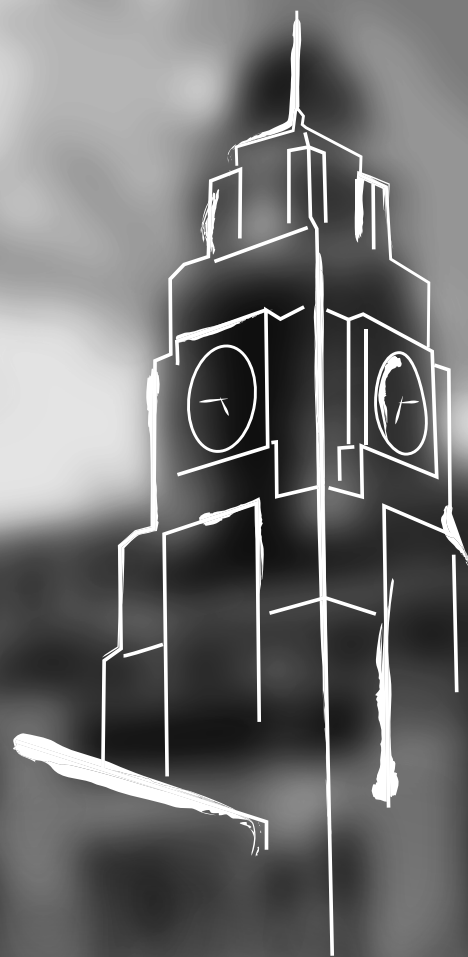


# ASU



جامعة العلوم التطبيقية  
APPLIED SCIENCE UNIVERSITY

## ASU STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020







**His Royal Highness  
Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa**  
The Prime Minister of the Kingdom of  
Bahrain



**His Majesty  
King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa**  
The King of the Kingdom of Bahrain



**His Royal Highness  
Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa**  
The Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme  
Commander of Bahrain Defense Force and  
First Deputy Prime Minister



# ASU STRATEGIC PLAN

2015-2020

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# FOREWORD



## **Professor Waheeb Alkhaja**

**Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Applied Science University**

I am pleased to present the Strategic Plan of Applied Science University, Bahrain, where our students are at the heart of everything we do.

ASU has an international outlook, through our partnerships with leading universities and academics in the UK and the Arab world. We also have a strong commitment to our local community and region - contributing through our educational provision, our research and our business partnerships. We intend to become a leading private University in the Gulf.

We deliver undergraduate and masters programmes across four colleges to around 3,000 students. Several more programmes are planned to come on-stream in the near future, in order to widen our global reach and to provide quality education to bright, ambitious and talented students throughout the region. We have invested significantly in our facilities by building a modern and well-designed University campus.

Our Strategic Plan has been developed with input from all our stakeholders, to ensure that with drive and determination Applied Science University and all our graduates will continue to play a vital role in the future of the GCC economy and contribute to our society.

# INTRODUCTION



**Professor Ghassan Fouad Aouad**  
President, Applied Science University

It gives me a great pleasure to introduce our Strategic Plan 2015-2020. Strategic planning plays a pivotal role in transforming our University and it was really exciting to develop our Plan with full participation from staff, students and external stakeholders, aligning it to the strategies and directions of the Kingdom's Higher Education Council and especially Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030. Delivery of our Plan will be achieved through a series of clear and robust Operational Plans and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Our core activities are centred on teaching & learning, research and community engagement, supported by four pillars of student support, internationalization & partnerships, quality assurance and sustainable growth. Combined, these form our seven Strategic Objectives. Students are central to all that we do and our Strategic Plan will ensure we provide the best possible learning experience, focusing on employability, strong entrepreneurial skills and STEM subjects. Our new British degrees, in collaboration with London South Bank University and Cardiff Metropolitan University, demonstrate that ASU delivers education of the highest quality.

This Strategic Plan has benefitted immensely from the clear vision of the Board of Directors and Board of Trustees, especially the insights of Professor Waheeb Alkhaja, our Founding President and Chairman of our Board of Trustees. It is also important to acknowledge the excellent contributions from our staff, students and external partners and stakeholders. Applied Science University has an exciting time ahead and our Strategic Plan will be a beacon to guide our direction.



# ASU

## A BRIEF HISTORY

Applied Science University was granted its licence by the Ministry of Education according to the decree issued by the Minister's Council (No. WD 140/2004) dated 5th July 2004, making it one of the first private universities in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

ASU aspires to become one of the leading universities in the Kingdom of Bahrain and in the wider Gulf region. The University aims to support the economic and social development of the Kingdom of Bahrain by providing degree programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Our programmes are grounded in a pedagogical framework designed to develop students' understanding of key theories and concepts through knowledge acquisition and development of practical skills, with a focus on providing programmes in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). We aim to foster life-long learning and to prepare our graduates for a range of career paths within their chosen field or discipline.

ASU employs experienced and well qualified academic faculty who support student learning and the overall student experience through provision of research-informed teaching, supported by a comprehensive range of learning and assessment methods. This approach ensures that ASU graduates are well-equipped and capable of facing the challenges of their professional careers.



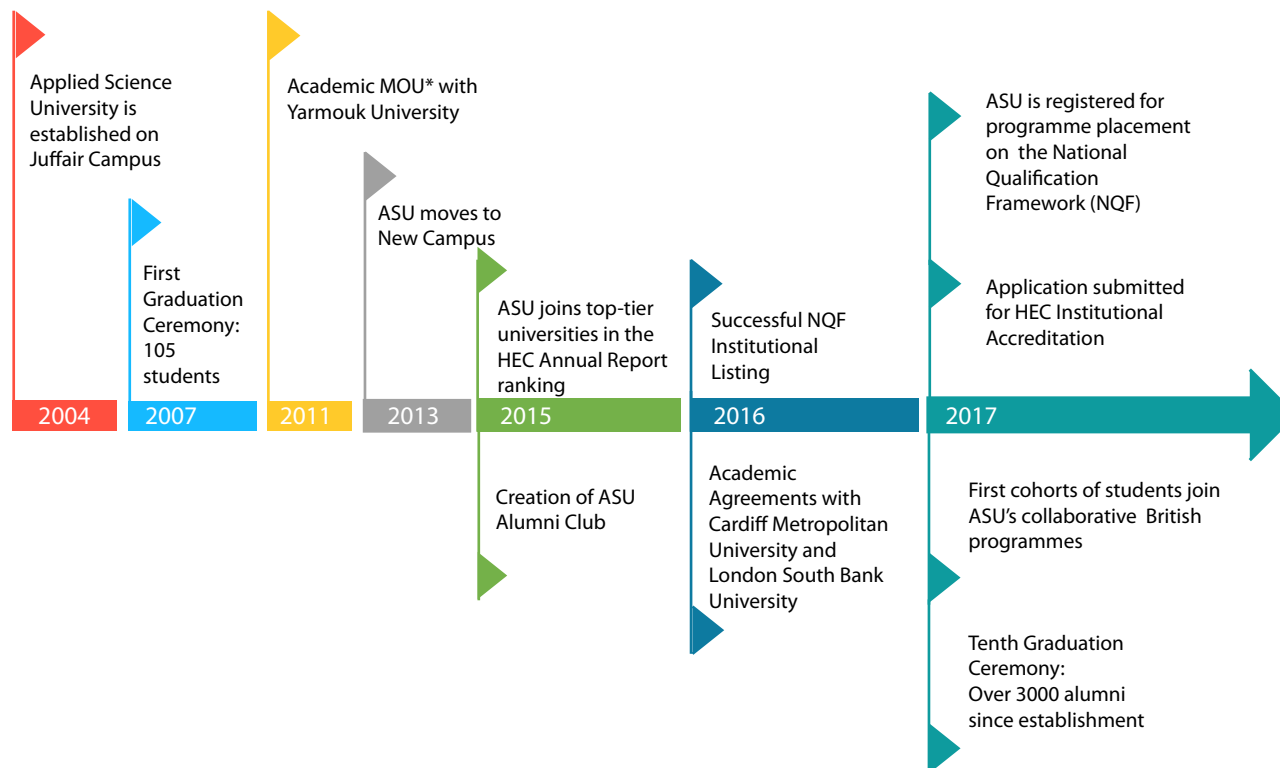
At its formation, ASU was situated in the Juffair district of Bahrain, and relocated to its new purpose-built campus in September 2013. The new campus covers an area of 24,000sq.m, designed to accommodate around 1,690 students at a time (giving a total capacity of 5,070 students distributed across mornings, evenings and weekends).

The campus is designed to provide a excellent educational environment, in accordance with the highest international and local standards using the latest technology in classrooms, including design studios, lecture halls, computer labs, language and specialized laboratories, as well as a high-tech library and a state-of-the-art lecture theatre with 292 seats. Wi-Fi connection is available across the campus. There is also a Student Activity Centre, featuring table tennis, billiards, table-football and computer games; together with outdoor courts for tennis, basketball, etc. In addition, located throughout the campus are social spaces with seating, a coffee shop and a cafeteria.

The location of the campus is an ideal geographical position, situated in the Central Governorate between Manama and Riffa, making it easily accessible from all parts of Bahrain.

The academic year 2017/2018 marks the inauguration of the first international programmes delivered at ASU in partnership with well-respected British universities, setting the University apart from the competition, on a path of success and excellence.

# ASU TIMELINE



# STRATEGIC PLAN

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since its establishment in 2004, ASU has been on a path of dynamic and positive progress towards becoming an internationally respected higher education institution.

This Strategic Plan is a high-level agenda, serving as a guide and roadmap to achieving our goal of excellence in all aspects of our operation. Over the period of this Strategic Plan, ASU will build on progress to date, continue to contribute to the strategies of the Kingdom of Bahrain and develop students into high-achieving global citizens.

This Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020 booklet covers:

- The cornerstones of ASU's foundation which are therefore the starting points of our Strategic Plan – these are
  - ASU's Vision
  - ASU's Mission
  - ASU's Core Values
- The Seven Strategic Pillars which we have identified as key to the formulation and successful implementation of our Strategic Plan
- The development of the ASU Strategic Plan and the mid-cycle review we conducted, leading to revisions and the publication of this booklet
- Implementation of our Strategic Plan and the way in which we monitor its progress
- Achievements and progress made since the Strategic Plan was first devised in 2015
- Our Strategic Objectives and the KPIs with which we measure their achievement

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## VISION AND MISSION

### VISION

"The vision of Applied Science University is to be one of the leading private universities supporting practical learning and scientific research in Bahrain and the Gulf."

### MISSION

"ASU is committed to offering an education that is accessible to academically competent students of Bahrain, the Gulf and beyond, and to deliver academic programmes of quality that graduate students equipped with knowledge and skills relevant locally and regionally. ASU is further dedicated to the promotion of a culture of learning and scientific research for its students, staff and faculty regionally and globally to engage meaningfully with the community at large."



**1. Integrity:**  
ASU's community values honesty, fairness and academic integrity as fundamental to its vision and mission, and will recognize, affirm and uphold this value in a responsible and committed manner.

**2. Collaboration and Team Spirit:**  
ASU's community recognizes collaboration and team spirit to be at the heart of the institutional culture and will promote these values in a dedicated manner.



**3. Loyalty:**  
ASU's students, faculty and staff cherish loyalty and commitment and recognize these values to be inherent in their culture of cooperation and dedication.

**5. Quality:**  
ASU's community values quality as an ideal and standard that should characterize its processes, outcomes, people and partners.

**4. Social Responsiveness and Community Engagement:**  
ASU's students, faculty and staff value their partners, networks and communities and intend to engage with them in a thoughtful, respectful, responsible and meaningful manner.

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## SEVEN STRATEGIC PILLARS

As we developed our Strategic Plan, we identified the three areas on which we focus our efforts and the four areas which enable us to do this. Together these make up the Seven Pillars of our strategic activities.

### **The focus areas are:**

- Teaching & Learning
- Research
- Community Engagement

### **The enabling areas are:**

- Student Support
- Internationalization & Partnerships
- Quality Assurance
- Sustainable Growth

These Seven Pillars were identified because they are key to achievement of our Mission, and our primary purpose of serving our community through provision of high quality education and the promotion of a culture of learning, research and engagement with the community.

# VISION

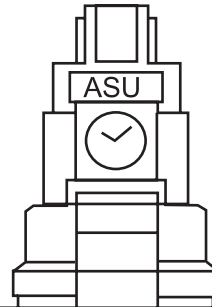
## Where should we focus our efforts?

The vision of Applied Science University is to be one of the leading private universities supporting practical learning and scientific research in Bahrain and the Gulf.

# MISSION

## Why do we exist?

ASU is committed to offering an education that is accessible to academically competent students of Bahrain, the Gulf and beyond, and to deliver academic programmes of quality that graduate students equipped with knowledge and skills relevant locally and regionally.



ASU is further dedicated to the promotion of a culture of learning and scientific research for its students, staff and faculty regionally and globally to engage meaningfully with the community at large.

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

## Where should we focus our efforts?

### 1. Teaching & Learning

Create a culture of learning and support students to develop their knowledge, learning and skills by engaging in professionally relevant programmes of study.

### 2. Research

Develop a research culture and deliver high quality research outputs.

### 3. Community Engagement

Ensure that ASU is committed to creating an impact on society through all activities, recognizing its duty to ensure that students, alumni and staff understand their obligations as citizens to engage with and support the community.

### 4. Student Support

Support Students as part of a 'learning community'. Ensure that all students realize their full potential – both in engaging fully with the opportunities provided for study and research and in preparing them for the world of work.

### 5. Internationalization & Partnership

Develop and maintain collaborative partnerships with other HE institutions, government, the industry and professional bodies to ensure that ASU activities support national priorities and remain relevant to the needs of industry

### 6. Quality Assurance

Comply with the HEC regulations, fully observe guidance from the national quality assurance and accreditation frameworks in Bahrain. Demonstrate that quality assurance and quality enhancement is embedded in all of its activities

### 7. Sustainable Growth

Operate effectively and efficiently, optimising the use of ASU physical and human resources. Grow ASU provision in terms of increasing student numbers on existing programmes, expanding its provision in other areas.

# VALUES

**Integrity - Collaboration & Team Spirit - Loyalty - Social Responsiveness & Community Engagement - Quality**

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## **DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW**

ASU's strategic planning process is a holistic one, encompassing a broad-based development stage and re-evaluation of its goals and strategic directions on a continuous basis, in light of new challenges and opportunities.

Mid-way through the 2015-2020 cycle, and alongside activity for the HEC Accreditation process and the inauguration of the first British programmes to be delivered at ASU in partnership with London South Bank University and Cardiff Metropolitan University, the University decided to undertake an in-depth review of the Strategic Plan to gauge the degree of achievement to date of its strategic objectives and the related KPIs.

In order to ensure participation by all stakeholders, the review involved a series of brainstorming and consultation meetings with the University's main stakeholders such as student and employer representatives, members of academic staff, administrative staff, Senior Management Group and external consultants. Workshops were also held to update ASU's SWOT Analysis and its Institutional Risk Register. This in-depth review, coordinated and led by the Governance and Strategic Planning Unit, resulted in an updated set of institutional KPIs that are more current and more reflective of the strategic direction of the university.

This updated Strategic Plan, supported by annual Operational Plans, will continue to guide the University in the implementation of its Vision and Mission and the achievement of its Strategic Objectives.



# STRATEGIC PLAN

## IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

To enable ASU to implement its Strategic Plan and achieve its goals, all University colleges, departments, units, directorates and deanships are required to develop annual Operational Plans that are closely linked and mapped to ASU Strategic Objectives and Key Priorities. The Operational Plans are updated regularly and are reviewed by the Board of Trustees at least twice each academic year.

### **The monitoring system includes:**

- Continuous assessment of the level of progress achieved against the previously-set targets
- Occasional internal audits to verify that achievements are based on evidence and proper documentation
- A Strategy Implementation Report which is issued periodically
- A bespoke Dashboard for ASU's institutional KPIs to measure overall performance at any given time

These measures, separately and together, ensure that progress is made and measured and that effective action is taken when necessary, in order to achieve ASU's Strategic Objectives.

Finally, ASU's Governance & Strategic Planning Unit has responsibility to collaborate with the various units and departments of the University to make sure that the Strategic Plan is being clearly communicated and fully understood by our stakeholders and that our staff are sufficiently equipped to implement it successfully.

# STRATEGIC PLAN ACHIEVEMENTS

After the University first devised its Strategic Plan in 2015, we immediately began work on implementation and major progress has been made by the date of the mid-stage review in 2017.

**During this period, the many significant milestones achieved include:**

- Full confidence from Bahrain's Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA) for additional programmes, bringing the total number of programmes with Full Confidence to nine (three more to be reviewed in 2018)
- Collaboration agreement with the Higher Education Academy (UK) for pedagogic development of our faculty
  - 50% of our academic staff are now HEA Fellows or Senior Fellows or in the process of achieving this qualification
- International partnership agreements with two leading British universities, London South Bank University and Cardiff Metropolitan University
  - Four programmes are now in operation and recruited their first students in September 2017
- Institutional Listing for the University on Bahrain's National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Register by the Education & Training Quality Authority (BQA)
- Successful application for HEC Institutional Accreditation
  - Significant progress has also been made on preparations for the Accreditation Panel Visit

- Niche research areas identified for collaborative research activities within the University
- Increase of almost 70% in the number of research publications (42 in 2014/15 and 71 in 2016/17)
- International Conference on Sustainable Futures (ICSF 2017), an international research conference organised and held in November 2017 in collaboration with London South Bank University, with participants from over 20 countries
- Our robust Quality Management System (QMS) set in place, together with starting the process of achieving ISO 9001:2015 certification
- Strengthened links with the business community via formal agreements with employers and organizations (including Flat 6 Labs, SMEs Bahrain, Bahrain Businesswomen's Society, etc)
- An increased number of entrepreneurship courses and activities to enable students to prepare better for their future careers
- An enhanced programme of community engagement activities
- Additional student clubs established in collaboration with the Students' Council to enrich students' university experience
- ASU Alumni Club, inaugurated to sustain contact with and support to our students after they graduate

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND KPIs

ASU's Strategic Objectives (shown below) are our goal statements for the Seven Strategic Pillars which we identified as key to achieving our strategy (see page 14).

The remaining pages of this booklet set out each of our Strategic Objectives, together with the KPIs which have been agreed to measure progress.

---

**1**

### TEACHING & LEARNING

Create a culture of learning and support students to develop their knowledge, learning and skills by engaging in professionally relevant programmes of study.

**2**

### RESEARCH

Develop a research culture and deliver high quality research outputs.

**3**

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Ensure that ASU is committed to creating an impact on society through all activities, recognizing its duty to ensure that students, alumni and staff understand their obligations as citizens to engage with and support the community

**4**

### STUDENT SUPPORT

Support students as part of a 'learning community'. Ensure that all students realize their full potential – both in engaging fully with the opportunities provided for study and research and in preparing them for the world of work.

As described in the Implementation and Monitoring section (see page 17), targets are set for each Strategic Objective and its KPIs, so there is a robust and clear process of measuring the steps taken towards achieving the ASU Strategic Plan.

## 5

### **INTERNATIONALIZATION & PARTNERSHIPS**

Develop and maintain collaborative partnerships with other HE institutions, government, the industry and professional bodies to ensure that ASU activities support national priorities and remain relevant to the needs of industry.

## 6

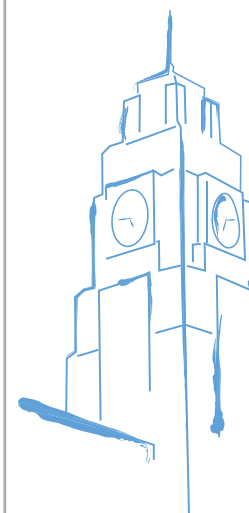
### **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Comply with the HEC regulations and fully observe guidance from the national quality assurance and accreditation frameworks in Bahrain. Demonstrate that quality assurance and quality enhancement is embedded in all activities.

## 7

### **SUSTAINABLE GROWTH**

Operate effectively and efficiently, optimising the use of ASU physical and human resources. Grow ASU provision in terms of increasing student numbers on existing programmes and expanding provision in other areas.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	<b>1. TEACHING &amp; LEARNING</b>  Create a culture of learning and support students to develop their knowledge, learning and skills by engaging in professionally relevant programmes of study.
KEY PRIORITY	INSTITUTIONAL KPI
1. Management of Programs and Curricula: Design and deliver programmes of study which are benchmarked against international standards, meet the needs of industry and the professions and focus on STEM subject areas	1.1 Graduate employment rate 1.2 Number of graduates in STEM programmes 1.3 Student/faculty ratio 1.4 Number of programmes which have been externally benchmarked and/or received full confidence judgements 1.5 Number of programmes with accreditation from appropriate professional bodies 1.6 Number of programmes in STEM subjects
2. Faculty Development: Ensure that staff development activities support the needs of our staff to enhance their pedagogical skills in teaching, learning and assessment and apply this to motivate and engage learners.	2.1 Proportion of teaching staff participating in professional development activities 2.2 Proportion of teaching staff who have gained a recognised pedagogical qualification or engaged in pedagogical research
3. Enhancement of Programmes: Ensure that both the content and delivery of programmes are informed by research and scholarship and are continuously improved.	3.1 Students' overall rating of the quality of their courses. 3.2 Number of courses which adopt a research based element in their content or delivery
4. Technology Enhanced Learning: Embed technology enhanced learning in the delivery of its programmes.	4.1 Percentage of academic staff using e-learning platform 4.2 Percentage of students using e-learning platform

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	<b>2. RESEARCH</b>  Develop a research culture and deliver high quality research outputs
KEY PRIORITY	INSTITUTIONAL KPI
1. Strategic Investments: Invest in increasing the number of active research staff through appropriate recruitment and staff development	1.1 Percentage of the total annual operational budget dedicated to research 1.2 Percentage of faculty with doctorates 1.3 Percentage of active researchers
2. Establish Priority Areas for Growth: Identify and support niche areas for inter-disciplinary research drawing on the collective subject expertise in its constituent Colleges.	2.1 Number of cross-disciplinary collaborative research groups within the University
3. Increase Research Activity/Culture: Increase the overall quality and quantity of published outputs.	3.1 Number of publications in peer-reviewed journals 3.2 Number of citations in refereed journals
4. External Profile Enhancement: Increase exposure of staff to national and international research communities through involvement in relevant conferences and meetings and building research networks.	4.1 Number of research papers or reports presented at academic conferences

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	<b>3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>  Ensure that ASU is committed to creating an impact on society through all activities, recognizing its duty to ensure that students, alumni and staff understand their obligations as citizens to engage with and support the community
KEY PRIORITY	INSTITUTIONAL KPI
1. Consultancy and Knowledge Sharing: Develop and deliver a broad portfolio of services that the University can offer to the community in order to provide advice, discussion and debate on subject areas in which it has expertise.	1.1 Number of consultancy and advisory activities conducted by the University 1.2 Number of events/seminars/lectures/articles/discussion groups led by the staff involving the wider community
2. Community Support: Arrange and participate in community engagement activities (ASU and external) that provide opportunities for students, alumni and staff to engage with and serve the community.	2.1 Number of community engagement and services events 2.2 Number of students participating in activities 2.3 Number of alumni participating in activities 2.4 Number of staff participating in activities
3. Open Campus: Enable appropriate use of our campus, facilities and services by the public, schools, academic institutions and charitable organizations for free or at a nominal cost.	3.1 Total number of events hosted on campus
4. Public Outreach: Develop relationships with all sectors of society (including government, policy-making bodies, charities, distinguished figures, institutions, schools and media) to promote outreach through dialogue, engagement and collaboration.	4.1 Number of formal/informal visits from and to the university 4.2 Number of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) 4.3 Number of relevant media interviews



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	<b>4. STUDENT SUPPORT</b>  Support students as part of a ‘learning community’. Ensure that all students realize their full potential – both in engaging fully with the opportunities provided for study and research and in preparing them for the world of work.
KEY PRIORITY	INSTITUTIONAL KPI
1. Continuous Support: Support students through all phases of the student journey from admission to graduation and employment.	1.1 Student overall satisfaction rate 1.2 Student evaluation of academic advising 1.3 Graduation rate for undergraduate students 1.4 Graduation rate for postgraduate students 1.5 Student retention rate 1.6 Number of students that receive financial support 1.7 Number of active student clubs
2. Engagement & Employability: Ensure the personal and professional development of students through the provision of extra-curricular opportunities.	2.1 Number of extra-curricular activities offered 2.2 Number of career development and employability-related extra-curricular activities for graduating students and alumni
3. Campus Environment: Create and resource a campus environment that supports and enriches independent student learning	3.1 Student satisfaction rate on the quality of their learning experiences at the institution in terms of: - Library - Information Technology
4. Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Leadership: Support and encourage students in a culture of engagement, entrepreneurship and innovation and prepare them to become leaders in their chosen professions.	4.1 Number of extra-curricular initiatives designed to promote entrepreneurial, innovation and leadership skills.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	<b>5. INTERNATIONALIZATION &amp; PARTNERSHIPS</b>  Develop and maintain collaborative partnerships with other HE institutions, government, the industry and professional bodies to ensure that ASU activities support national priorities and remain relevant to the needs of industry
KEY PRIORITY	INSTITUTIONAL KPI
1. Partner Networks: Create a network of high value partners that share our ambitions and values.	1.1 Number of MOCs/MOUs with national and international partners 1.2 Number of international students
2. External Profile Enhancement: Build relationships and embark upon joint projects with these partners that support the implementation of our priority objectives.	2.1 Number of international degree programmes offered by the University 2.2 Number of international degree programmes offered by the University in STEM subjects 2.3 Number of joint activities, projects or publications with suitable external academic, professional or industry partners
3. Liaison with Government: Play a key role in partnership with government to support the Economic Vision 2030 for Bahrain.	3.1 Number of projects or initiatives which are relevant to and supportive of government priorities

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	<b>6. QUALITY ASSURANCE</b>  Comply with the HEC regulations and fully observe guidance from the national quality assurance and accreditation frameworks in Bahrain. Demonstrate that quality assurance and quality enhancement is embedded in all activities
KEY PRIORITY	INSTITUTIONAL KPI
1. Quality Assurance Procedures: Ensure that quality assurance procedures and processes are effectively communicated to all staff and are regularly monitored	1.1 Number of quality assurance training sessions delivered
2. Regulatory Compliance: Ensure that ASU is fully compliant with the regulatory framework in which it operates	2.1 Number of audits to ensure full compliance with the higher education regulations
3. Best Practice: Regularly conduct external and internal environmental scans to identify and implement best practices in quality assurance in all aspects of its operations.	3.1 Number of best practices identified and implemented as a result of internal reviews (Annual Programme Review Reports, Periodic Programme Review Reports, etc)  3.2 Number of best practices identified and implemented as a result of external benchmarking and/or reviews
4. Accreditation: Gain appropriate national, regional and international accreditations	4.1 On-time and successful results from Bahrain's accreditation bodies (HEC and BQA)  4.2 Successful accreditations from appropriate quality-related bodies

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	<b>7. SUSTAINABLE GROWTH</b>  Operate effectively and efficiently, optimizing the use of ASU physical and human resources. Grow ASU provision in terms of increasing student numbers on existing programmes, expanding its provision in other areas.
KEY PRIORITY	INSTITUTIONAL KPI
1. Finance: Secure resources that will allow us to achieve our ambitions in a sustainable way.	1.1 Budget realization with acceptable variance between actual expenditures and budget
2. Marketing and Public Relations: Develop and monitor the effectiveness of innovative marketing and PR strategies to optimize student recruitment and enhance the reputation of the University.	2.1 Number of enrolled students 2.2 Cost per recruited student
3. Human Resources: Recruit and retain competent academic staff who have both strong subject expertise and high academic standards	3.1 Faculty retention rate
4. Value for Money: Ensure that investment in both human and physical resources is effective in supporting its strategic priorities and consistently provides value for money.	4.1 Total average operating expenditure (other than student allowances) per student
5. Risk Management: Ensure that reputational and financial risks are identified and that appropriate mitigation is in place to minimize risk.	5.1 Percentage of risks with valid mitigations keeping risks within tolerable limits
6. Regulatory Compliance: Monitor regulations related to administrative matters at the University to promptly satisfy regulatory bodies	6.1 On-time regulatory compliance

# STRATEGIC PLAN WORKSHOPS



# Governance & Strategic Planning Unit

November 2017

**[www.asu.edu.bh](http://www.asu.edu.bh)**

This book has been issued as per the approval of the General Secretariat of the Higher Education Council