

Overall, the reviewers consider the implementation of the study programs and the associated student support services to effectively foster a holistic, student-centered learning environment. Students benefit from close supervision and support by highly committed and competent academic staff.

According to the reviewers, all the requirements of the fourth criterion regarding student organization are fully met.

Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.)

Current status

Please refer to the cross-program aspects outlined above: applicable to all degree programs.

Assessment

Please refer to the cross-program evaluation provided under the Bachelor's degree program in Nursing above.

5. Resources

This criterion focuses on the adequacy and sustainability of resources allocated to the program. The reviewers assess whether the involved faculties

are sufficiently equipped in terms of personnel, infrastructure, and financial resources to deliver the program effectively. This includes an evaluation of the sustainability of funding and the institution's financial management practices.

The qualifications and number of academic and administrative staff are reviewed in light of their ability to ensure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Furthermore, the reviewers analyse the higher education institution's strategies and procedures for staff recruitment, retention, and professional development.

The reviewers also examine whether the quantity and quality of facilities and equipment - such as libraries, laboratories, teaching spaces, and IT infrastructure - are suitable for the implementation of the program and aligned with its objectives.

Current Status

Cross-disciplinary aspects: applicable to all degree programs

Physical resources

All classrooms are equipped with computers and audiovisual equipment as well as with smart boards with touch screens and windows operating systems that can operate software. These boards provide immediate access to the Internet during class discussions. Although classroom presence became obligatory as of Fall 2022, the smart-boards provide easy and total access for students who opt to follow online, if they are incapacitated or outside Lebanon. Furthermore, with these boards, students have the extra option to review the whole class session even after the live session is terminated.

Although the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education does not recognize online education and has a penchant for face-to-face education, AUST was allowed delivery through a blended approach. AUST has taken full advantage of this breakthrough and had notable proficient faculty members who could not be found in Lebanon to teach classes online and finish the course with minimum physical presence in the classroom. AUST faculty, staff and students have access to the library holdings of EBSCO (online library service) which offers access to a wide range of library services. Training on the use of EBSCO is done on individual basis for new faculty and staff and in groups to all new students. The library staff are always ready to train individuals who need assistance.

Digital access and learning resources

To support diverse learning preferences and needs, AUST provides students with access to online platforms, digital libraries, and e-learning tools. The university ensures equitable access to course materials and lecture content, facilitating both in-person and asynchronous learning. This has proven particularly valuable for students balancing academic work with part-time employment or family responsibilities.

The FHS offers its instructors and students the following:

Media in faculty library (books, journals, digital media):
More than 10,900 hard copy books that are growing at the rate of 500 items annually.
21,970 soft copy books of all majors available on the searching engine "Business Source Complete" by EBSCO and SCOPUS
Online memberships to 2,365 scientific journals
Computers connected to the Internet
Subscription to EBSCO and SCOPUS Host for scientific publications

Furthermore, AUST library has concluded an agreement with the library of the leading older university in Lebanon. Whereby AUST members may have access and borrowing privileges to their holdings through the Librarian. One of the main factors that sets AUST apart is the high tech and well-equipped laboratories where students can practice the theoretical learning spread over a space of 1210 m². The following table represents the different labs at the faculty:

Facility	Space m²
Bio-Analytical Chemistry Laboratory	80
Biology Laboratory	54
Chemistry and Food Science Laboratory	66
Computer Laboratories	500
Nutrition Laboratory	40
Microbiology Laboratory	55
Molecular Biology Laboratory	82
Crime scene lab	55
Research lab	52
Contact Lenses Laboratory	32
Refraction Laboratory	12
Dispensing Laboratory	32
Offices	150

Periodic evaluation of resource sufficiency is conducted to ensure alignment with program evolution, student feedback, and international standards.

Faculty

The FHS offers six undergraduate programs along with eight graduate programs. The total number of students is 450 with 25 postgraduates. To date, the faculty has 15 full-time academic staff with a teaching load of 12 credit hour per semester, 52 part-timers and 19 FTE. In parallel, seven

administrative and technical staff covering academic affairs, student services, IT, finance, HR, and maintenance.

The institution's human resources (HR) strategy has been developed to support its academic mission and strategic goals. HR functions are integrated with the teaching, research, and administrative functions of the institution with regard to staffing and staff training activities. The HR strategy supports transparency in hiring, advancement opportunities, equal employment opportunity, and staff retention. The Faculty Affairs Policy describes the processes, among them faculty recruitment and promotion of the faculty. Faculty positions are identified based on the needs of individual academic programs, student enrolment trends, and research requirements. The final hiring decision is made on the basis of academic qualifications, research potential, and teaching abilities in alignment with the goals of the respective department.

Involvement of faculty in the governance of the institution is guaranteed in their participation in council meetings, departmental meetings and faculty meetings. The promotion of a faculty member is based on the evaluation of teaching effectiveness, research productivity and record of service. The university provides all requirements that a faculty member needs to be judged worthy of promotion such as access to unlimited internet, email, library facilities, seed money for research, computers, laboratory equipment, needed software, travel to conferences and payment for publishing research output in refereed journals. Faculty members are consulted when a new Chair or a new Dean is appointed.

Research funds and financing

Good teaching and classroom delivery are prioritized but research remains a Sine Qua Non requirement for advancement in professorial rank. The research conducted by AUST faculty members is generally characterized as applied research. However, there is also some fundamental research, particularly in the field of biology.

The allocation of research funds from the revenues collected from students is kept to the minimum limits stipulated by the government (5% of the operating budget). The funds allocated for research are dispensed and used as follows:

- a) seed money for research
- b) travel subsidy to deliver papers ensuing from research done at AUST
- c) cost of publishing (journals and books)

Seed money, travel subsidy and cost of publications are all governed by requests made by the researcher to the University Research Council (URC) and dispensed according to amounts approved by the Executive Council based on recommendation by the URC. Research that deals with humans requires further approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Faculty members with doctorate degrees need to show visibility through published work in internationally referred journals in order to qualify for

consideration for advancement in professorial rank. Faculty members are encouraged to seek funding for their research projects from outside AUST.

The National Council for Scientific Research (CNRS) has traditionally been a key funding body for faculty research, with several AUST researchers benefiting from its grants. Since the 2020 economic crisis, however, its financial resources have been severely limited. A resumption of full funding activities is anticipated in the future. Despite all the negatives that have tainted the Lebanese scene, some faculty members have secured international research support, including collaborative projects in the biological sciences and grants from the private sector for research in health-related fields.

AUST has established cooperations with European universities, particularly in France, through co-tutelle and co-direction of Ph.D. research, including partnerships with Université de Lille, Université de Nantes, and Université Catholique de Lille. Since 2003, all faculty promotions in rank were tightly tied to research visibility as evidenced by publications in international refereed journals.

Research requirements typically apply to PhD faculty seeking promotion, with or without graduate student assistance. There is a growing emphasis on involving undergraduate students in research activities. Faculty members with Master's degrees are not required to conduct research, though they may receive similar support if they choose to do so. Some are actively engaged in research across fields such as Engineering, English, Education, and Design. Research requirements apply only to full-time faculty with doctoral degrees. Part-time faculty may receive travel funding for conferences if the research is conducted at AUST and the institution is credited in any resulting publication.

Except for the Lebanese University, all universities in Lebanon are private and rely primarily on tuition for revenue. AUST's funding comes almost entirely from tuition, with occasional donations directed to the student scholarship fund. From its inception, AUST has emphasized providing American-style higher education to financially disadvantaged students, and current fundraising efforts remain focused on student aid.

In a context of social, economic and political uncertainty, AUST and the FHS had to adapt continuously to challenges. The most important consequences that hit the education sector in Lebanon as a direct result of war are:

- Widespread students and university displacement
- Financial barriers to education and brain drain
- Psychological impact on students
- Disruption of academic year
- Ongoing recovery efforts

Facing all these challenges, the aim of AUST was to maintain a credible operation in face of the economic collapse. The administration had to figure out how to adapt to an escalating situation and an unpredictable and dangerous

war affecting the whole country. AUST has been considering increasing the geographical reach of its course offering a year before the economic crisis. "Blackboard", an online system for online teaching was purchased and staff and faculty received a training prior to this crisis affecting Lebanon. This online solution was used during COVID and can be used also as an emergency plan to overcome the complex situation in case of any escalation of the war.

The Vice President for Finance and Administration (VPFA) is the key person in the Budget cycle. It is the office of the VPFA that initiates the Budget Cycle and follows it up to a conclusion. The offices directly involved in collecting and dispensing funds according to the approved budget employ nine full timers (with college degrees). An internal auditor rechecks all income and expense statements. The university also employs RSM as the external auditing firm (historically, RSM was derived from the initials of the three original founding firms - Robson Rhodes of the UK, Salustro Reydel of France and McGladrey of the USA). The annual budget as approved by the Board ensures that the salaries are guaranteed and that the plans for growth requested by cost centers and approved by the Board are to be financed a year ahead of implementation.

Nursing (B.Sc.)

Current status

Please refer to the cross-program aspects outlined above: applicable to all degree programs.

Assessment

The reviewers commend that the resources allocated to the program at AUST are fully adequate and sustainably managed.

Academic and administrative staff are well-qualified and sufficient in number to ensure that the intended learning outcomes are achieved. According to AUST, the low number of instructors with a PhD in the nursing program can be explained by the fact that a doctorate in this field is not yet common in Lebanon and it is therefore difficult to recruit nursing instructors with a doctorate, at least from within the country.

The institution demonstrates effective strategies for staff recruitment, retention, and professional development. They have diverse international backgrounds and degrees from renowned universities, and demonstrate strong professional engagement, including participation in international conferences and the organization of voluntary training sessions.

The institution provides state-of-the-art infrastructure to support student learning. This includes classrooms equipped with cameras and sound systems to facilitate remote participation, well-resourced libraries, modern laboratories, and comprehensive IT facilities.

Besides, from the reviewers' perspective, the library's facilities ensure that students have the necessary resources to succeed.

Although AUST's funding comes almost entirely from tuition, with only occasional donations directed to the student scholarship fund, the reviewers were informed that the program benefits from secure and sustainable funding, and the institution demonstrates sound financial management practices that ensure both the long-term stability and the continued development of the program.

Overall, the reviewers have no doubt that the financial, human, and physical resources fully support the achievement of intended learning outcomes and enable students to acquire both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. The reviewers consider the resources provided by AUST to be well-suited to the objectives of the program, and fully supportive of high-quality teaching, learning, and professional preparation.

The reviewers conclude that all requirements of the fifth criterion concerning resources have been fully met.

Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.)

Current status

Please refer to the cross-program aspects outlined above: applicable to all degree programs.

Assessment

Please refer to the cross-program evaluation provided under the Bachelor's degree program in Nursing above.

6. Quality assurance

This criterion addresses the internal and external quality assurance mechanisms applied to the design, implementation, and continuous improvement of the study program.

The reviewers evaluate the overarching quality assurance concept of the program, including the processes, instruments, and indicators used to monitor the achievement of its objectives. Attention is given to how the institution and program management collect, analyse, and utilise relevant data to inform decision-making and enhance quality.

The reviewers assess whether quality assurance measures are applied regularly, systematically, and effectively, and whether feedback loops are closed to support continuous improvement. Additionally, the involvement of key stakeholders—such as students, academic staff, administrative personnel, and external partners (e.g. employers)—in quality assurance processes is reviewed. The panel also examines the availability and clarity of program-related information provided to current and prospective students.

Current status

Cross-disciplinary aspects: applicable to all degree programs

Accreditations

The new Higher Education Law (285/2014) specifies certain requirements that a tertiary-education institution must meet to be recognized and maintain good standing. For example, institutions cannot be established or add programs, colleges, or campuses without a decision from a national committee of educational reviewers. Universities must also seek accreditation from recognized and respected international bodies for both their quality management systems and the quality of their study programs.

All the programs at the FHS are accredited by the MEHE. In addition, the FHS laboratories are either ISO 17025 accredited – such as the microbiology labs – or currently in the process of renewing their accreditation, as is the case for the Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) testing lab. Meanwhile, the forensic analysis lab is working toward receiving ISO 17025 accreditation as well. As for the toxicology lab, it is accredited with a Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) certificate. The institution obtained reaccreditation for its Computer & Communications Engineering program from the Accreditation Board of Engineering & Technology (ABET) and accreditation for its Business programs from the International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE). The Computer Science program is also accredited by ABET. The relevant certificates are attached to the SER.

Moreover, AUST holds institutional accreditation from EVALAG.

Quality management system

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 FHS ensures that all academic programs meet the requirements established by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. In addition, the faculty works closely with national professional bodies such as the Lebanese Syndicate of Medical Laboratory Technologists, the Syndicate of Opticians and Optometrists, the Lebanese Syndicate of Radiographer, the Order of Nurses, and the Lebanese Order of Dietitians to ensure that courses satisfy professional license criteria and adhere to the highest ethical and practice standards.

The evaluation of program validity falls under the jurisdiction of the respective faculty. FHS departments work extensively to keep the programs in line with national qualifications frameworks, accreditation requirements, and labor market demands. This approach incorporates input from academic staff, industry partners, advisory board, alumni, and student representatives. In addition, they carry out benchmark analysis to guarantee competitive and relevant comparable national programs. FSH regularly updates its references and enhances course materials through ongoing advisory board meetings, effective collaboration with the MEHE, and consistent departmental meetings to ensure that student needs are aligned with learning outcomes. These initiatives support continuous development through curriculum upgrades, syllabus revisions, and content updates.

Defined academic policies, certified teaching staff, and standard course specifications serve as guidelines for the implementation of the study program. The chairpersons assess that the program objectives align with the course learning outcomes. They also collaborate with the Quality Assurance Department (QAD) to verify that the teaching quality and learning activities, assessment techniques, and student support services adhere to predetermined criteria. The “Planned semester Activities” structure organizes each semester’s activities, including course offerings, faculty meetings, advising, and examination periods, with weekly progress reports to the QAD.

A defined quality assurance (QA) framework exists at the program level, fully integrated with the institution’s overarching QA system. Each academic program follows a structured QA process encompassing curriculum development, instructional planning, implementation monitoring, and periodic evaluation. These processes are aligned with the university’s central QA framework, coordinated by the QAD. The QAD oversees a set of “Planned semester activities” outlining the processes and procedures required from both academic and administrative departments. These activities are distributed across the semester, including registration week(s), the 15 weeks of instruction, the final examination period, and the grade posting period. A process manual, developed in collaboration with the relevant departments, ensures proper implementation of these activities.

Department chairs and/or program coordinators report on the execution of these processes weekly, submitting their reports to the QAD. The QAD consolidates the reports and monitors whether the scheduled tasks were completed and whether they meet the established standards based on predefined indicators. Indicators may be quantitative or qualitative. Examples of quantitative academic indicators include: the percentage of instructors attending faculty meetings, the percentage of new students participating in general orientation, the percentage of senior students receiving advising to ensure timely graduation, and the number of industry contacts for student training and job placement. Examples of qualitative indicators include: the preparation of preliminary course offerings for the next semester and the revision of syllabi.

Administrative departments also report quantitative indicators, such as the percentage of target schools visited by the admissions office, the number of students issued acceptance letters by the registrar, and the percentage of tuition fees collected by the bursar’s office, as well as qualitative information, such as whether the registrar submitted the course offerings to the IT department on time for online posting and whether the bursar’s office reminded students of tuition installment deadlines.

Certain tasks within the “Planned semester activities” are interlinked between academic and administrative departments. For example, the registrar provides lists of senior/graduating students to academic departments for advising and graduation clearance, and the IT department issues usernames and

passwords for instructors, while academic departments ensure that course materials and syllabi are uploaded to Blackboard.

The QAD ensures that effective feedback mechanisms are in place to support continuous improvement. Feedback is collected from external stakeholders, instructors, and students, with any discrepancies or quality gaps reported to the dean's office. This approach facilitates timely decision-making and follow-up, ensuring that program-level QA initiatives are fully integrated into the faculty's overall quality management system.

Continuous monitoring of student progress

Formative and summative assessments are strategically embedded across the curriculum to monitor student performance and support learning progression. Instructors provide constructive feedback, and struggling students are identified early and referred to academic support services when needed. AUST meets students' needs through a combination of curriculum relevance, practical engagement, academic advising, responsive feedback systems, and inclusive values, thus enhancing the overall quality and relevance of the student learning experience.

Students' voice and feedback mechanisms

Students actively engage in quality assurance through a variety of organized and informal methods. At the end of each academic term, students assess both theoretical courses and clinical training components. AUST encourages student feedback through course evaluations, student representation in academic committees, and periodic satisfaction surveys. At the end of every semester, students evaluate both courses and instructors as part of AUST's commitment to continuous improvement. Informal input is also encouraged through open-door office policy, designated student liaisons, and frequent meetings, which provide students with numerous chances to express problems, make changes, and participate in academic decision-making. This feedback loop contributes to continuous program improvement and the adjustment of teaching strategies, course content, and administrative processes. Recent changes to course content and teaching delivery methods have directly responded to student input regarding workload balance, assessment clarity, and engagement levels.

Quality assurance processes and instruments

The evaluation of the validity of the programs is within the jurisdiction of the FHS. 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 the whole program through a variety of defined indicators such as course exams, course projects, senior projects, internships, practicum, exit exams, colloquium, students' performance in exchange programs, and graduate studies.

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

- Monitoring the execution of academic processes, 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 online 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, school orientations process, students' requests (absence, withdrawal, certificates, transcripts, counselling, make-up exams...) processes, graduation process, purchasing process.
- 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. Respectively, the students' and the chairperson's evaluation hold 52% 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 an improvement plan 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.
- Representatives from the job market attend Advisory Board meetings to review, recommend enhancements, and approve meeting minutes. The FHS will gradually incorporate the comments into the assessment of the program's objectives.
- Students who petition the concerned chairperson/dean on any issue pertaining to academic or administrative matters receive a message/email of their petition indicating the decision regarding the petition and the actions to be taken if applicable.

Quality enhancement

AUST fosters a 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 the development and enhancement.

Regular, data-driven, faculty-wide quality improvement is guaranteed by this integrated QA system. Depending on the procedure, quality assurance activities are carried out weekly, semesterly, or annually and are incorporated into the university's operating calendar. The way the "Planned semester activities" are carried out serves as a gauge for performance quality and compliance.

Students' course evaluations after each semester are used by FHS as both a source of feedback and a catalyst for quality enhancement. For instance, the academic departments updated the syllabi after several students expressed concerns with the clarity of the evaluation criteria in particular courses.

Additionally, the FHS has embraced a data-driven strategy for quality control. Midway through the semester, project ideas/progress are examined and approved under the mid-project checkpoint system implemented by the FHS. This intervention dramatically increased project outcomes and decreased the failure rate.

The QAD also makes sure that industry, alumni, and student input are used effectively when the Educational Objectives are reviewed regularly.

Feedback loop cycle

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 efficient decision making for continual improvement of the faculty.

Chairperson's role in quality assurance

To guarantee ongoing program improvement, the program's responsible party - usually the department chairperson or program coordinator - systematically gathers, examines, and applies pertinent data in collaboration with the QAD. The QAD collects feedback from other University constituents:

Online course assessments are used to gather student input. The program chair discusses recurring problems with faculty members during

departmental meetings. Examples of these problems include unclear assessment criteria or low satisfaction with course delivery. The improvement is put into practice in the following semester.

Every year, alumni are sent an online survey to collect data about graduate employment. This data is analyzed by the program chair to assess how well program outcomes match labor market demands. The curriculum may be modified to include new courses or improve the practical training components if trends reveal deficiencies (such as a skills mismatch).

The job market provides valuable feedback on the performance of students and graduates hired by various institutions. Many companies operating in Lebanon regularly reach out to the chairs of the FHS to recruit students and graduates for available job opportunities. The departments maintain regular follow-ups with these employers to assess whether students were successfully hired and to gather feedback on their performance. In addition to post-graduation feedback, follow-up also occurs during the internship and clinical training periods, where the Chairperson closely monitors and evaluates students' progress, engagement, and overall status. This ongoing oversight ensures early identification of any concerns and allows for timely intervention. Any quality-related issues identified during these follow-ups - whether in training or employment - are reported to the concerned department, which takes appropriate corrective actions to enhance program quality and student preparedness.

Quality complaints from any of the University's stakeholders pertaining to non-adherence to set processes and procedures are reported to the FHS for corrective action with the concerned department.

Stakeholder involvement in quality assurance

Stakeholder participation is critical to the QA procedures of the Faculty of Health Sciences. By incorporating students, professors, administrative staff, and external stakeholders such as healthcare employers and clinical partners, AUST guarantees that the academic programs are up to date, responsive, and in line with educational standards and healthcare sector expectations. Across all disciplines, this cooperative approach helps to continuously enhance graduate abilities, teaching methods, learning environments, and curriculum material.

Faculty involvement

Faculty members across all health science programs at the FHS play a central role in quality assurance by maintaining academic rigor, ensuring alignment with professional standards, and responding to the evolving needs of the healthcare sector. They regularly assess and update course syllabi and program learning outcomes, integrating the latest research, technological advancements, and regulatory guidelines.

Teaching practices, assessment tools, and clinical supervision methods are also subjected to peer review and internal audits to uphold consistency,

fairness, and instructional excellence. A structured classroom visitation system is also in place to support instructional quality and professional growth. Senior faculty, department heads, or program coordinators conduct regular class visits, particularly for new instructors, to observe teaching techniques, classroom engagement, and the use of instructional materials in relation to the approved syllabus and learning outcomes.

To further strengthen teaching and learning, FHS supports robust faculty development through ongoing training initiatives. In collaboration with the Higher Education Center for Development (HECD), faculty members participate in workshops and seminars on outcome-based education, curriculum mapping, student-centered teaching, assessment strategies, simulation-based learning, interprofessional education, accreditation standards, and research ethics. Additionally, faculty are encouraged to engage in self-paced certification programs offered through online platforms such as Coursera with whom AUST has signed a MoU. These programs cover topics including academic writing, educational technology, instructional design, and healthcare innovation, with completion officially recognized as part of faculty development records.

Administrative involvement

Across all programs at the FHS, administrative departments are essential to the implementation and upkeep of quality assurance measures. By using written regulations, standardized assessment instruments, and frequent audit procedures, the administration enforces the faculty's quality assurance system, guaranteeing adherence to accreditation and institutional norms. The QA Unit and the Dean's Office are in charge of gathering and maintaining important data, such as student and stakeholder input, graduate employability statistics, and academic performance measures. These data are examined methodically to facilitate evidence-based decision-making and ongoing program enhancement. The administrative staff is also crucial in planning and organizing recurring accreditation visits and external reviews. Additionally, they support the faculty's dedication to upholding high standards in instruction, evaluation, and graduation results.

Employer and clinical partner involvement

Enhancing the relevance and quality of academic programs at the FHS requires the participation of external stakeholders, including advisory board, clinical supervisors, employers, and alumni. Their efforts guarantee that the curricula continue to reflect the changing demands of the healthcare industry. Members of the Advisory Boards to offer strategic feedback on curriculum development, new developments in healthcare, and graduate performance. Additionally, during clinical rotations, students receive organized assessments from clinical supervisors and preceptors that emphasize professionalism, practice preparedness, and core skills. Employer input on recent graduates' performance, especially in areas like communication, critical

thinking, and technical abilities, is gathered through graduate follow-up studies, which are carried out to further evaluate the efficacy of the program. In order to provide students with career counselling, the FHS works with the Career Learning Development (CLD) office. Career counselling services include interview preparation, CV writing, job search tactics, and career planning.

Department heads and clinical supervisors are important liaisons between students and healthcare facilities. They organize internships and clinical placement assistance and help students ace national certification examinations (colloquium exam).

All procedures and policies are regulated within the Governance and Quality Management Manual of AUST.

Nursing (B.Sc.)

Current status

Please refer to the cross-program aspects outlined above: applicable to all degree programs.

Assessment

The reviewers acknowledge that the institution has established a quality assurance framework that supports the systematic design, implementation, and ongoing improvement of the study programs. Internal and external mechanisms are in place, and the reviewers were informed that processes and tools for monitoring the achievement of objectives are applied with diligence. Apart from that, the reviewers recognize that the university continuously seeks to improve its mechanisms and welcomes the proactive engagement of all stakeholders in enhancing program quality. The university demonstrates a strong commitment to collecting and analyzing relevant data in order to inform decision-making and to foster a culture of continuous improvement.

Moreover, the reviewers note that the university has effective procedures in place to inform current and prospective students about its programs, ensuring that relevant information is clear, accessible, and well-communicated.

Nevertheless, the reviewers have some suggestions on how AUST can further improve its quality assurance system. The reviewers first suggest that students be systematically involved in the concerns of the internal quality management system. To this end, it is recommended to establish a Student Council in which elected students can represent the interests of the student body in a bundled manner. The previous practice, which was described to the reviewers during the site visit, according to which individual students in the cohorts are designated as cohort spokespersons either by their fellow students or by the instructors, is also useful in the opinion of the reviewers to discuss specific concerns within the cohorts. The reviewers also acknowledge that the open-door policy makes it easier for students to represent and solve their individual concerns themselves. The establishment of

a Student Council is primarily intended to ensure that the interests of the student body and their concerns related to internal quality assurance are represented by an institutionalized body.

In addition, AUST should create instruments and communication platforms that enable university members to give anonymous feedback or anonymous complaints. During the site visit, employees stated that they are used to openly communicating their concerns and complaints to the responsible university authorities, while students have the opportunity to give anonymous feedback, at least through the course evaluations. Furthermore, the students referred to the option of submitting a petition on certain issues. During the site visit, individual employees stated that they basically see no need to create channels for submitting feedback and complaints anonymously. According to their reasoning, it is just as possible to settle difficulties quickly and informally through the personal acquaintance of the faculty members with each other and through the open-door policy. The reviewers acknowledge this usual procedure and do not want to prescribe to the university to raise future complaints or similar concerns in an anonymous form. However, the reviewers consider it useful that there is at least the option to submit anonymous feedback and complaints, as this allows the individual preferences of individual employees to be accommodated and makes sure that AUST is prepared for a variety of potential concerns being possibly addressed by the employees. In addition, the reviewers consider it useful with regard to the further development of the internal quality assurance system if certain concerns are documented in written form and not just informally regulated.

Moreover, the reviewers advise AUST to involve its central quality authority – the Quality Assurance Department – more closely in quality-related processes. During the site visit, the reviewers got the impression that the data collected and the knowledge gained on quality concerns, taken for example from the course evaluations, are discussed within the departments and with those responsible for teaching. However, there does not always seem to be a systematic involvement of the central Quality Assurance Department. In the opinion of the reviewers, however, the regular involvement of the Quality Assurance Department is helpful, as it ensures that emerging concerns in the area of quality assurance are sufficiently documented and that an actual derivation of any necessary measures can be checked. The reviewers welcome the fact that such a central quality authority has already been established within the university and therefore recommend the following: The data gathered for quality assurance purposes – such as the course and teaching evaluations – should directly be sent to the central Quality Assurance Department of AUST for them to analyze the data and get in touch with the faculties and departments to be involved in evident matters. The Quality Assurance Department should furthermore be systematically informed about the actions regarding quality assurance that the departments take. By forwarding the data to the Quality Assurance Department and having them follow up on whether measures are taken, the quality loop is ensured to be closed. This

also allows the Quality Assurance Department to maintain a comprehensive view of evaluations, results, and measures across all programs.

The reviewers conclude that all requirements of the sixth criterion concerning quality assurance have been met.

Recommendations

R5 A Student Council should be established in order to systematically take into account the interests of the student body and their concerns with regard to internal quality assurance.

R6 AUST should establish instruments and communication platforms for the staff members to provide anonymous feedback on their wishes and concerns regarding their work conditions at AUST.

R7 The data gathered for quality assurance purposes – such as the course and teaching evaluations – should directly be sent to the central Quality Assurance Department of AUST for them to analyze the data and get in touch with the faculties and departments to be involved in evident matters. The Quality Assurance Department should further-more be systematically informed about the actions regarding quality assurance that the departments take. By forwarding the data to the QAD and having them follow up on whether measures are taken, the quality loop is ensured to be closed. This also allows the QAD to maintain a comprehensive view of evaluations, results, and measures across all programs.

Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.)

Current status

Please refer to the cross-program aspects outlined above: applicable to all degree programs.

Assessment

Please refer to the cross-program evaluation provided under the Bachelor's degree program in Nursing above.

Recommendations

R5 A Student Council should be established in order to systematically take into account the interests of the student body and their concerns with regard to internal quality assurance.

R6 AUST should establish instruments and communication platforms for the staff members to provide anonymous feedback on their wishes and concerns regarding their work conditions at AUST.

R7 The data gathered for quality assurance purposes – such as the course and teaching evaluations – should directly be sent to the central Quality Assurance Department of AUST for them to analyze the data and get in touch with the faculties and departments to be involved in evident matters. The

Quality Assurance Department should further-more be systematically informed about the actions regarding quality assurance that the departments take. By forwarding the data to the QAD and having them follow up on whether measures are taken, the quality loop is ensured to be closed. This also allows the QAD to maintain a comprehensive view of evaluations, results, and measures across all programs.

V. Final assessment

Results of the assessment

Assessment grades

No	Assessment criteria	Assessment
1	Program profile	A
2	Curriculum	A
3	Student assessment	A
4	Organization of the study program	A
5	Resources	A
6	Quality assurance	A

Assessment levels

Level	Assessment	Description
A	Passed.	The program fulfils or exceeds all criteria. All activities are in line with the profile and objectives of the program and provided at a high academic level.
B	Passed subject to conditions	The program does not fulfil some relevant criteria. However, the institution should be able to remedy the shortcomings within twelve months after the assessment.
C	Suspension of the accreditation procedure	The program does not fulfil relevant criteria, but it is likely, that it will be able to remedy the shortcomings within 18 months after the assessment. The HEI may apply for a resumption of the accreditation procedure.
D	Failed	The program does not fulfil relevant criteria, and is not expected to be able to meet all assessment criteria within 18 months' time.

VI. Statement of the university

The university submitted the following statement on 18 November 2025:

“The Faculty of Health Sciences appreciates the constructive recommendations provided for the Nursing and Nutrition & Food Science programs. In response, several actions have been initiated, while others are being planned for implementation during the upcoming academic cycles as follows:

1. Program-Specific Recommendations – Nursing

Recommendation 1

It is clearly stated in the vision of the Nursing Department that the program “will expand to offer unique, needed programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and that it will be recognized internationally according to acknowledged professional standards.”

Our strategic mid-term objective is to progress toward achieving this vision. In this connection, we are exploring the development of a master’s degree and, at a later stage, a PhD. A needs assessment is currently being conducted to evaluate market demand and conduct international benchmarking. In parallel, we are reviewing the feasibility of introducing microcredentials and short certificates aligned with emerging areas in nursing practice to support lifelong learning.

Recommendation 2

The Faculty of Health Sciences has reviewed existing structures in Lebanon and identified the need for a clear mechanism to admit qualified nursing assistants into the bachelor’s program. In fact, we are already offering a Nursing Bridging Program to facilitate the promotion of eligible technical nurses to become holders of a BS in Nursing. This program is designed in accordance with Decree No. 8590 dated 02-08-2012. It allows TS nurses (Technique Supérieure) who have passed their final government exam with a minimum average of 12/20 to join the bridging program. The number of credits in the bridging program represents at least 50% of the credits of the generic BS in Nursing program. Upon successfully completing the program, students are eligible to sit for the qualifying government colloquium.

Recommendation 3

This is well noted. While “Therapeutic and Effective Communication” is addressed in most nursing courses, we will also consider organizing an interdisciplinary workshop focused on communication skills.

Recommendation 4

Towards the end of their academic journey, all students must complete the Internship course (NUR 499P – six credits), during which they are placed in the specialization area or ward of their choice. In addition to facilitating their

transition to practice, this internship may also introduce students to the specialty they aspire to pursue.

Furthermore, we are exploring the introduction of final-year specialization tracks that align with evolving trends in nursing practice. Consultations with clinical partners and faculty members are currently underway. The objective is to design specialization pathways that can later be continued within future master's programs once these programs are established.

2. Program-Specific Recommendations – Nutrition & Food Science

Recommendation 1

Expanding our Nutrition and Food Science program is currently one of our top priorities. In addition to finalizing the MoU with Université Côte d'Opale in France—which will enable our students to pursue further studies and obtain a Food Engineering degree—the department is preparing to launch a new specialty program entitled AI in Food Science and Food Safety. This program will be the first in a series of specialized degrees being developed to address evolving market needs.

Recommendation 3

We fully recognize the importance of strong communication skills for a successful professional career. Our curriculum already emphasizes this competency through course projects that require students to present scientific content to instructors and peers, thereby strengthening their communication and presentation abilities.

To further support the development of these essential skills, we are exploring the introduction of a dedicated workshop led by a theatre director. This initiative is designed to enhance students' confidence, expressiveness, and overall effectiveness in communication.

3. Cross-Program Recommendations (Nursing + Nutrition & Food Science)

Recommendation 5

The University recognizes the importance of a Student Council in fostering student engagement. However, given the current context in Lebanon—where student sociopolitical affiliations may reflect broader national tensions—formal elections could pose a risk of instability on campus.

Nevertheless, students are encouraged to communicate any academic or non-academic concerns directly with their advisors. The Office of the Dean of Students remains fully accessible for support, either through in-person visits or via the internal computerized petition system. These mechanisms ensure that student concerns continue to be heard and addressed in a systematic and effective manner.

Recommendation 6

AUST is currently reviewing several available solutions and is in the process of selecting an institutional platform that will allow staff and faculty to submit their concerns confidentially while ensuring systematic follow-up.

Recommendation 7

The University acknowledges the importance of reinforcing the central role of the Quality Assurance Department (QAD). The QAD will maintain a comprehensive overview of evaluations, outcomes, and improvement measures across all programs, thereby ensuring that the quality loop is effectively closed.”

VII. Accreditation recommendation of the reviewers to the Accreditation Commission

According to the review panel, the study programs Nursing (B.Sc.) and Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.) meet the EVALAG criteria for an international program accreditation. Therefore, the panel recommends them for accreditation and recommends awarding the EVALAG label for international program accreditation.

The review panel recommends AUST to consider the recommendations (R) in this report to further improve the study programs.

Program profile

R1 AUST should consider the development and the set-up of a Master's and possibly also a PhD program building up on the reviewed Bachelor's program. Besides, AUST should consider offering additional qualification options for graduates (e. g. microdegrees, microcredentials).

R2 AUST should find a way to transfer suitable nursing assistants to the Bachelor's program in Nursing.

Curriculum

R3 AUST should put additional emphasis on the communication skills in the training of the students in the program.

R4 For the students to sharpen their individual academic profiles, AUST should consider offering specializations in the final-year of the curriculum that can be followed up in a Master's program, either in a Master's program to be developed at AUST or an established Master's program at partner universities and other higher-education institutions.

Student assessment

None

Organization of the study program

None

Resources

None

Quality assurance

R5 A Student Council should be established in order to systematically take into account the interests of the student body and their concerns with regard to internal quality assurance.

R6 AUST should establish instruments and communication platforms for the staff members to provide anonymous feedback on their wishes and concerns regarding their work conditions at AUST.

R7 The data gathered for quality assurance purposes – such as the course and teaching evaluations – should directly be sent to the central Quality Assurance Department of AUST for them to analyze the data and get in touch with the faculties and departments to be involved in evident matters. The Quality Assurance Department should furthermore be systematically informed about the actions regarding quality assurance that the departments take. By forwarding the data to the QAD and having them follow up on whether measures are taken, the quality loop is ensured to be closed. This also allows the QAD to maintain a comprehensive view of evaluations, results, and measures across all programs.

VIII. Accreditation decision of the Accreditation Commission

In their meeting on 8 December 2025, the members of the EVALAG Accreditation Commission decided unanimously to accredit the study programs Nursing (B.Sc.) und Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.) at the American University of Science and Technology (AUST) in Beirut, Lebanon, until 31 December 2031 with the recommendations made by the review panel. The recommendations are listed in chapter VII.

Annexes

Annex 1: EVALAG assessment criteria for international program accreditation

Annex 2: ESG

Annex 3: Site visit schedule

Annex 1

Assessment criteria for international program accreditation¹⁰

The accreditation criteria used by the EVALAG international program accreditation have been put into effect by the EVALAG Foundation Board. They refer to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and include an analysis of Part 1 of the ESG.

1. Program profile

Profile and objectives of the program

The expert team checks

- 1.1. whether the objectives of the program are in line with the profile and the strategic goals of the institution
- 1.2. whether the intended learning outcomes of the program are well defined and publicly accessible
- 1.3. whether the intended learning outcomes correspond to the type and level of qualification provided by the program
- 1.4. whether the intended learning outcomes are based on academic or professional requirements (standards), public needs and the demands of the labour market and contribute to the employability of the graduates
- 1.5. whether the (academic) study program is related to research (procurement of scientific methods in theory and practice, research based teaching)
- 1.6. whether the profile and objectives of the program comply with internationally accepted standards
- 1.7. the international dimension of the program
- 1.8. whether the qualification of the academic staff is adequate with regard to profile and objectives of the program.

¹⁰ Decision of the Foundation Board, February 18th, 2016, updated December 1st, 2017

2. Curriculum

Curriculum and teaching and learning methods

The expert team checks

- 2.1. whether the curriculum of the program is adequately structured to achieve the intended learning outcomes
- 2.2. whether the curriculum provides the necessary knowledge and methodological expertise of the relevant discipline(s)
- 2.3. whether the learning experience is organized in a way that takes the diversity of students and their needs into account, employs appropriate student-centered teaching and learning methods and encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process.

3. Student assessment

Organization of student assessments

The expert team checks

- 3.1. how the assessment of intended learning outcomes is organized
- 3.2. whether the amount and requirements of assessments are adequate with regard to the intended learning outcomes
- 3.3. whether the requirements of the thesis reflect the level of the degree
- 3.4. whether the assessment criteria are transparent and used in a consistent way
- 3.5. whether the staff undertaking assessments is adequately qualified
- 3.6. whether examination regulations exist and
- 3.7. whether they provide clear and fair regulations for student absence, illness and other mitigating conditions.

4. Organization of the study program

Implementation of the program

The expert team checks

- 4.1. the appropriateness of entry qualifications
- 4.2. the regulations for the recognition of qualifications (i.e. Lisbon Convention)
- 4.3. whether the organization of the study process allows the program to be carried out in such a way that the intended learning outcomes will be achieved and whether the organization of the study process also takes the diversity of students and their needs into account
- 4.4. how the implementation of the program is managed (roles and responsibilities)
- 4.5. whether the workload of the program is adequate with respect to the necessity to reach the intended learning outcomes in the scheduled time frame

- 4.6. how the student life cycle is organized (i. e. all (organizational) relationships between the student and the institution from enrolment to graduation)
- 4.7. whether the care services and student advisory services are suitable
- 4.8. in case of a cooperation with internal and external partners: how the cooperation is organized.

5. Resources

Deployment of resources (finances, personnel, facilities) to sustain HEI programs

The expert team checks

- 5.1. the sustainability of funding and financial management
- 5.2. whether the number and qualification of academic staff (full-time and part-time) is adequate to ensure intended learning outcomes
- 5.3. which strategies and processes for the staff recruiting and staff development are used
- 5.4. whether amount and quality of facilities and equipment allow the provision of the program (library, laboratories, teaching rooms, IT equipment)
- 5.5. whether the amount and quality of the resources provided are adequate to reach the objectives of the program.

6. Quality assurance

Internal and external quality assurance of the program

The expert team checks

- 6.1. how study programs are designed and implemented and how their improvement is organized
- 6.2. whether a quality assurance concept of the program is available and how it is connected to the quality assurance system of the institution
- 6.3. what kind of quality assurance processes and instruments for programs are implemented
- 6.4. whether quality assurance is regularly, systematically and effectively used for quality enhancement
- 6.5. whether quality feedback loops are closed
- 6.6. how the persons responsible for the program systematically collect, analyse and use relevant information
- 6.7. how stakeholders (students, teachers, administration, employers) are involved in quality assurance)
- 6.8. whether relevant program information for students and prospective students is provided.

Annex 2

European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area:

<https://www.enqa.eu/esg-standards-and-guidelines-for-quality-assurance-in-the-european-higher-education-area/>¹¹

¹¹ Last accessed on July 22nd, 2025.

Annex 3

Program accreditation of the study programs Nursing (B.Sc.) and Nutrition and Food Science (B.Sc.)

Schedule for the virtual site visit on 09 and 11 September 2025:

09 September 2025	
13:00-14:00 CEST	Management representatives of AUST and representatives from quality assurance and resource equipment on the level of both programs , i. e. Nursing (B. Sc.) and Nutrition and Food Science (B. Sc.)
14:00 – 14:15 CEST	Break
14:15 – 15:30 CEST	Teaching staff and academic staff from the Nursing (B. Sc.) program
15:30 – 15:45 CEST	Break
15:45 -16:45 CEST	Students and alumni from the Nursing (B. Sc.) program

11 September 2025	
13:00-14:15 CEST	Teaching staff and academic staff from the Nutrition and Food Science (B. Sc.) program
14:15 – 14:30 CEST	Break
14:30 – 15:30 CEST	Students and alumni from the Nutrition and Food Science (B. Sc.) program
15:30 – 16:30 CEST	Internal discussion among the experts and EVALAG
16:30 – 17:00 CEST	Final meeting with AUST