



**AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY
OF BEIRUT**

Mediterraneo

March 3, 2023

Prof. Mary Koutselini
President
Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation
in Higher Education (CYQAA)
Lemesou Avenue 5,
2112, Lefkosia Cyprus

Subject: Institution Response to CYQAA's decision to postpone the decision for the Institutional, Departmental and Programmatic accreditations of the American University of Beirut Mediterraneo

Dear Prof. Koutselini,

The leadership team and the various constituents at the American University of Beirut (AUB) send their sincere appreciation and regards to you, CYQAA officers, and the council members for the due diligence in evaluating the American University of Beirut – Mediterraneo (AUB Mediterraneo) and its proposed departments and programs.

On February 23, 2023, in its 90th submit, the Council of the CYQAA decided to postpone any decision on the Departments and programs until the completion of the Institutional Evaluation. Accreditation of the (1) Institution, (2) Psychology Dept. and Program, (3) Computer Science Dept. and Program, and (4) PPE Dept. and Program is pending the institution's response to six points. The institution addressed the six points and is enclosing its response below.

- 1. The internal quality assurance procedures of the institution should be aligned with the legislative framework of Cyprus, e.g. periodic evaluation every 5 years and not every 8 years.**

Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) requires AUB Mediterraneo to undergo a comprehensive Self-Study Evaluation and On-Site Evaluation Visit at least every eight years. This is why we noted the 8-year period. However, AUB Mediterraneo will surely comply with the legislative framework of Cyprus and is ready to undergo the

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periodic evaluation by year 5. This is actually beneficial as well and will allow AUB Mediterraneo to be ready earlier for the review by MSCHE.

2. The ranks of the academic faculty should be in accordance with the legal framework of Cyprus, i.e., Lecturer, Assistant, Associate, Professor.

Professorial titles (Professor, Associate professor, Assistant professors) are normally granted to full-time faculty members who have completed their higher education within their own discipline (normally Ph.D.) and who meet the academic qualifications established by their faculties/schools and the University. In our model, faculty members normally start their career at the rank of Assistant Professor, and are required to apply for promotion/tenure maximum in their 6th year of appointment. Assistant Professors that are not granted tenure must leave the institution. Once a tenured Associate Professor, the faculty member normally should apply for promotion to tenured full professor, but has the ability to stay as a tenured associate professor. Tenured faculty members have a contract for life, but should undergo post tenure evaluation to ensure that they are progressing in their research.

Lecturer title is given to Ph.D. holders whose main duties are focused on teaching and services, excluding research. Lecturers are on contract basis normally for a period of three years renewable based on the recommendation of the department. Lecturers are evaluated on their teaching and services excellence. There is no promotion path from Lecturer to Assistant Professors. However, Lecturers that are active in research can apply to advertised professorial position at the rank of Assistant Professor and be evaluated among the pool of candidates. The academic are defined in the “Charter” submitted in the application.

3. Submit a legal document (e.g. charter, agreement, memorandum of understanding) clarifying the relationship between the American University of Beirut - Mediterraneo (AUBM) and the parent institution in Beirut. AUBM must not be a branch of AUB, but rather an autonomous university in Cyprus.

Kindly find attached a memorandum of understanding (MoU) <MoU_AUB_AUB-Limited.pdf> between AUB represented by its President, Fadlo Khuri, and AUB Limited (the Cypriot company that is establishing AUB Mediterraneo) represented by its director Wassim El Hajj, confirming the autonomy of AUB Mediterraneo. AUB Mediterraneo has its own budget and makes its own decisions without getting any approval from staff, faculty, or administrators at AUB. This is in line with the governance structure presented in the AUB Mediterraneo Charter that was submitted as part of the accreditation application (kindly check section 4.0 of the attached Charter <Charter.pdf>).

4. Program coordinators must be permanent faculty members of the institution from either Lebanon or the EU and live permanently, or seconded in Cyprus.

The institution confirms that all deans and program coordinators will be residing in Cyprus

and fully dedicated to their job and tasks at AUB Mediterraneo.

5. Recruit academic and administrative staff based in Cyprus and send a full list to the CYQAA. International Calls for academics, Contracts and MOUs of employment must be sent to the CYQAA.

During the first year and given that the institution does not have enough time to run international recruitment for teaching staff and in order to ensure the delivery of high quality teaching, the majority of the teaching staff will be seconded from AUB, to become full-time faculty members at AUB Mediterraneo. Other teaching staff, if needed, will be hired locally as part-timers or full-timers. At all times, the number of teaching staff part-timers will be less than 30% of the overall number of teaching staff. The teaching staff that will be seconded from AUB are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Teaching Staff from AUB seconded to AUB Mediterraneo

Faculty Name	Rank	Discipline
Arne Dietrich	Professor	Psychology
May Awaida	Lecturer	Psychology
Sarine Agopian	Assistant Professor	Psychology
Shady Elbassuoni	Associate Professor	Computer Science
Amer Mouawad	Assistant Professor	Computer Science
Ramzi Mabsoot	Associate Professor	Economics
Bashshar Haydar	Professor	Philosophy
Nikolas Kosmatopoulos	Assistant Professor	Politics
Alain Daou	Associate Professor	Business Administration
Abdeljalil Ghanem	Lecturer	Business Administration
Wael Khreich	Assistant Professor	Business Administration
Bacel Maddah	Professor	Industrial Engineering
Nabil Nehme	Assistant Professor	Industrial Engineering
Ahmad Sabra	Assistant Professor	Mathematics
Dorota Fleszar	Instructor	English
May Mikati	Instructor	English

As for the staff members, the aim is to hire the majority of the staff locally, while seconding few AUB staff to train the new hires. PwC Cyprus (<https://www.pwc.com.cy/>) has been tasked to run the talent acquisition for AUB Mediterraneo. At the moment, we are in the final stages of hiring three admission advisors. 57 applications were received and a short list of 16 candidates was prepared by PwC. Kindly find attached the summary of the short listing process as sent by PwC Cyprus <Assessment Summary.pdf>. The AUB staff that will be seconded from AUB include: Mustapha El Habbal, an Admissions expert with 20 years of experience, and Boushra Rahal, a quality assurance expert with 20 years of experience. Others might be seconded depending on the successful recruitment of local staff. Kindly find attached the CV's <CV's of Seconded AUB Members.pdf>.

The number of students that will be admitted in September 2023 might vary between 100 and 200 students. Hence, the teaching staff listed in Table 1 are sufficient to cover the expected teaching needs. The uncertainty in the student numbers is due to the fact that we cannot accept student applications yet, and hence although we are receiving a lot of queries and interest, we cannot know if this interest will be translated into actual applications. Our Communications Team reported very high interest during the first two weeks of February 2023, for instance around 2 million impressions in Cyprus alone. Kindly find attached <Communications Report - Feb 1 to Feb 16.pdf> that lists the various KPI's (reach, reactions, impressions, countries, etc.) of the digital campaign during the first two weeks of February 2023.

Plan for year 2:

The faculty members that are seconded from AUB represent the core teaching and research staff of every department, and consequently will manage the process of recruiting at least one new faculty member in every department before the start of the second year. Kindly find attached <Recruitment Job Ads.pdf> which are the job Ads that will be used to advertise for the open positions.

6. The number/ratio of students in relation to the teaching staff is very high and this must be addressed immediately.

This comment was raised by one of the External Evaluation Committees. Following other top quality institutions of higher education, the student-faculty ratio at AUB Mediterraneo is set at 15. This ratio is an average and will vary by department per faculty/school. This ratio is typical and very appropriate for universities with mix of undergraduate and graduate offerings at the start-up phase.

With best regards,

Wassim El Hajj, Ph.D.
Rector
American University of Beirut – Mediterraneo