

# BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

## Independent Higher Education (IHE) Reaccreditation Inspection

**INSTITUTION:** American University of Culture and Education

**ADDRESS:** Badaro Campus  
Tayouneh Roundabout  
Omar Bayhom Street  
Beirut  
Lebanon

**HEAD OF INSTITUTION:** Dr. Abdul Majid Abdul Ghani

**DATE OF INSPECTION:** 19 - 20 May 2016 and 17 January 2017

**ACCREDITATION STATUS AT INSPECTION:** Accredited

### DECISION ON REACCREDITATION:

- Reaccreditation awarded for the full four-year period.
- Decision on reaccreditation deferred.
- Award of reaccreditation refused.

Date: 23 March 2017

### 1. Background to the institution

The American University of Culture and Education (AUCE/the University) is a private, independent, non-sectarian, non-profit institution of higher education. It provides higher education programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

With a preceding history of education provision dating back to 1983, the University was formally and legally established as a higher education institution in 2000. It was then fully confirmed as a university by an additional government decree made in June 2009. AUCE is therefore certified and accredited by the Lebanon Ministry of Education to operate as a university-level institution and to provide approved higher education programmes.

The motto of the University is that education has no limits. The University has published a full statement outlining its vision, mission and objectives. There are seven key aims, which include to enhance AUCE's teaching and learning environment to attract and retain well qualified students and instructors and to develop students' skills, competencies and knowledge through university experiences and lifelong learning.

AUCE is governed by a Board of Trustees (the Board). As a private corporation it has a total of eight shareholders, of which five sit on the Board of Trustees. The Board is independent of the executive management of the University and is responsible for the appointment of the President and other senior management staff. There is a separation between the ownership and the internal financial management. The Chief Executive of the University is the President, who is accountable to the Board. At the time of the inspection the President was acting head of AUCE but has since been formerly appointed to this position. AUCE has three faculties, which are the Faculty of Science and Literature, the Faculty of Arts, and the Faculty of Business. Each is led by a Dean of Faculty. Since July 2016, AUCE is led by a new President, who previously held the post of Vice President of Academic Affairs.

AUCE has established formal affiliations and partnerships with a number of academic institutions and commercial organisations, allowing for transfer between campuses, student placement and employment and research collaboration. These include both regional and international associations. The University has planned, for a number of years, to seek validation of its programmes by a university in the United Kingdom (UK), but this prospect has been hindered by the current political circumstances.

The main university campus, which is the only campus that BAC accredits, is located in Badaro, Beirut. There are eight other campuses, which are located in different geographical areas in the Lebanon.

### 2. Brief description of the current provision

AUCE has grown considerably, since its establishment in 2000, from around 150 students studying at the Badaro campus for business and computing degrees to around 850 full and part-time students, covering subjects in business, computing, management and design. The campus has approximately 72 academic staff, of which 40 are full time.

The University offers undergraduate, Master of Business Administration (MBA) and Master of Science (MSc) programmes in the subject fields of business, management, computer science and design. Since 2013, AUCE has hosted three Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) students from one of its collaborative partnerships, whereby the students teach on the undergraduate computer science courses and, in return, they receive supervision for their PhD work from AUCE staff. In this way, the University is extending its supervisory experience and enhancing its research status.

AUCE designs its programmes following the American curriculum and credit systems, providing for flexibility in student study choices and in course design. Other programmes offered by AUCE, in support of its students and staff, are a Freshman Programme, a Student Support Programme, an Intensive English Programme and the AUCE Teaching Diploma. AUCE admits both national and international students. While the current student profile shows the vast majority are from the Lebanon,, there are also 15 students from Syria, ten from Palestine and smaller numbers from around ten other countries, including Europe and the United States (US). The average age profile of the students is 19 to 20 and there are about the same proportion of male and female students.

### 3. Inspection process

Due to the political circumstances in the Lebanon, it was agreed in December 2015 that, taking into account Foreign Office advice, the inspection of AUCE, in Beirut, could not be conducted using the conventional inspection visit and reporting arrangements. The accreditation process has, therefore, been organised in a series of stages over 2016 to 2017. To maintain the flow of information and communication, following the formal expiry of the accreditation status,

monthly reports have been made by AUCE from 2014 onwards, covering key developments and events in the University. These were all considered as a part of the inspection evidence.

The first stage of the inspection itself was to review the application and the self-evaluation report, together with a range of relevant documentation. A desk-based analysis was carried out by the lead inspector, which provided the basis for the next stage. In May 2016, a number of Skype interviews were conducted from the BAC offices. Discussions were conducted with selected groups of staff and students in Beirut. The Skype discussions included senior management, deans and heads of department, teaching staff, students and staff in academic administration and support areas.

In January 2017 a visit was made by a single BAC inspector to AUCE in Beirut, to confirm further the existing evidence and to cover particular aspects of the inspection that required on-site inspection. This visit to the Badaro site inspection was carried out over one day. Meetings were held with the senior management team and the President as well as with academic staff and a group of students. A tour of the premises was carried out and three lessons were observed, covering a cross-section of the programmes running at the time of the inspection. Various documentation was scrutinised and the management information database and student portal were reviewed.

#### **4. Inspection history:**

| <b>Inspection type</b> | <b>Date</b>        |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Full Accreditation     | 15 - 17 March 2010 |
| Interim                | 11 April 2011      |

## PART B - JUDGEMENT AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector(s) during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.

### INSPECTION AREA - GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

#### 1. The institution is effectively and responsibly governed

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 1.1 | The organisational structure, including the role and extent of authority of any owners, directors or governing body, is clearly defined, documented and understood by stakeholders.                                      | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 1.2 | The head of the institution, directors and other relevant persons are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out.                             | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 1.3 | Policies, procedures and systems linking governance and management are well documented and effectively disseminated across the institution.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 1.4 | The institution engages in appropriate risk management planning, which is administered and monitored by named individuals.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 1.5 | The head of the institution, directors and other relevant persons are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out.                             | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 1.6 | The governing body conducts regular risk assessment exercises in all areas of the institution's provision.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 1.7 | All relationships with other educational institutions and organisations are defined formally and are fully transparent, with institutions compliant with partner or parent institutions' requirements, where applicable. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

#### Comments

The Board of Trustees, the senior management team and the University Council have effective oversight of the organisation and its effective operation.

A well-defined risk assessment policy is in place and security risks, business risks and competitor analysis are all under consideration by senior management. However, a full risk assessment of all major areas of the operation is still under development. Little evidence of systematic recorded action planning was seen.

#### 2. The institution has a clear and achievable strategy

- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| 2.1 | The institution has a clear strategy for the development of its higher education provision which is supported by appropriate financial management.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.2 | There is provision for stakeholder input to inform the strategic direction of the institution.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.3 | The strategy is well communicated to all stakeholders within and outside the institution.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.4 | The governing body and senior management conduct a regular and systematic review of their own and the institution's overall performance and measure this performance against strategic targets. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

#### Comments

AUCE has a defined strategy, which contains measurable targets. The University is in the process of developing a revised and more systematic strategic plan, following the changes in management.

AUCE sets and works to strategic targets. It uses appropriate market analysis to inform strategic planning and to assess risk.

Information on the performance of the programmes and student satisfaction is gathered through regular surveys and reviews, and reported to the senior management and considered by the University Council. It was not clear to what extent such information was formally made available and considered by the Board of Trustees, as the governing body.

### 3. Financial management is open, honest and effective

3.1 The institution conducts its financial matters transparently and with appropriate probity.  Yes  No

3.2 The institution's finances are subject to regular independent external audit.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

#### Comments

Financial management has recently been strengthened by the establishment of a financial committee, which regularly monitors and reviews budgets with a view to improving business results.

The financial health of AUCE meets the requirements for accredited institutions as set out by the Lebanese Ministry of Education.

### INSPECTION AREA - ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

#### 4. The institution is effectively managed

4.1 The management structure is clearly defined, documented and understood by all stakeholders including governors, management, staff and students.  Yes  No

4.2 The head of the institution and other senior managers are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out.  Yes  No

4.3 There are clear channels of communication between management, the governing body, staff, students and other stakeholders.  Yes  No

4.4 There are clearly delineated responsibilities and reporting arrangements at institutional, faculty, departmental, programme and course levels. This should include provision for academic leadership at programme and individual course level.  Yes  No

4.5 There is an effective committee structure with appropriate reporting lines which informs management decision-making and provides feedback to stakeholders.  Yes  No

4.6 Committees and other meetings have clear and appropriate terms of reference, are scheduled to meet regularly and are minuted accurately.  Yes  No

4.7 There is a set of comprehensive policies, regulations and procedures for staff and student conduct.  Yes  No

4.8 Management ensures that all information, internal and external, including publicity material, is accurate and fit-for-purpose.  Yes  No

4.9 A policy exists and is administered effectively regarding collection of and refund of student fees.  Yes  No

4.10 Management compiles reports at least annually presenting the results of the institution's reviews and incorporating action plans. Reports include analysis of year-on-year student satisfaction, retention and achievement, staff performance (including research and other forms of scholarship) and a review of resourcing issues.  Yes  No

4.11 Action plans are implemented and reviewed regularly, with outcomes reported to management and subsequently to the governing body.  Yes  No

4.12 Management monitors and reviews academic and administrative staff performance through a clearly documented and transparent appraisal system.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

#### Comments

There is a clearly defined management hierarchy, with job specifications and responsibilities defined at senior management, faculty and programme levels. This is well communicated and understood.

Policies regarding student and staff conduct are clearly set out in the student handbook and in employment-related documentation.

There is an appropriate committee structure in place, with academic committees at faculty and university level. However, the committee minutes, that were seen by inspectors, consisted only of brief notes. A more standardised, professional, informative and detailed record of meetings, with clear actions and accountability, would provide for greater transparency and communication within the University.

The policy on and administration of student fees is well designed and carefully managed to ensure fairness and support for students where necessary. Reminders are given to students and a refund policy is published in the student handbook.

AUCE has developed a full appraisal system, first implemented in 2015, through which a self-assessment is completed in advance by the employee. A review is carried out annually with a line manager, which takes into account peer observation and student feedback. Subsequently, a report is made and appropriate training and development is offered. Not all staff have been through the appraisal process yet. A summary of the outcomes of appraisals is made by the human resources team and contributes to the planning of staff training. The commitment made by the University to this appraisal procedure is commendable.

## 5. Academic management is effective

- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| 5.1 | There are appropriate procedures for the proposal, design and validation of programmes of study which take cognisance of the mission of the institution, national imperatives, market demand and resource issues and reflect international norms. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 5.2 | Management ensures that the stated curricula are delivered as presented in the prospectus and other related documentation, and that requirements from professional or other relevant bodies are met.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 5.3 | There are regular scheduled and minuted meetings of academic staff to review academic programmes.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 5.4 | There is an appropriate policy and effective procedures exist for the acquisition of academic resources to support programmes.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 5.5 | Appraisal of academic staff includes regular classroom observation which is used for the dissemination of good practice.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 5.6 | Academic staff are supported in their continuing professional development and enabled to develop further pedagogic techniques to enhance the learning of students.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

### Comments

The review of the quality of teaching is thorough and intensive. All teachers are observed twice each semester with unannounced visits to classes. They are evaluated against progress reports, which are carried out for the relevant course and are reviewed before the observation. Consideration is given to the approach taken to the syllabus, lesson plans, teaching materials and preparation of students for the final examination.

The assessment of teaching performance and effectiveness is informed by classroom observation and student feedback. The delivery of course units is discussed in heads of department and faculty meetings and in the Deans' regular discussions with the President. This process will include the exchange of good practice.

Professional development for academic staff is well supported, with workshops offered using external expertise and faculty meetings where staff can request support. The faculty meetings also allow for the exchange of good practice. This also takes place through the sharing of training and experience in teaching and administration between the different branches and sites of the University. AUCE has made an internal assessment of the benefits of instructor training.

## 6. The institution if effectively administered

- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| 6.1 | Administrators are suitably qualified and experienced and understand their specific responsibilities and duties.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 6.2 | The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the institution.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 6.3 | The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented and understood and appropriately focused to support its activities. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 6.4 | Policies, procedures and systems are well documented and disseminated effectively across the institution.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 6.5 | Data collection and collation systems are effective and accurate.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 6.6 | Classes are timetabled and rooms allocated appropriately for the courses offered.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 6.7 | Comprehensive administrative records are organised and stored efficiently, easily accessed and used effectively.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

### Comments

A new, recently implemented management information system provides for the efficient administration of programme data and assessment administration as well as student records. It has also strengthened communication with the students, with interfacing through e-mail and text messaging. AUCE will continue to develop the system in order to achieve improvements in the administration.

## 7. The institution employs appropriately qualified and experienced managerial and administrative staff

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 7.1 | There are appropriate policies and effective procedures for the recruitment and continuing employment of suitably qualified and experienced staff. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 7.2 | There are effective procedures for the induction of all staff.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 7.3 | There is a transparent and well-documented appraisal system for all staff.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 7.4 | There are clear and appropriate job specifications for all staff.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 7.5 | All staff are treated fairly and according to a published equality and diversity policy.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 7.6 | The institution has a clear policy regarding the handling of legal issues relating to the employment of staff.                                     | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 7.7 | Staff have access to a complaints and appeals procedure.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 7.8 | Opportunities are provided for the continuing professional development of administrative and managerial staff.                                     | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

### Comments

All the expected policies and procedures are in place to ensure that appropriately qualified and experienced staff are recruited.

Not all staff files systematically include up-to-date documentation, including staff appraisal documentation and employment contracts.

## INSPECTION AREA - TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

### 8. Academic staff are appropriately qualified and effective in facilitating student learning

- |      |  |                                      |                          |                                     |
|------|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 8.1  | Academic staff are appropriately qualified in terms of subject knowledge, pedagogic and communicative skills, and experienced for the courses to which they are allocated.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |
| 8.2  | The programmes and their constituent courses are delivered and assessed in ways that enable students to succeed by developing the knowledge and skills which will be required for final examinations or assessments. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |
| 8.3  | Learning outcomes for all programmes are articulated and are publicly available.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |
| 8.4  | Academic staff are effective in recognising individual learning needs and preferred learning styles and adapting their delivery to meet these.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |
| 8.5  | Academic staff ensure the active participation of all students in class activities.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |
| 8.6  | Academic staff use a mixture of large and small group and individual activities, to encourage and support students' learning.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |
| 8.7  | Academic staff supply students with access to any additional learning materials as appropriate to support student learning.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |
| 8.8  | Academic staff produce schemes of work and detailed lesson plans and lodge these with the administration.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |
| 8.9  | Academic staff draw upon current research in their teaching.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |
| 8.10 | Students are encouraged and enabled to develop independent learning skills.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |
| 8.11 | Where appropriate, students are given the opportunity to obtain relevant workplace experience.   | <input type="radio"/> Yes            | <input type="radio"/> No | <input checked="" type="radio"/> NA |
| 8.12 | Students have access to teaching staff outside teaching and learning sessions.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |
| 8.13 | The institution provides students and academic staff with access to appropriate resources and materials for study and encourages and supports their use of these.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

### Comments

AUCE staff are well qualified and there is a strong commitment to ensuring high quality teaching. Instructors hold at least Master level qualifications. Their teaching ability is assessed on appointment and they are required to have existing appropriate experience.

All course programmes are subject to review and assessment, with reporting to faculty committees.

The lesson observations, that were conducted during the inspection, showed that good teaching practice is undertaken in lessons. Good questioning techniques and interaction, relevant group work and effective feedback were observed.

Full curricular syllabus descriptions are in place and are provided to students in booklet format on the website. Each module has defined learning outcomes, which are then divided into smaller objectives for weekly lesson plans. Study plans serve to integrate individual modules into course programme schemes. The level of achievement of learning outcomes is a part of the moderation procedure.

Instructors are specifically encouraged to discuss their research area with students and students may be involved as assistant researchers. Students undertake research as a part of their programme, through projects or case studies.

The student portal is an important resource for study materials, providing on-line course resources and staff and student uploads of information, materials and completed assignments. An on-line discussion forum is under development and will be fully implemented during 2017. AUCE is recommended to give strong support to the full implementation of the student portal and to populate it with learning materials for all its programmes.

Workplace experience is not a requirement of the AUCE study programmes. However, for the relevant disciplines, students wishing to seek a work placement will receive guidance and academic references. AUCE has well-established contacts with local employers.

| 9. <b>Assessment is fair, well-organised and appropriate for the level and nature of the courses, and students receive timely and supportive feedback on their work</b> |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 9.1   | Students are provided with an assessment schedule in which required coursework and revision periods are detailed in advance with clear submission dates.       | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 9.2   | Assessment strategies are relevant to the content and nature of the courses and focused on measuring students' achievement of the intended learning outcomes.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 9.3   | Assessment tasks are clearly written, indicating what students need to do to achieve stipulated levels of achievement.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 9.4   | Students receive detailed and supportive oral and written feedback on their assessments and overall performance and progress, which are effectively monitored. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 9.5   | There are secure and efficient procedures for the administration of examinations and other means of assessment.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 9.6   | The institution takes appropriate steps to identify and discourage cheating, including plagiarism and other misdemeanours, and to penalise offenders.          | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 9.7   | There are clear policies and procedures for students to claim mitigating circumstances and to appeal against marks awarded.                                    | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 9.8   | There are effective procedures for internal and external moderation at pre- and post-assessment stages.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 9.9   | The institution makes student records and transcripts available to its students in a timely manner.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

#### Comments

Information on assessment is well defined and communicated to students and there is an alignment of assessment with learning outcomes, which is moderated as part of course review.

Students receive both written and verbal feedback on their work, their grades and progression. Grades are monitored at faculty level and then submitted to the central administration for entry to the student record. During the inspection, examples of marked student work demonstrated that only verbal feedback was sometimes given, with merely a grade recorded on the assignment. AUCE should introduce a common assessment and marking policy which ensures that written feedback is always provided to students on any written work.

Information on academic integrity and plagiarism is included in the student handbook. Plagiarism is checked by commercial software.

Students reported that assessment is carried out fairly and properly conducted. Arrangements for appeals against grade marking, called petitions, are in place and these are well understood by students.

AUCE has arrangements in place for the internal moderation of assessment. AUCE states, in its self-evaluation report, that external moderators are used to moderate final examination results and the overall student grade pattern. Evidence was seen of brief external moderator reports for some discipline areas. It was not clear, however, how systematically the use of external moderation is and AUCE is recommended to ensure that external moderation is in place for final assessment in all of its degree-level programmes. It may also seek to strengthen the external moderation by giving guidance on the moderator's report and by including greater attention to the curriculum design and delivery.

10. **The institution encourages and supports its staff to undertake research and other forms of scholarship and to engage in other professional activities**

- 10.1 Academic staff are encouraged and supported to undertake research in relevant fields and to publish their findings.  Yes  No
- 10.2 Academic staff contracts require academic staff to engage in research and/or scholarship relevant to their teaching and other duties.  Yes  No
- 10.3 The institution encourages and supports staff to obtain additional qualifications.  Yes  No
- 10.4 There is a fair and transparent procedure for staff to seek financial support for their research and other professional development activities.  Yes  No
- 10.5 The institution provides time for staff to meet regularly to share and discuss current research activities and, if appropriate, invites external speakers.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

AUCE has a strong commitment to research. This is reflected in the academic staff contract and also through formal expectations for regular publication, the explicit support for research time and the recognition and celebration of research achievement. AUCE conducts collaborative research projects with partner higher education institutions.

**INSPECTION AREA - STUDENT RECRUITMENT, SUPPORT, GUIDANCE AND PROGRESSION**

11. **Publicity material, both printed and electronic, gives a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the institution and its curriculum**

- 11.1 Text and images provide an accurate depiction of the institution's location, premises, facilities and the range and nature of resources and services offered.  Yes  No
- 11.2 Information on the programmes available is comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date.  Yes  No
- 11.3 There are effective procedures to update information on a regular basis.  Yes  No
- 11.4 Students are informed of the status of the qualifications offered, including the awarding body and level of award.  Yes  No
- 11.5 Students are given some indication of the type of careers graduates may follow and any professional body exemptions that may be available.  Yes  No
- 11.6 Students are informed of the full cost of all programmes, including costs of assessments and any required materials.  Yes  No
- 11.7 Students are informed as to the necessary English language requirements for entry on to programmes.  Yes  No
- 11.8 The institution has a clear policy on the accreditation of prior learning and prior experiential learning which is brought to the attention of prospective students.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

The AUCE website provides a useful range of information, including details of faculties and a list of their programmes, regulations and fees as well as photo galleries of events organised by the University. While relatively modest, the website is accurate and informative.

Other marketing and promotional activities include orientation visits to schools in the region to inform potential students about the AUCE offer.

Students confirmed that they had all the information, that they required about AUCE, including details of the qualifications they are studying for, entry requirements and how AUCE will help them to get jobs.

Students expressed positive views regarding career progression and job prospects. AUCE organises regular recruitment fairs, where students can meet possible recruiters. The students confirmed that the instructors talk about employment opportunities, that they can apply for and that companies come to AUCE to talk to the students about possible jobs. They are informed, in a transparent manner, regarding the costs of their programme. The fees are clearly stated on the AUCE website and on registration.

AUCE has a clearly defined policy on grade transfer, which is published in the student handbook. All such applications must be formally approved by a member of the senior management.

**12. The institution takes reasonable care to recruit and enrol suitable students for its courses**

- |      |   |                                      |                          |                                     |
|------|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 12.1 | Entry requirements for each programme are set at an appropriate level and clearly stated in the programme descriptions seen by prospective students.                            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |
| 12.2 | A formal application process ensures that students meet the entry requirements and any claimed qualifications are verified.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |
| 12.3 | Prospective students are properly briefed on the nature and requirements of the programme(s) in which they are interested and provided with advice on choosing their programme. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |
| 12.4 | All application enquiries are responded to promptly and appropriately.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |
| 12.5 | Any recruitment agents are properly selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated.   | <input type="radio"/> Yes            | <input type="radio"/> No | <input checked="" type="radio"/> NA |
| 12.6 | Students receive a proper initial assessment, which includes language ability, to confirm their capability to complete the programmes on which they are enrolling.              | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |
| 12.7 | Students with special needs are identified so that appropriate support can be provided.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |
| 12.8 | Entry on the basis of accreditation of prior learning and prior experiential learning is subject to a rigorous process and is clearly documented.                               | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |                                     |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

The procedures on applications and admissions to AUCE are well regulated and include a review of high school grades, an English language test and a personal interview.

AUCE has a formal policy for transfer from another institution with advanced standing, following the US model for grade transfer. This is clearly documented and published in the student handbook. Transfer application is subject to formal approval.

**13. Students receive pastoral support appropriate to their age, background and circumstances**

- |      |   |                                      |                          |
|------|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 13.1 | There is at least one named staff member responsible for student welfare who is suitably trained, accessible to all students and available to provide advice and counselling. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| 13.2 | Students receive an appropriate induction and information on the pastoral support available to them.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| 13.3 | Students are issued with a contact number for out-of-hours and emergency telephone support.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| 13.4 | The institution has policies to avoid discrimination and a published procedure for dealing with any abusive behaviour.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| 13.5 | There are effective systems to communicate with students out of class hours.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

Students confirmed that there is a well organised induction process with comprehensive and helpful information.

Students are provided with a support tutor's e-mail and mobile number.

The Student Handbook contains statements on discrimination, appropriate behaviour, academic integrity and etiquette.

**14. Students receive appropriate guidance**

- |      |  |   |
|------|--|---|
| 14.1 | Students are given an induction to the institution, their programme of study and guidance on the use of facilities such as the library and IT.                         | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 14.2 | Additional support or advice on alternative programmes is provided to students who are judged not to be making sufficient progress to succeed.                         | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 14.3 | Students have access to a fair complaints procedure of which they are informed in writing at the start of the course and offered guidance in submitting a complaint.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 14.3 | Students have access to careers advice and guidance, including progression to further study, from a designated and suitably qualified and experienced member of staff. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 14.3 | Students have access to careers information including prospectuses for further study.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met  NA

**Comments**

Students are very positive in their comments on the quality and the range of support provided by AUCE.

A comprehensive Student Handbook provides information to students on all aspects of their studies at AUCE, including the availability of the petitions, complaints and appeals procedures.

AUCE provides a career planning and development service and regularly organises job fairs at which students can meet recruiters.

**15. Student progress is measured and recorded regularly on the basis of adequate and explicit data and effective remedial action taken where necessary**

- |      |   |   |
|------|---|---|
| 15.1 | Assessment outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of students who are not making satisfactory progress and there is prompt intervention where appropriate. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 15.2 | There is a clear and published policy on required student attendance and punctuality, with effective procedures and systems to enforce it.                              | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 15.3 | Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all students, collated centrally and reviewed at least weekly.                   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 15.4 | Student absences are followed up promptly and appropriate action taken.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 15.5 | Students are each allocated a personal tutor who is responsible for the regular review of students' progress.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met  NA

**Comments**

The monitoring of assessment, by academic management, is sound. Students are also able to monitor their own progress, through the student portal.

The management of attendance is thorough, with clear guidance and appropriate policies, daily recording and monitoring and established follow-up procedures.

16. **International students are provided with specific advice and assistance**

- 16.1 Before their arrival, international students receive appropriate advice on travelling to and living in the country or location.  Yes  No
- 16.2 On arrival, international students receive an appropriate induction in issues specific to the local area.  Yes  No
- 16.3 Information and advice specific to international students continue to be available throughout their time at the institution.  Yes  No
- 16.4 Provision of support takes into account cultural and religious considerations. Where possible, students have access to speakers of their own first language.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met  NA

**Comments**

There is currently an appropriate level of support, briefing, and information provided on an individual or group basis for the relatively small number of international students. This includes visa support, and orientation advice. However, there is no specifically targeted induction arrangement for these students as a group to ensure they systematically receive the necessary information in a consistent way. Specific information for international students is not included on the University's website so that they can review it prior to arrival at AUCE.

17. **Where residential accommodation is offered, it is fit-for-purpose, well maintained and appropriately supervised**

- 17.1 Any residential accommodation is clean, safe and of a standard which is adequate for the needs of students.  Yes  No
- 17.2 Any residential accommodation is open to inspection by the appropriate authorities.  Yes  No  NA
- 17.3 A level of supervision is provided appropriate to the needs of students.  Yes  No
- 17.4 Students are provided with advice on suitable private accommodation.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met  NA

**Comments**

18. **The institution provides an appropriate social programme for students and information on activities in the locality**

- 18.1 Students are provided with appropriate information on opportunities for participation at events and other leisure activities which may be of interest.  Yes  No
- 18.2 The social programme is responsive to the needs and wishes of students.  Yes  No
- 18.3 Any activities within the social programme have been chosen with consideration of their affordability by the majority of students.  Yes  No
- 18.4 Any activities organised by the institution are supervised by a responsible representative with suitable qualifications and experience.  Yes  No
- 18.5 Students are encouraged to develop and participate in extra-mural activities.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

A wide variety of social and sporting activities is provided for students. These include seminars and presentations by invited speakers, a multi-religion festival, a celebration of the national day of independence, parties at Christmas and Halloween and a staff and student football match. Students confirmed their positive experience of this varied social programme.

#### INSPECTION AREA - PREMISES, FACILITIES AND LEARNING RESOURCES

##### 19. The institution has secure possession of and access to its premises

- 19.1 The institution has secure tenure on its premises.  Yes  No
- 19.2 The institution has the legal right to use these premises for the delivery of higher education.  Yes  No
- 19.3 Where required, the institution has access to suitable external premises for academic or non-academic purposes of a temporary or occasional nature.  Yes  No  NA

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met  NA

#### Comments

##### 20. The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for students and staff

- 20.1 Access to the premises is appropriately restricted and secured.  Yes  No
- 20.2 The premises are maintained in an adequate state of repair, decoration and cleanliness.  Yes  No
- 20.3 There are specific safety rules in areas of particular hazard (e.g. science laboratories) which are brought to the attention of students, staff and visitors.  Yes  No  NA
- 20.4 General guidance on health and safety is made available to students, staff and visitors.  Yes  No
- 20.5 There is adequate signage inside and outside the premises and notice boards for the display of general information.  Yes  No
- 20.6 There is adequate circulation space for the number of students and staff accommodated, and a suitable area in which to receive visitors.  Yes  No
- 20.7 There are toilet and hand-washing facilities of an appropriate number and acceptable level of cleanliness.  Yes  No
- 20.8 There is adequate air conditioning, heating and ventilation in all rooms.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

#### Comments

Security is assured by a full-time security office. The premises are monitored by an extensive system of closed circuit television cameras (CCTV) throughout the campus building and outside. Students carry identification cards.

The campus premises are spacious, fit for purpose and well-maintained. Criteria relating to health and safety, signage, circulation, hygiene and ventilation are met.

21. **Classroom and other learning areas are appropriate for the programmes offered**

- 21.1 Classrooms and other learning areas provide adequate accommodation in size and number for the classes (e.g. lectures, seminars, tutorials) allocated to them.  Yes  No
- 21.2 Classrooms and any specialised learning areas (e.g. laboratories, clinics, workshops, studios) are equipped to a level which allows for the effective delivery of each programme.  Yes  No
- 21.3 There are facilities suitable for conducting assessments such as examinations.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met  NA

**Comments**

The classrooms are spacious and light, appropriately equipped with fixed projectors and whiteboards and adequately furnished. The art rooms have appropriate equipment and there is good space to display the students' artwork and interior design projects. There is a large lecture room and a large art space, which are very attractive.

AUCE should make better provision for networked systems in some of the classrooms so that on-line resources can be used by instructors to support the learning.

22. **There are appropriate additional facilities for students and staff**

- 22.1 Students have access to sufficient space and suitable facilities for private individual study and group work.  Yes  No
- 22.2 Academic staff have access to sufficient personal space for preparing lessons, marking work and consultations with students.  Yes  No
- 22.3 Students and staff have access to space and facilities suitable for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink where appropriate.  Yes  No
- 22.4 Students and staff have access to secure storage for personal possessions where appropriate.  Yes  No
- 22.5 There are individual offices or rooms in which academic staff and senior management can hold private meetings and a room of sufficient size to hold staff meetings.  Yes  No
- 22.5 Administrative offices are adequate in size and suitably resourced for the effective administration of the institution.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met  NA

**Comments**

The campus building is well planned and provides study spaces, rooms for private meeting and small tutorials and for relaxation and refreshment. Office and administration accommodation is appropriate and fit for purpose.

23. **The library is appropriately stocked and provides a fit-for-purpose learning resource for the student body**

- 23.1 The library is adequately staffed with appropriately qualified and experienced staff.  Yes  No
- 23.2 The library has sufficient space for student independent study and group working.  Yes  No
- 23.3 There is sufficient provision of learning materials including books, journals and periodicals and online materials.  Yes  No
- 23.4 There is a well-organised lending policy.  Yes  No
- 23.5 There are clear, systematic and effective means of ensuring the adequacy and currency of library stock to reflect staff and student needs.  Yes  No
- 23.6 Library opening times are sufficient to encourage and support student independent learning.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met  NA

**Comments**

The library is spacious and well-stocked. It has recently been strengthened with a substantial purchase of new books and a systematic updating of stock, which was carried out in 2013. There is good access to a range of on-line study and research resources, including subscription to an e-library and electronic journals.

The library lending policy is clear and included in information to students.

24. **The information technology resources are well managed and provide a fit-for-purpose learning resource for the student body**

- 24.1 There are sufficient computers of the necessary specification to meet student and staff needs.  Yes  No
- 24.2 There is provision of appropriate, up-to-date, software which reflects the needs of the programmes.  Yes  No
- 24.3 There is an effective means of ensuring the renewal of hardware and software to ensure efficiency and currency.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

The level of access to desktop computers is good, including the Information Technology (IT) lab for research and completing assignments. Students can also use their own laptops with the campus wireless system.

A full range of appropriate software is installed as needed by subject areas, and there is an IT service team to support the computing facilities.

AUCE has in place a web-based student portal, through which students can access a variety of useful information, track their study progress and make changes to their course choices.

## INSPECTION AREA - QUALITY MANAGEMENT, ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

### 25. The institution has effective systems to review its own standards and assess its own performance

- |      |  |   |
|------|--|---|
| 25.1 | The institution undertakes regular and systematic monitoring of its operations.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 25.2 | The institution conducts periodic reviews of all aspects of its performance against clearly specified and appropriate performance indicators.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 25.3 | The nominated leader for each course produces an end of-session (semester or year) report which includes measures of student satisfaction, completion rates and achievement levels.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 25.4 | The nominated programme leader, drawing upon reports from its constituent courses, produces an annual programme report which includes analysis of year-on-year results on student satisfaction, achievement levels, completion rates and progression to further study or employment. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 25.5 | Reports, which present the results of the institution's reviews, evaluate its performance and incorporate action plans, are compiled at least annually. These are considered by senior management and the board of trustees and, where appropriate, shared with all stakeholders.    | <input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No |
| 25.6 | All programmes are subject to annual review and to full revalidation every five years.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 25.7 | Annual review and revalidation of programmes involve external assessors.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 25.8 | All quality management policies and procedures are clearly documented, for example in a quality manual or similar, and brought to the attention of staff and, where appropriate, students and other stakeholders.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 25.9 | Particular attention is paid to the quality of the student learning experience and to ensuring there is fair treatment of all students.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

#### Comments

Quality assurance policy and procedures are well advanced. The University has developed a comprehensive quality assurance guide, coordinated by the quality assurance department and published early in 2016. This sets out in detail the tools, procedures, responsibilities and expected outcomes of internal assessment in the University. The guide has been externally reviewed by the Ministry of Education and by an external international expert. Following the review, additions are being made, including more details on internal audit arrangements. The guide will receive final approval at the end of 2017. The development and implementation of the quality assurance procedures, that are set out in the guide, will serve well to strengthen academic and administrative operations in the University and this is a project to be commended.

All academic programmes are reviewed periodically through course evaluation procedures, which set out clear indicators for satisfactory performance. AUCE is currently engaged in a flow of work, process re-engineering project, aimed at achieving a more productive and efficient operation of all services supporting students. To achieve this, an internal audit of administrative and support services has been conducted and the resulting report identifies areas for improvement and the establishment of new criteria as necessary. This initiative is to be further extended and is also commendable.

Course reviews take place through the departmental assessment of performance. This is completed on the basis of semester evaluations of programmes and of teaching faculty. The departmental assessment draws together progress reports, instructor surveys, student feedback and course data on student progress. Heads of Department present the resulting reports to Deans and finally to the Vice-President Academic and actions are identified as required. Ongoing monitoring of programme performance takes place in regular meetings between Heads and Deans.

25.5 The procedures outlined above provide a good basis for a robust quality management system. Nevertheless, no evidence was seen of a reporting procedure, which provides a full overview of the University's performance, producing information which was then considered on an annual basis by the senior bodies of AUCE and by the Board of Trustees.

There is no formal five yearly re-validation process. Instead, as a smaller institution, the approach taken by the University

involves ongoing assessment of course performance and making adjustments over time. For instance, AUCE has carried out a recent evaluation of the outcomes of the courses. This review has led to a change in the structure of the course programmes, a realignment of assessment and grading and an increased focus on the majors and the introduction of more electives to make the courses more flexible. These changes came about as, in part, a result of student survey-based information.

**26. The institution regularly obtains and records feedback from students and other stakeholders and takes appropriate action where necessary**

- |      |   |   |
|------|---|---|
| 26.1 | Views of all stakeholders, including academic staff and students, partner institutions and employers, are canvassed and recorded regularly through various means, including face-to-face meetings, feedback questionnaires and, where appropriate, formal student representation. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 26.2 | The views of stakeholders are considered objectively, evaluated thoroughly and, where necessary, appropriate action is taken.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 26.3 | There are effective means of responding to stakeholders' opinions and keeping them informed of any actions taken and reasons for no action being taken, through formal feedback mechanisms.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 26.4 | Key performance indicators will include analysis of student outcomes in terms of the current year and year-on-year performance and any significant variations in student achievement between different programme components.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 26.5 | The institution engages with the wider community, such as employers and its alumni, in a formal and systematic manner in order to obtain feedback on the relevance of its provision and to identify areas for development.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

AUCE makes full and regular use of student feedback on programmes and acts on the outcomes. There is a suggestion box available for anonymous feedback. The University also periodically seeks feedback from alumni and it has carried out a survey of employers of graduates, so as to better assess the relevance and impact of its programmes in the marketplace.

The arrangements for communicating the response to feedback rely on informal reporting, although students clearly stated that they had been made aware of actions taken in response to their feedback and were able to give examples. AUCE would benefit from the introduction of a more systematic communication of the responses made to student feedback.

The course evaluation includes consideration of student outcomes for the current year and performance against a number of stated criteria. Analysis and comparison of performance across years and programmes takes place, through the consideration of reports in departmental meetings.

**27. The institution has a strong commitment to, and procedures that facilitate, continuing enhancement of its provision**

- |      |  |   |
|------|--|---|
| 27.1 | All stakeholders are invited and encouraged to make suggestions for enhancement.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 27.2 | In their annual appraisal, all staff are required to identify where they have facilitated enhancement and to identify further areas requiring enhancement. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 27.3 | End-of session course and annual programme reports should include enhancements made and identify further areas requiring enhancement.                      | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 27.4 | Action plans are implemented and reviewed regularly within the institution's committee structure.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 27.5 | Staff professional development needs are identified through appraisal and other means, and measures taken to support staff to address these.               | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 27.6 | The institution has formal mechanisms to monitor the information it provides internally and externally and to make any enhancements deemed necessary.      | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

AUCE conducts surveys of students, staff and of graduate employers with a view to identifying levels of satisfaction and

areas for improvement.

Arrangements for producing and discussing programme-level reports involve meetings at departmental and faculty level which provide opportunity for enhancement-led planning.

Staff appraisal reports are co-ordinated by the human resources section with a view to identifying staff development needs. Faculty and staff are encouraged to attend workshops and training programmes and to complete studies leading to additional qualifications. PhD study by academic staff is encouraged and supported.

There is good evidence that meetings and discussions are held regularly on a formal basis to survey a wide range of information with a view to student satisfaction and programme improvement. Internal audits and assessment are further examples of these.

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#### **COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes  No

## PART C - SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

Numbering of action points aligns with that of the minimum standards

### GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

#### Institution's strengths

The University's structures for governance and management are good.

There is a clear strategic vision, an established structure of accountability and good communication between departments, faculties and senior management. AUCE uses strategic planning, the setting of targets and regular performance assessment as a part of its strategic management. This provides effective support for a consistent and informed approach to organisational management.

AUCE has a robust system for carrying out regular review of its programmes against its strategic priorities, giving attention to their currency, effectiveness and vocational relevance. This will help to ensure that studies and teaching are up to date and provide good opportunities for graduate employability.

Administrative and management staff are well qualified and professionally experienced.

| Actions required | Priority H/M/L  |
|------------------|---|
| None.            | <input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low |

### ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

#### Institution's strengths

There is a well established management hierarchy from course co-ordinator to head of department to faculty dean, with associated reporting procedures.

Teaching staff and senior academic management are well qualified. Staff performance is regularly monitored and supported.

Appropriate academic policies and procedures are well documented in the AUCE student handbook and quality assurance guide.

AUCE has recently developed and introduced a comprehensive procedure for staff appraisal.

The implementation of an improved management information system has strengthened institutional record keeping, performance analysis and communication with students.

| Actions required | Priority H/M/L  |
|------------------|---|
| None.            | <input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low |

## TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

### Institution's strengths

The curriculum for each programme is carefully defined, with every module having specified learning outcomes and individual lesson objectives. This will ensure that staff and students have a good understanding of what is to be learned and how that learning will take place.

The University's arrangements for reviewing the quality of teaching are thorough and intensive. Professional development is provided. This shows a strong institutional commitment to providing a positive learning experience for its students.

Assessment is well managed, with moderated marking, helpful feedback, clear explanation of grades and tutorial support provided as necessary.

The University's academic regulations and other student policies are well set out and made widely accessible in the student handbook.

AUCE shows a strong commitment to academic research and teaching staff are able to include their research interests in their teaching and involve students in research-based projects.

| Actions required | Priority H/M/L  |
|------------------|---|
| None.            | <input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low |

## STUDENT RECRUITMENT, SUPPORT, GUIDANCE AND PROGRESSION

### Institution's strengths

Arrangements for recruiting and admitting students, for initial induction briefing and more general information throughout their studies and for general student advice and support are all of a high standard. Students commented positively on all these support areas.

The monitoring of student progress, maintenance of student records and management of attendance are all sound features of the student administration.

Students have access to careers advice and guidance and AUCE organises job fairs which are an excellent opportunity for students to meet and discuss with local and regional employers.

AUCE offers a full programme of extramural and social events, including sporting activities, to its students.

| Actions required | Priority H/M/L  |
|------------------|---|
| None.            | <input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low |

## PREMISES, FACILITIES AND LEARNING RESOURCES

### Institution's strengths

Facilities and learning resources are fit for purpose and effectively support AUCE's aims as a higher education teaching and research institution. As a result, students enjoy a positive learning environment which supports their studies well.

| Actions required | Priority H/M/L  |
|------------------|---|
| None.            | <input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low |

## QUALITY MANAGEMENT, ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

### Institution's strengths

AUCE has put in place many policies and procedures which make a valuable contribution to the maintenance of the academic quality of its programmes and their ongoing development and improvement. These measures include the establishment of the quality assurance unit, the compiling and publication of the quality assurance guide, the regular review and evaluation of programmes and the introduction of internal audits and assessments.

All programmes are reviewed on a regular basis, and evaluation takes into account student feedback, instructor surveys, progress reports and analysis of data. In this way, the maintenance of standards and the necessary adjustment and development of programmes to meet student need and market-place developments is assured.

Assessment is well managed, with external moderation used for final examination assessment. This helps to ensure consistency and fairness in marking and assessment.

The University's flow of work analysis being implemented as a part of internal assessment procedures is a positive initiative and will serve to improve the efficiency of its administrative and support functions.

| Actions required  | Priority H/M/L   |
|---|--|
| 25.5 AUCE must develop and put in place a procedure for compiling an overview report on its whole institutional performance. This must be considered on an annual basis by the senior management, the University Council and the Board of Trustees. | <input type="radio"/> High <input checked="" type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low |

### RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

It is recommended that AUCE makes formal, recorded, risk assessments. Action points to address risk areas, together with key responsibilities, should be identified in the resulting record or report.

AUCE should make information on the overall review of institutional performance available to the Board of Trustees, for consideration on a periodic and systematic basis.

It is recommended that the minute-taking procedures for meetings of the main university committees be reviewed and a standard approach agreed. This might usefully include a brief outline of the agenda topic, the outcome of discussion, and identification of any actions to be taken and persons responsible.

The newly introduced appraisal system is a positive feature and the University will need to ensure that it is applied to all areas and categories of staff over a period of time.

The University is strongly encouraged to further develop the use of data in informing its management decisions, using the new management information system to its full potential and embedding this in its wider practice. For instance, in course evaluation.

AUCE should ensure that all staff files include the up-to-date documentation including staff appraisal documentation and employment contracts.

AUCE should work towards the full implementation of the student portal for all its programmes, so that students can upload their assignments and readily access course materials uploaded by the instructor.

To ensure consistency in assessment policy, AUCE may wish to make it a requirement that for all written work the student receives written comments as feedback, perhaps through a standard grading format.

AUCE is recommended to ensure that external moderation is in place for final assessment in all its degree-level programmes.

While it is recognised that AUCE has only a relatively small number of international students, it is advised that relevant information for international students be added to the University's website, so that such students can review it prior to arrival.

It is also recommended that AUCE develop and implement a standardised checklist approach to the induction that is provided for international students, so that it can be ensured that all such students receive the necessary information in a consistent way.

AUCE should make more provision for networked systems in some of the classrooms so that online resources can be used by instructors to support the learning.

AUCE should consider establishing a systematic mechanism to report to students on the actions taken in response to their feedback.

AUCE is recommended to make an explicit identification of key performance indicators for programmes and by the definition of a formal procedure for the review of such indicators, including comparative aspects.

## **COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**