

# PRESIDENT'S NEWS DIGEST

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**ASU**  
جامعة العلوم التطبيقية  
APPLIED SCIENCE UNIVERSITY



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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the 20th issue of the 3rd year of the President's News Digest.

As indicated in last week's News Digest, during the next few weeks my Message will address topics related to the Self Evaluation Report (SER) which is part of our Institutional Accreditation by the HEC, in order to keep our staff and students informed about the content of the report.



We have now been informed by HEC that the Inspection Visit will take place over four days, 24 to 27 June 2018. This means that we have 14 weeks to make our preparations.

Having already covered Area 1, we move on to look at Area 2 which relates to Academic Management and Administration. Area 2 is divided into four standards and forty-three key indicators. In the SER, we respond to each of the Key Indicators of Area 2 in turn, with clear descriptions of our arrangements for organising and managing our academic operations through our academic and administrative staff and structures, to show how we meet the requirements.

In this issue, the SER summaries cover our responses to Area 2, Standards 4 and 5, which discuss the academic management of the University.

### AREA 2: ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

#### Standard 4: The institution must be effectively managed

4.1. The management structure must be clearly defined, documented and understood by all stakeholders including governors, management, staff and students.

- Our response covers the organizational and management structure set out in the ASU structure diagram, showing how this supports effective academic decision-making and management. We re-state the point made in our answers to Area 1 that our structures enable the separation of academic and financial decision-making. We also note that the structure is well communicated using the website, the student handbook, student orientation and staff induction

## INTERVIEW OF THE WEEK

We would like to feature the interview this week with:



**Name:** Eman Ahmed Al Sadeq

**Position:** Head of Governance and Strategic Planning

### 1. Tell us about yourself: (Your childhood, academic background)

I grew up in a very small family; I guess this gave my parents that chance to focus in raising their children by making everything available to improve our skills especially when it comes to education. Education was and still part of our daily life.

In brief, I graduated from UOB back in 2005 and joined Bahrain Bourse. I was assigned to perform banking-related operations, and had the chance to work on governance and strategy at the operational levels. In 2013, I joined the Kingdom University, and worked on governance and strategy at corporate level. At that time, I obtained my MBA from Strathclyde Business School which strengthened and enhanced my skills in this field. The degree focused on strategy management process starting from planning ending to closing and evaluating strategies.

### 2. Tell us about your job at ASU

I joined ASU in Jan 2018, and it is considered a milestone in my career life as well. ASU is a very well-known University and considered as one of the major institutions that has big market share in Bahrain. I am now working as the Head of Governance and Strategic Planning, and it is the role I always like to have as it's related directly to my profession and academic backgrounds.

- 4.2. All senior managers must be suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and be effective in carrying them out.
- Our response covers the excellent qualifications and experience of the President, Vice Presidents and senior staff and also refers to their clear job descriptions, ASU's rigorous recruitment processes and the annual evaluation/appraisal process
- 4.3 There must be clear channels of communication between management, the Board of Trustees, staff, students and other stakeholders.
- Our response covers how ASU arranges communication channels through committee memberships and surveys of students, alumni, employers and staff. We also note the establishment of the Student Council and the Programme Advisory Boards; the all staff meetings; Communication Group meetings; the ASU Sharepoint site; the social media channels; and the weekly News Digest
- 4.4. There must be clearly delineated responsibilities and reporting arrangements at institutional, faculty, departmental, program and course levels. These must include provision for academic leadership at program and individual course level.
- Our response covers how our organizational and management structure (shown in the ASU structure diagram) ensures clear reporting lines and it gives details about the academic leadership and management provided by the supporting structure of deans, heads of department, programme leaders and course coordinators
- 4.5. There must be an effective committee structure with appropriate reporting lines which informs management decision-making and provides feedback to stakeholders including students.
- Our response covers ASU's committee structure, led by University Council supported by bodies with clear roles and responsibilities, each with a clear reporting line to ensure that communication and decision-making takes place at the right level
- 4.6. Committees and other meetings must have clear and appropriate terms of reference, must be scheduled to meet regularly and minuted accurately.
- Our response covers the ASU Terms of Reference for committees, noting that this sets out remit, responsibility, membership, meeting frequency and reporting lines for each body, as well as standing orders which define the conduct of business and proceedings. It notes the annual Committee Meeting Schedule and the process for formally taking and approving minutes; and provide a short summary about the role of each committee
- 4.7. There must be a set of comprehensive policies, regulations and procedures for staff and student conduct and systems in place to ensure their implementation.

- Our response covers the ASU Bylaws; the specific bylaws for student and staff conduct; and the policies on harassment & anti-bullying, academic misconduct, plagiarism & examination rules and confidentiality. It also notes the handbooks for students and staff which ensure that our policies and regulations are publicised; and the approach we take to breaches
- 4.8. There must be a published policy on complaints which includes a system for recording and monitoring complaints and the associated responses.
  - Our response covers ASU's clear policies on complaints made by students and grievances raised by staff, which are publicised through the respective Handbooks with information on appeals procedures. It also notes the responsibilities of the HR Department and the Deanship Student Affairs in these processes; and our proactive approach to encouraging suggestions rather than waiting for complaints
- 4.9. A policy must exist and be administered effectively regarding collection of and refund of student fees.
  - Our response refers to information in the ASU Bylaws on fees and refunds. It also notes that this is effectively administered by the Financial Affairs Department in close collaboration with the Deanship of Admissions and Registration; and publicised in programme handbooks and the prospectus
- 4.10. Management must compile a report at least annually presenting the results of the institution's reviews and incorporating action plans. Reports must 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.
  - Our response refers to ASU's annual report which based on the Strategy Implementation Report (derived from Operational Plans, dashboard reports and Annual Programme Review Reports). It notes that the SIR reviews overall performance and forms the basis for actions to be included in the next academic year's Operational Plans; and that APRRs review programme performance and form the basis for actions which will be reported on in the next year's APRR
- 4.11. Action plans must be implemented and reviewed regularly, with outcomes reported to management and subsequently to the governing body.
  - Our response notes that ASU's actions plans are the annual Operational Plans prepared by each department/unit and that updates every semester report on progress. The Interim and Annual Strategy Implementation Report (derived from Operational Plans, updates, dashboard reports and Annual Programme Review Reports) are used to report progress to the Strategic Planning and Risk Management Committee, the President and the Board of Trustees

### **3. Tell us about your aspirations for the University**

My aspirations is to continue the tasks that are inspired by the BOT and the President's willingness in continuously improving the governance and strategic planning practices within a team spirit, and consequently, gain national and international accreditation, which in turn, make ASU the leading HEI in Bahrain and the region

### **4. What do you enjoy most about your job?**

I enjoy all aspects in my job as this is my expertise; I like the practice of continuous improvements and developments, communicating with people and successful achievements, and mostly, the family spirit that ASU has which makes it unique among many organizations.

### **5. Tell us about your hobbies**

Travel comes in the first place, then sports and reading.

### **6. Tell us about your favourite food**

I prefer to live clean; healthy leafy greens for salads are the best meal I can have. Seafood comes in the second place.

### **7. Tell us about the book you are reading now**

Away from academic and work-related books, I am interested in reading books based on true stories. I have just finished reading a story written by Jean Sasson and Omar bin Laden, "Growing up Bin Laden" and have started with a series of stories for the author Mrs. Alia Alkadhmi (Kuwaiti writer).

### **8. Final words**

I wish ASU the best of luck in achieving the institutional accreditation.

- 4.12. Management must monitor and review academic and administrative staff performance through a clearly documented and transparent appraisal system.
- Our response covers ASU's Employee Evaluation Policy, which provides a clear guide to the employee appraisal process, and notes that this is included in the Staff Handbook to publicise it to all staff
- 4.13. There must be transparent and fair policies and procedures in place to recognize and reward staff through promotion or financial considerations.
- Our response refers to the Employee Evaluation Policy section relating to recognition/reward of staff following appraisal, research outputs and/or exceptional performance using promotion, incentives, increments, etc. It notes that these processes are managed in a transparent process involving line managers, HR Department and Financial Affairs Department

### **Standard 5: Academic management must be effective**

- 5.1. Programs must be fully mapped to the National Qualifications Framework and have achieved or be in the process of achieving a 'confidence' outcome from NAQQAET following a program review or have accreditation by recognized professional bodies or be subject to a formal articulation agreement with an internationally recognized HEL.
- Our response covers ASU's successful Institutional Listing by the General Directorate of Qualifications (GDQ), the mapping and confirmation panel activities currently being undertaken, the January 2018 submission to GDQ for Qualification Placement of Bachelor of Business Administration and Bachelor of Law and our plan for submitting our other programmes to GDQ. It also covers our nine Full confidence programme review judgements and the considerable progress made by our other three programmes leading up to their re-review in March 2018. It also refers to the ACCA accreditation of ASU's BA Accounting & Finance and our plans to seek recognition from other relevant bodies such as CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development), BCS (British Computer Society) and AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) for accreditation of its programmes in the College of Administrative Sciences. Finally, it covers the validation of our new programmes with our UK partners (Cardiff Metropolitan University and London South Bank University)
- 5.2. There must be appropriate procedures for the proposal, design and validation of programs of study which take cognizance of the mission of the institution, national imperatives, local, Gulf and international market demand and resource issues and reflect international norms.
- Our response covers ASU's New Programme Development Policy and the related processes, noting that it is aligned to GDQ's requirements and ensures (through research and benchmarking) that we develop programmes to address market needs, business requirements and the priorities of the Kingdom of Bahrain; and that final approval for new programmes comes from the University Council, the Board of Trustees and the HEC
- 5.3. The institution must have in place mechanisms to ensure and demonstrate that the content, design, approach and teaching methods of the curriculum are consistent and supportive of the intended learning outcomes.
- Our response covers ASU's Learning, Teaching & Assessment Strategy and Policy on Benchmarking, as well as the role of the programme leader to ensure appropriate standards of content and teaching methods, a balance and variety of teaching/learning approaches and assessment methods and links to intended learning outcomes (course and programme). It also notes our clear Programme Specification and Course Specifications and College Programme Handbook
- 5.4. Management must ensure that the stated curricula are delivered as stated in the prospectus and other related documentation and that HEC requirements and those from professional or other relevant bodies are met.
- Our response covers how ASU establishes a Programme Team for each programme of study, headed by a programme leader, that meets regularly and reports to the relevant head of department, which is responsible for delivery and academic quality and ensuring that programme delivery follows the approved programme specification, so that courses and assessments are in line with student expectations. It also notes that management mechanisms include course portfolios, classroom observations, and annual programme reviews with APRRs
- 5.5. The institution must have clear policies, criteria and processes for academic appointments and promotions and be able to demonstrate that these are implemented.
- Our response covers appointment by referring to the Recruitment and Settlement Policy and the Academic Staff Bylaw as well as the procedures followed by colleges, departments and the HR Department. For promotion it refers to the Academic Promotion Bylaw, the establishment of the promotion committees and the process of evaluating applications (including appeals).

- Through the policies, which are publicised in the Staff Handbook, ASU ensures that staff are treated equitably and in light of clear expectations
- 5.6. The institution must be able to demonstrate that the responsibility areas of the academic staff, as in teaching, research, scholarly activity, consultancy, community outreach and academic administration, are clearly identified and show a balance in line with academic conventions.
    - Our response covers the responsibility areas of academic staff in Article 12 of ASU's Academic Staff Bylaw, defining them as teaching, research, community outreach and academic administration, which are distributed across the 45 hour week specified in the contract. It also notes that teaching loads may be reduced where an academic staff member has other responsibilities (such as Vice President, dean of college, head of department, director) and that the Staff Handbook provides details of normal teaching load and reduced teaching load relevant for each category
  - 5.7. The institution must ensure that there is a balance between the number of senior and junior academic staff.
    - Our response notes that ASU follows HEC regulations for academic staff and maintains a balance between senior and junior staff. The response includes two tables: current academic staff numbers by category (professors, associate professors, assistant professors and lecturers) and by length of service (under 2 years, 2-5 years, 6-10 years and over 10 years)
  - 5.8. The institution must ensure that there is a balance between the number of local and international academic staff.
    - Our response notes that ASU has a multi-cultural and diverse educational environment in line with its Vision and Mission and that we aim to maintain a balance between local and international academic staff while recruiting the best available according to criteria for qualifications and experience. It also notes that currently academic staff represent 22 nationalities and includes a table showing the current numbers of local and international academic staff
  - 5.9. There must be regular scheduled and minuted meetings of academic staff to review academic programs.
    - Our response refers to the programme leaders and the programme teams which have regular minuted meetings to discuss content and delivery and consider Course Evaluation Reports (CERs) and Annual Programme Review Report (APRRs). It also notes that college and University Curriculum Committees cover design, content and delivery of all programmes, including validating new programmes and annual/periodic review of existing ones. It also refers to the guidance for this provided by Quality Assurance Manual
  - 5.10. Mechanisms must be in place to ensure a program of enhancement of teaching and learning is continuously developed, supported and evaluated and to support teachers in their continuing professional development.
    - Our response covers the role of the Academic Staff Development Unit (overseen by the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and Development) to provide professional development for academic staff and provide an annual programme of events. It makes specific reference to ASU's collaboration with the Higher Education Academy, UK (HEA) Fellowship Scheme (and ASU staff success); current work to establish ASU's own HEA-accredited fellowship programme; the annual Good Teaching Conference for sharing good practice and gaining feedback; and the 2017-2018 Crossing the Bridge Together workshop series
  - 5.11. Appraisal of teaching staff must include regular classroom observation, feedback and be followed up where necessary.
    - Our response covers the part that classroom observations play in informing and evaluating the practice and development of its academic staff, by feedback to staff and input to the appraisal process. It also notes that the policy and procedure is outlined in the Staff Handbook and Employee Evaluation Policy; that structured forms for observation and self-evaluation are used; and that observation is approached as a supportive process, with constructive feedback and improvement suggestions being given promptly
  - 5.12. Academic managers must employ a system of mentoring and peer review to support faculty staff.
    - Our response covers the mentoring system mentioned in the Recruitment and Settlement Policy which requires every new academic staff member to have a mentoring colleague with appropriate experience to provide professional and pastoral advice. It also notes the ongoing support to professional practice provided by peer review (as per 5.11)
  - 5.13. Newly appointed academic staff must have a thorough induction program and be offered ongoing support and guidance through a mentoring system.
    - Our response covers ASU's comprehensive induction programme for all new staff, with a day of general briefings and a further day for academic staff covering matters that they will need to know (including use of Moodle, NQF, and other matters). It also notes that ongoing support is provided by informal regular communication with their line managers and formal staff appraisals at the end of the year, together with the formally-required allocated mentor for each new member of academic staff

- 5.14. Teachers' development must be supported by regular training and the provision of technology and tools to facilitate self-learning, access to information and communication.
- Our response covers the work of the ASDU, the various teaching workshops and conferences it organises, together with ASU's work with HEA for academic staff to gain Fellowships which recognise the standard of their teaching practice (as per 5.10). It also notes that academic staff have appropriate hardware and software, other resources including the Library and the Moodle e-learning system, together with relevant training.

## ASU VISITS THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTER AT UNIVERSITY OF BAHRAIN

On Wednesday 14 March 2018, Dr. Assem Al-Hajj, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Development, along with Mr. Noel Lavin, Director of Foundation and Delivery Services and Ms. Diana El Hageova visited the English Language Center at the University of Bahrain (UoB) to discuss their newly established Foundation Programme. ASU team met with Dr. Ghada Jassim, Director of English Language Center, and 2 colleagues, who briefed about how their Foundation Programme operates.



The UoB English Language Center has recently established the first National Geographic Learning Resource Center at its premises where students can get extra help from teachers while reading books by National Geographic covering various topics among many other activities.

UoB team also informed ASU team about the upcoming conference of their center titled “Foundation Programs in Higher Education: Gateway to Success” which will be held at the end of the month and invited ASU staff to attend.

The visit ended with a tour of the Center. ASU team thanked UoB team for their hospitality and invited them for visit ASU premises soon.

## THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICE ACTIVITIES

ASU continues to strengthen its ties with the community through the following community engagement activities:

### The UN House in Manama

The Community Engagement Office represented by Mr. Thaer AlRamini member of the office, visited the UN House in Manama, and met Mr. Samir Al-Darabi, Acting Director for UN Information Centre for the Gulf States and discussed opportunities of cooperation between the two parties.



### Alhoora and AlGodaibia Community Centre

The Community Engagement Office represented by Mr. Thaer AlRamini member of the office, visited AlHoora and ALGodaibia Community Centre and met Ms. Shekha Khalifa AlZaied, Head of Public Relations and Activities in the Centre, and discussed opportunities of cooperation between the two parties.



## The Royal Charity Organization

The Community Engagement Office represented by Dr. Mohammad Alaa Al-Hamami, Manager of the office and Mr. Thaer AlRamini member of the office, received Mr. Alaa Bu Dalama, Head of Programs and Activities and Ms. Tuqa Hani Elsayed, Charity and Humanitarian Programs Specialist from Royal Charity Organization and discussed cooperation frameworks upon signing a memorandum of understanding between the parties.



## ASU Participated in training course entitled "Parliamentary Culture of Youth"

Bahrain Parliamentary Training Centre in cooperation with the ASU's Community Engagement Office and the Deanship of Student Affairs, invited students from ASU to participate in a training course entitled "Parliamentary Culture of Youth" at the Parliament as part of a series of training courses that will be implemented on a later stage to include the largest possible number of students.



The 2-day training course included lectures, workshops as well as attending committees meetings. Advisers, deputies, and lawyers in the Secretariat delivered the lectures, who discussed the development of the parliamentary life within the framework of the reform project of His Majesty the King, the formation and terms of reference of the National Council, mechanisms and procedures for the work of parliamentary committees. They also highlighted the achievements of the House of Representatives during its previous periods, and field visits of the weekly session of the House of Representatives.

"120 attendees mostly from Applied Science University participated in the course" mentioned Mr Thaer Al Ramini

Ms. Fatima Hashem Khalid Head of Parliamentary Training Section expressed her sincere thanks and appreciation to the Management of Applied Science University for its continuous efforts to enable students to keep abreast of the development and excellence of the labor market by introducing distinguished graduates that represent the University.



## Dr. Al-Hamami Delivered "Social Media Fundamentals" Workshop

On Saturday 10 March 2018, Dr. Mohammad Alaa Al-Hamami delivered a workshop titled "social media Fundamentals". The workshop is part of "يلاسوشال" programme that aims to train 450 Bahrainis and enhance the Bahraini community with best skills to use social media in the field of entrepreneurship in cooperation with Dair Charity Society and civil societies in the cities and villages of Bahrain.



The free workshop was organized by Tafawuq Consulting Center for Development and Social Media Club in Bahrain and in a strategic partnership with Tamkeen Labor Fund and in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the management of Legend PAPI for Marketing Consulting.

During the workshop, Dr. Al-Hamami explained some of the important topics about social media with practical examples such as how to listen and search about what is related to the brand and to the professional specialization and the market, how to identify goals and objectives using the social media, how to setup and develop a plan that helps in reaching the goals and objectives, the content to be published, the target audience, and measurements to evaluate the performance and success of the social media accounts in different platforms.



Last, the Dair Charity Society thanked and awarded Dr. Al-Hamami for delivering the workshop.

### THE AAB COMMITTEE FOR ENTERPRISES MEETING

Prof Saad Darwish, President’s Advisor for Special Projects, a member of the the AAB Committee for enterprises attended their meeting at Gulf Hotel on 3 March. This committee is part of the Arab Youth Council for Integrated Development under the Umbrella of the Arab League. The members discussed future plans and formation of the committee bylaws and ways to expand membership from to other countries. Representatives from Tamkeen gave an insight of the available service they provide. The information given to the audience covered all aspects on how to run a business; from the development of strategic objectives to strategy execution plans. The aim was to develop ways to lead in the area of entrepreneurship.



### ASU PARTICIPATES IN EMPLOYABILITY SUMMIT

Prof Saad Darwish, President’s Advisor for Special Projects attended the Employability Summit which was organized jointly by RCSI Bahrain and Bahrain Polytechnic. The Summit took place at the RCSI Bahrain campus on Sunday, 11March. The Summit focused specifically on higher education and its role in producing highly employable graduates for the Bahraini job market. The event featured a series of high-quality speakers with valuable insights into the needs of Bahrain and its employers and it provided plenty of opportunities to network with key stakeholders, including employers, academic institutions, sponsoring bodies, ministries and students from around the country.



### “WOMEN BETWEEN COMPETITIVENESS AND EMPOWERMENT”



As ASU continues its support to empower women, Prof Saad Darwish President’s Advisor for Special Projects attended a Regional Forum on “Women between Competitiveness and Empowerment” on 11 March, which was under the patronage of the Minister of Industry, Commerce & Tourism Mr. Zayed R. Alzayani. The Forum aimed to revise legislations that supports women; motivate women to contribute to the economic development, and help them to lead. The forum discussed eight papers which covered a wide spectrum of issues related to women empowerment and competitiveness.

## MEETING WITH HE SHAIKH ABDULLAH BIN AHMED AL KHALIFA

The Arab Committee for Enterprises under the Arab league met with his Excellency Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Undersecretary International Affairs in his office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in preparation for the Cairo visit this month.



Prof Saad Darwish, President's Advisor for Special Projects being a member of the Committee attended the meeting. During the meeting, His Excellency said that the interest in the human element is a top priority for Bahrain and the Country has been able to make significant progress in comparison to other countries with higher income than Bahrain. Bahrain has made significant progress in women's empowerment, economic affairs and youth opportunities. He also mentioned that Bahrain pays particular attention to education and quality, and compulsory education is free of charge to citizens and foreign residents. The Ministry of Education is exerting great efforts in supporting many institutions of the State, including the Education Quality Authority, in order to improve education outputs. The main challenge remains within the process of linking the program of international sustainable development goals and the internal priorities, the statistical challenge, and how to measure some of the development indicators. Dr Dhafer Al Omran, Dr Abdul Hasan, Mr Fareed Al Bader and other members described the activities of the committee, which were well revived by his Excellency as it is in line with the leading role Bahrain is playing in Entrepreneurship. His Excellency is a great supporter to Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Not not mention, he is an ASU Alumni.



## KSA SCHOOLS VISIT

On 14 March 2018, the Marketing and Public Affairs Directorate team consisting of Ms Ruqaya Mohsin, the Director, Mr Ali Mohamed, Assistant Director and Mr Abdulhameed Baqi, Acting Head of Marketing & Students Recruitment Office and Emad Samara, a student at the College of Administrative Sciences visited seven private schools in the eastern province of KSA (New World International School, Asian International School, Gulf International School, Dunes International School, Orbit International School, Al Hussan School & Rahima Private School).



The purpose of the visits was to enhance communication and build a strong base of relations with educational institutions in KSA in preparations for any upcoming educational career consultations & exhibitions, which might take place in the near future.

Data was collected and there were several factors that the students listed in favor for ASU:

### Teaching language:

The school principals, vice-principles expressed their interests in our hosted British Programmes and the existing programmes that suit the needs of both Arabs and non-Arabs students as subjects are taught in both languages English or Arabic based on choosing their major and programme.

### University's Location:

It simply takes the students less than 2 hours journey to reach the University which can be one of the major factors for them to enroll at ASU.

## Campus Facilities:

The principals of some schools were impressed about the University's facilities and they are looking forward to working with us in the near future.

On the other hand, there were some significant limitations and constraints, which were not in favor to ASU's recruitment objectives:

Firstly, it has been advised to our team to obtain an official approval permit from the "Local Educational Council" in order to enable the team to visit their private schools.

Secondly, 12th grade students of CBSE curriculum usually leave to their home countries to study at universities for less cost; while students of IGCSE Curriculum are obliged to continue their education and obtain the A Level.

## The outcome:

The New World International School, took an immediate action by setting up a meeting session with 200 of their senior year students next Tuesday, 20 March, to present all ASU hosted and existing programmes.

## H.H SHEIKH NASSER AL-KHALIFA UNIVERSITIES SPORTS TOURNAMENT

During the week commencing 11 March 2018, the sport games of H.H Sheikh Nasser Bin Hamad Al-Khalifa Universities Sports Tournament started their finals. ASU teams astonished us, as they played extremely well in

most of the participated sports; the female basketball team won the Bronze Medals as well as the male volleyball team who also got the third place and won the Bronze Medal.

ASU also won two awards by, (1) Noor AlHuda Rabea who won "the best goal keeper" in the female football team and (2) Fatima Abdulredha who won "the best player in the female basketball team".

The Dean of Student Affairs Dr Faiza Zitouni reported "Hats off to all our students who kept us on our toes from the moment they started playing to the end, they really made us proud! Such sport tournament allowed us to discover the talent of our students. Our students players and staff at the Deanship of student affairs worked relentlessly showing their loyalty and commitment towards our beloved university".



Many thanks to all ASU students who participated in making this tournament a great success, including; students players, all members of the Students Council,

Volunteering Club members, Sport Club members (especially Abdulla Al-Ahmad, the President of the Club and Faisal Al-Jowder), the Media club members who were active on our social media (especially Houd Sadeq and Ahmed Dasmal). Many thanks to the team coaches, Mr Abdulla Al Jaber (Alumni member) and Ms Mooza Mansouri and Ms Fataima Janahi.



Our special thanks go to our staff at the Deanship of Student affairs, especially Mr Mohammed Najjar and Mr Thaer Ramini, for their valuable contribution in preparing, organizing, supervising our student during the 3 weeks of the tournament.

Many thanks to the President of the University, Professor Ghassan Aouad, for his great support, to Dr Assem Al-Hajj, the VP for Academic Affairs and Development, Dr Mohammed Yousef, VP for administration and Finance, Mr Abdulla Al-khaja, Mr Mohammed Nassar, Dr Mohammed AlHamami, Professor Saad Darwish, and all staff who supported our students in these great memorable achievements.



## LINKING TEACHING THEORY WITH ASSESSMENT – PROF ROBERT NEWTON

Having considered the basis on which teaching theories are integrated into practice the next step is to consider carefully how these are linked to assessment practice. Assessment is a crucial feature for ensuring that the full range of knowledge, practical and theoretical skills, critical thinking and analysis and transferable skills are evidenced by learners to ensure programme intended learning outcomes are met. Not all courses on a particular programme need to test student attainment of all of the **programme** intended learning outcomes, however, they must comprehensively test the achievement of the each and every **course** intended learning outcomes (and collectively the course intended learning outcomes for all compulsory courses which comprise the programme must be achieved).

Bear in mind that assessment should be an opportunity for students to demonstrate what they have learned and benefit from the knowledge of their instructors on how to improve their understanding of the subject being taught - as such is an integral part of teaching and learning.

The assessment strategy adopted in any course may be varied and must reliably and accurately measure the extent to which each course learning outcome has been attained by each student. Thus, within the programme there will be a range of types of assessment. Most commonly programmes will use the following types of assessment.

- **Examinations (Written or Practical)**
- **Quizzes – including Short Notes, Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) or True/False Questions**
- **Written Coursework (which includes Individual Projects or Dissertations/Theses)**
- **Group Work and Presentations**

When adopting a behaviourist approach to teaching and learning any of the above assessment methods can be used to determine the extent to which the learner can accurately replicate knowledge or facts which he/she has acquired. However, if the purpose of the assessment is to test higher order critical or analytical skills not all of these are equally effective. In addition, to assess practical skills or key transferable skills the assessment method must be selected carefully to ensure it is both valid and reliable.

**Written Examinations** are often used primarily to test knowledge and understanding, however, depending on the manner in which the questions are constructed they are more appropriately used to test cognitive skills – particularly analytical thinking skills. They can be used to test practical knowledge (I.e. knowing in theory how to complete a task) but a rigorous and reliable assessment of practical competence should be done by conducting a practical examination (see below).

To test particular cognitive skills in a written examination it is vital that the questions are set in a manner which requires the learner to go beyond just describing or listing facts or principles.

This is often clear when considering the wording of the questions. For example, questions which require the student to demonstrate critical thinking skills can take the form of ‘compare and contrast ...’ or ‘analyse the key features of ...’ or ‘evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of using ...’

The questions set can be related back to the use of Bloom’s Taxonomy which should be used when framing learning outcomes.

The following table is provided as an example of how the taxonomy can be applied in a practical manner. This applies not only to examinations but to other forms of written assessment.

| Bloom’s Levels | Associated assessment verbs   | Example  |
|----------------|---|--|
| Knowledge      | List<br>Describe<br>Define<br>State   | List the symptoms you would expect to observe in a patient with high blood pressure  |
| Comprehension  | Explain<br>Discuss<br>Compare<br>Interpret<br>Distinguish                   | Compare and contrast the benefits of outsourcing IT support operations with maintaining a dedicated in-house IT support function.                      |
| Application    | Solve<br>Demonstrate<br>Illustrate<br>Classify                              | Illustrate, using examples, how an organisation can increase its market share<br><br>Solve the following differential equation ...                     |
| Analysis       | Analyse<br>Distinguish<br>Explain<br>Identify                               | Explain clearly why ice floats on water  |
| Synthesis      | Create<br>Predict<br>Plan<br>Design<br>Propose                              | Propose a cost-effective solution for the prevention of corrosion (rusting) of car bodies<br><br>How would you design an energy efficient house        |
| Evaluation     | Evaluate<br>Recommend<br>Determine<br>Assess<br>Justify<br>Decide<br>Verify | Assess the reasons for increase in popularity of online shopping and recommend steps which ‘high street’ retailers should adopt to remain competitive. |

**Practical Examinations** are used in order to test mastery of practical skills. As such they are performance based and conducted in an environment where the student has access to the tools required to complete a practical task and be assessed on the extent to which they can demonstrate they have been able to accomplish it. Students must have clear direction on what they must achieve and be provided with sufficient time to do this and all equipment to perform the task must be provided.

**Quizzes and MCQs** - These are probably one of the most difficult assessment methods in terms of the time taken to carefully construct the questions and ensure that they accurately test the student's knowledge. They are frequently used to enable learners to engage in formative assessment with (in the case of technology-based assessment) the option of providing immediate feedback.

They are ideal instruments for testing knowledge and have the additional advantage that they can be assessed in a much more objective manner than examinations (they are in some textbooks referred to as objective tests).

**Written coursework** – These provide the learner with the opportunity to demonstrate critical thinking, analysis and synthesis of information, information seeking skills, and the ability to logically construct and justify an argument or proposition. They are one of the most important methods for testing research skills and the learner's ability to independently use published sources and demonstrate their own critical understanding of these. Written coursework can take many forms. A good strategy to integrate into written work is to require students to examine the topic from multiple perspectives and encourage them to provide their own views on any areas in which the literature provides examples of conflicting opinions or theories. Case studies (or cases in Law) can be used to encourage students to comment critically on real life (or fictitious examples of real life problems) and contribute to the development of a constructive learning environment which prepares the student for problems which he/she may have to deal with or resolve in the work place. Written work which requires the student to comment critically on academic papers or current debates in the subject encourage the development of research skills and the adoption of an evidence-based approach to problem solving.

Written assessments are the area in which it is of crucial importance to ensure that the student is not simply copying/plagiarising other published sources of information. Students should be encouraged to read widely on the topic and incorporate as many ideas from published sources as possible (an extensive bibliography of sources used to gain views and opinions on the subject is often a good indication of how well the student has engaged in this) Students must cite all sources from which they have derived their own conclusions and the accuracy and extent of this can form one of the assessment criteria. However, simply copying large passages of text without properly acknowledging the source is academic misconduct and must be flagged up as such and appropriate penalties imposed.

**Group Work and presentations** – The main significance of these types of assessment is that they provide the learner with the ability to demonstrate achievement of key transferable skills. Notably in the case of group work their inter-personal skills, leadership skills and ability to organise and structure tasks collaboratively. Presentations are ideal for testing students communication skills – particularly in designing and communicating information to diverse audiences. They also have an important role in building student's confidence.

It is important when using either group work or individual/group presentations to very clearly identify and communicate the criteria on which the student's work will be assessed. It should also be noted that learners who have not previously been involved in assessment by presentation or group work should be given instruction in how to deliver presentations or work effectively as a team prior to being assessed (following the general principle that you should only assess learners on what has been taught).

These methods also give the instructor the opportunity to use peer assessment as part of the assessment strategy. It should, however, be pointed out that this is by no means an easy form of assessment to implement in practice and unless the instructor is very confident that it can be effectively administered and students will engage in peer assessment confidently and honestly then it is best avoided.

## **A Note on Formative and Summative Assessments**

It should be noted that there is a difference in the way in which the terms formative and summative are used in the educational literature.

They can be defined literally according to the function implied in the names i.e. formative assessments are used purely to help the student to understand the subject better and benefit from feedback and the results do not contribute to the final grade. Only summative assessments contribute to the students' GPAs. This definition is implied in the NQF documentation.

Some of the literature (e.g. publications on assessment by the QAA(UK)) view formative assessment as any assessment in which the student is given feedback in order to provide assistance in understanding his/her grade and to improve upon it in subsequent summative assessment (generally the final examination for a course where there is no requirement to give feedback).

In both definitions the important point to bear in mind is that feedback provided must be informative and extensive enough to ensure that students are made aware of their strengths and weaknesses in order to ensure they learn from assessment. External examiners should be encouraged to comment on the quantity and quality of feedback provided.

### **Practical Points on Assessment Practice**

Finally, some practical points to bear in mind. These are frequently points which can raise comment from external examiners or reviewers.

The assessment must be based on what has been taught and should cover the whole range of the syllabus. In particular ensure that topics which are delivered later in the course are covered but also be sure to provide students with sufficient time prior to assessments to fully absorb and revise these topics.

The assessment must be clear and unambiguous. Avoid complex wording when formulating questions and make sure that it is clear to the student that the response required is clearly related to particular areas of what has been taught.

The same assessment question or task must not be repeated – particularly with the same cohort of students. Look carefully at the difference between any mid-term examination and the final examination. This is not to say that the same areas of knowledge cannot be covered but ideally in the final examination there should be an increase in difficulty of the questions set (and as noted above they must include topics taught subsequent to the mid-term examination being undertaken).

The assessment must be appropriate for the level and prior knowledge of students undertaking the assessment. Assessments should become progressively more difficult as the student progresses through the programme.

There should be clear rubrics (general guidance on what is required by students) for any written assessment and the extent to which the student has achieved what is required in each area identified in the rubrics must be reflected in the grade.

For all assignments other than the final examination you must ensure that there is clear evidence of extensive and useful feedback which can assist the student to improve on his/her performance. Assessments which simply record a grade and vague comment – such as 'excellent' or 'good' will attract negative comment.

Ensure **absolutely** that no assessment in which there is plagiarism which can be clearly identified is graded with no comment on the fact that the word is plagiarised. In some cases, it does not require subject specialist knowledge to identify this and an external or reviewer will have serious concerns if it appears instances of plagiarism have not been dealt with in line with the academic misconduct policy.

It is of **paramount importance** that any assessment in which there is plagiarism, which can be clearly identified, is graded with no comment on the fact that the work is plagiarised. In some cases, it does not require subject specialist knowledge to identify this and an external or reviewer will have serious concerns if it appears that instances of plagiarism have not been dealt with in line with the academic misconduct policy.

Or

It is of **paramount importance** that any assessment in which there is plagiarism, which can be clearly identified, is not graded and labelled with a comment to reflect the fact that the work is plagiarised. In some cases, it does not require subject specialist knowledge to identify this and an external or reviewer will have serious concerns if it appears that instances of plagiarism have not been dealt with in line with the academic misconduct policy.

## REMINDER OF THE WEEK

Institutional Accreditation Inspection Visit, 24-27 June 2018

## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

*“One, remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Two, never give up work. Work gives you meaning and purpose and life is empty without it. Three, if you are lucky enough to find love, remember it is there and don't throw it away.”*

**Professor Stephen Hawking**

 *Happy Reading!* 