

ASU



جامعة العلوم التطبيقية
APPLIED SCIENCE UNIVERSITY

معتمدة من مجلس التعليم العالي
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2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT

Applied Science University





His Highness
Shaikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa
Late Amir 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 and Prime Minister



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Welcome to Applied Science University's Annual Report for the academic year 2019/2020.

There is no doubt that this year was the most disruptive and challenging since the launch of the University in 2004. The Covid-19 pandemic impacted all the economic sectors in the entire globe, and Bahrain was no exception.

At Applied Science University, we took the threat of the Covid-19 Virus very seriously and were proactive in taking preemptive measures before the first case in Bahrain was reported on 21 February 2020. The Board of Trustees met on 12 February 2020 and initiated a series of protocols to ensure the health and safety of staff and students and ensure the continuity of the educational process without any interruption by activating the e-learning platform. The University provided all the necessary training for both staff and students and, as a result, it managed to shift swiftly and smoothly to online education when the Higher Education Council instructed higher education institutions to move all learning and teaching activities online.

Professor Waheeb Alkhaja
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

We consider that successful transition to online education as our biggest achievement of the year, but the University has also accomplished other remarkable achievements in the same year, such as the ISO 21001:2018 Certification for Educational Organizations Management Systems, and the great progress it made on international league tables such as the Times Higher Education (THE) University Impact Rankings, the QS Arab Region ranking and the UI GreenMetric World ranking.

The details of our achievements and the highlights of our key activities are highlighted in this Annual Report 2019/2020, and I sincerely hope you will enjoy reading it.

Finally, I take this opportunity to thank the President of the University, Professor Ghassan Aouad, for his commendable leadership, and the entire team of academic and administrative staff, for their continuous efforts to take ASU from strength to strength.

Happy Reading.



I am pleased to present Applied Science University's Annual Report for 2019/2020, a year that was marked by the unfortunate spread of the Covid-19 pandemic around the globe, causing chaos and losses and radical changes in the way we do things, and a year that really tested ASU's resolve and ingenuity.

It was a challenging year for all sectors, including the higher education sector, and things are yet to get back to normal, but ASU managed during 2019/2020 to not only sail during the pandemic to safety by moving all its operations online and putting in place all the necessary health and safety measures, but it also achieved many new successes and cemented its status as the leading private university in Bahrain.

Indeed, the University officially received the BQA Institutional Review Certificate for successfully meeting all the requirements in the BQA Institutional Review Handbook. ASU also achieved the ISO 21001:2018 Certification for Educational Organizations Management Systems, making it the first university in Bahrain and the GCC to achieve that in addition to its ISO 9001:2015 Certification.

In terms of league tables, ASU made remarkable progress on many fronts as it ranked at 401+ in the Times Higher Education (THE) University Impact Rankings, improved its QS Arab Region ranking by moving up to the 37th spot from the 45th spot in the previous

year, and also achieved 4 Stars overall in the QS Rating System which is a unique distinction for a Bahraini university. Finally, ASU improved its UI GreenMetric World ranking by climbing to the position of 636.

We had a great year in terms of research as we successfully organized our "International Conference on Innovation, Technology, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship" in association with London South Bank University. 69 papers from 130 researchers from 16 countries were included in the peer-refereed proceedings, with 29 papers produced by ASU staff members.

Our students continued to shine as our "Al Fazaa" team went on to win "Product of the Year" and "Boeing STEM Challenge Award" at INJAZ Arab World Competition, after lifting the national trophy last year.

There are many other achievements in this report that I invite you to read, enjoy and cherish, and I'd like to conclude here by expressing my deepest gratitude to the Chairman of our Board of Trustees, the Chairman of our Board of Directors and the members of both Boards, to the Ministry of Education, the Higher Education Council and the BQA, to the employers who support us, to all our academic and administrative staff, and above all, to our dear students and their families.

This Annual Report 2019/2020 outlines the highlights of our year. I hope you enjoy reading it.

Professor Ghassan F Aouad
President

The Year of Covid-19 Pandemic



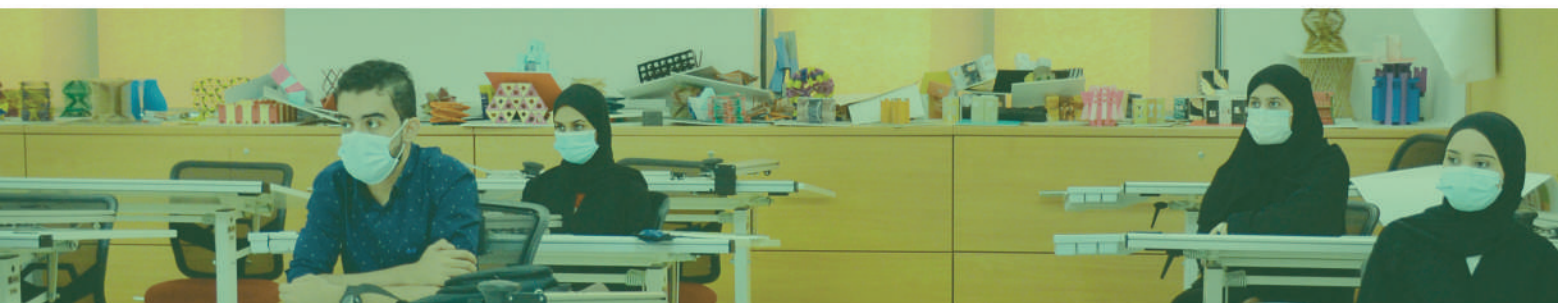
The academic year 2019/2020 will forever be remembered as the year of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a challenging year for educational institutions at all levels across the globe, and ASU was no exception. The University had to adapt quickly to the new reality by shifting all of its teaching and assessment online, in addition to taking all the necessary measures and precautions to ensure the health and safety of its staff and students.

This report provides a summary of the measures taken by the University to alleviate the impact of the pandemic, and it highlights the impact of the pandemic on student numbers (Admissions and Registration). The report also outlines the University's key achievements in its core activities (Teaching & Learning, Research, Community Engagement) and the impact COVID-19 has had on them. Lastly, the University's key achievements and its support activities for 2019/2020 year are reported.

The University's Response to Minimize the Impact of COVID-19

The University took prompt action and introduced various measures in order to minimize the impact of the coronavirus on its students, staff and other stakeholders:

- A committee chaired by the University's President was formed as per the Ministry of Education guidelines to deal with all the COVID-19 related matters. The committee met 10 times in the 2019/2020 academic year with all meetings properly minuted and all ensuing actions implemented and followed up upon.
- The University encouraged its academic and administrative staff to get vaccinated, and it maintains a record of all vaccinated staff. The Chairman of the Board and Trustees and the President of the University set the example and took the vaccine early to encourage other staff members to do the same.
- All University Management meetings were conducted online. This also includes the meetings of the Board of Trustees and the University Council. To do so, ASU invested in more than one solution (Microsoft Teams, Zoom, etc.) and trained its staff accordingly to ensure continuity of operations at all times.
- The University contracted a specialized company to sanitize the campus and the offices on a regular basis.
- Temperature checks were made mandatory for anyone entering the campus from any of the entry points.
- Hand sanitizers were installed at various points across the campus.
- The University's administration digitized the majority of its operations using a paperless approach including online payments for the University vendors to reduce physical contact.
- Different flexible work-from-home schemes were introduced for both administrative and academic staff members to reduce on-campus presence. The schemes evolved based on the evolution of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Bahrain.



- From March 2020, ASU started using Moodle bundled with the BigBlueButton plugin to deliver live classes online. This choice was dictated by the fact that staff and students were familiar with this online system and it provided the functionality needed. Training and detailed guidelines were developed and delivered to academic staff members and manuals and tutorial videos were shared with students and made available on the University's website. The IT team was also mobilized to provide assistance for all classes in the mornings and the evenings.

- A call center was set up in order to help students with their enquiries regarding teaching, assessment, and administrative issues. Within the framework of the University's response to governmental directives to confront the coronavirus and to facilitate the students' achievements, a special team was established to work as a call center to receive student questions and respond to their various enquiries. In order to ensure the team's effectiveness, they were given an intensive course in communication skills. The team members, (nine employees) manned the contact center during office working hours to receive enquiries and deal with questions in coordination with the concerned Deans, Directors, Departments or Colleges members. The University's management harnessed all logistical capabilities to facilitate the team's work and an electronic system was designed which was linked to the multiple hotline numbers.

- Health and safety measures, guidelines and instructions were produced, displayed on-campus, and shared with all staff and students to help them better deal with the effects of virus. The HR Department also provided reminders regarding these measures, namely those related to the new social habits including: wearing masks at all times whilst in the presence of others; maintaining social distancing; washing hands thoroughly with soap and water and use hand sanitizer; frequently cleaning and sterilizing surfaces and frequently used items; covering one's mouth when coughing or sneezing; the correct usage and dispose of wipes; avoiding contact with persons displaying a fever or cough; avoiding close personal contact such as cheek kissing or handshaking.

- The directives of the Coordination Committee chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander, and Prime Minister were published on the University's Instagram in order to help staff and students understand the latest happening at the national level.

- The University Council approved a decision on how to deal with mid-term and final exams by replacing them with coursework, assignments and projects.

- ASU did not interrupt its student-related activities because of the pandemic, instead they were moved online. These include honoring outstanding students, orientation day for new students, elections of the new Student Council members, and meetings with alumni.

- Despite the unprecedented situation presented by the coronavirus, the University continued organizing and holding seminars online such as its regular scientific seminars, an online roundtable about funding opportunities for young entrepreneurs, and the international conference of the College of Law.

- Approximately 10 articles about the coronavirus were published in the News Digest in order to create more awareness about the virus and its implications.

- A new section was introduced on the University's website regarding e-Learning with all the relevant links and information: <https://www.asu.edu.bh/e-learning/>
- A new section was introduced on the University's website regarding COVID-19 with all the relevant links and information: <https://www.asu.edu.bh/covid-19/faq/>
- The University adapted its marketing strategy by investing more in online advertising and holding multiple virtual open days and online meetings with school representative.



Teaching & learning

Teaching & Learning is the first Pillar of our Strategic Plan and the first of our core activities

Impact of the pandemic

As mentioned in the previous section, the teaching and learning activities were not interrupted as the University adopted the necessary measures early on to move its operations online. The University also took appropriate monitoring and control measures to ensure the effectiveness of its e-Learning system such as daily reporting and periodic audits. In addition, a study was carried out via an online survey using Microsoft Forms addressing all academics at ASU to assess online teaching. A summary of the results is provided below for the period of teaching during the Second Semester 2019/2020:

- Total number of entered courses during this study period was 2312
- Total number of registered students during this study period was 62851
- 97.5% of academics across all Colleges at ASU were able to deliver their classes on time and as scheduled
- 95% of academics across all Colleges at ASU presented clearly their lesson objectives on the screen at the beginning of their classes
- 96% of academics across all Colleges at ASU used course material related to their classes and also made them available to students
- 88.5% of academics across all Colleges at ASU recorded their classes, and the ones that did not, were either doing some formative/ summative type of assessment, and/ or had some technical issues
- 94% of academics across all Colleges at ASU did not face any technical issues (voice or video). For the 6% that did encounter technical issues, they were related to (1) the sound (students/staff could not hear, or there was too much noise in the background), (2) entering the Moodle platform (mainly at the start of classes). However, most technical issues were resolved through direct contact with the ICT support staff, or through engagement HODs
- 94% of academics across all Colleges at ASU took attendance and registered it on the Student Information System (SIS)
- 74% of academics across all Colleges at ASU conducted some form of formative assessment

Furthermore, the QAAC (Quality Assurance & Accreditation Center) conducted independent surveys to gauge staff and student satisfaction rates about their experience with E-Learning at ASU and both survey results came in very positive showing that staff were either satisfied or very satisfied with the various aspects of the online teaching and learning at the University.

In conclusion, the University confidently believes that through the combination of timely and appropriate interventions, the COVID-19 pandemic had little noticeable impact on the University's Teaching & Learning activities.



Key Achievements

Achieving the BQA Institutional Review The academic year 2019/2020 will be marked by the distinguished accomplishment of achieving the BQA Institutional Review and receiving the Certificate after meeting all the requirements mentioned in the BQA Institutional Review Handbook. This crowning achievement cemented ASU's status as a top university in Bahrain as it joined an elite group of universities who achieved both the HEC Institutional Accreditation and the BQA Institutional Review.



ASU 4th Forum: SHARING "ONLINE TEACHING PRACTICES" DURING (COVID-19) Just like any other year, this annual good-practice-sharing event was held and organized at ASU by the Academic Staff Development Unit, only this time with a focus on online teaching and learning. All academic staff members participated at this very successful event and shared their experience and expertise with their peers to foster an environment of mutual learning and knowledge sharing.

Achieving the ISO 21001:2018 Certification for Educational Organizations The University was the first in Bahrain and the region to address the requirements of the newly issued ISO 21001:2018 Standard for Educational Organizations Management Systems. Coupled with the ISO 9001:2015 that it achieved in 2017 for its administrative provision, this accomplishment makes ASU one of the very few universities in the Arab world to achieve such a remarkable feat, and it illustrates once again the University's commitment to meet international standards and best practices when it comes to the quality of its teaching and learning.



Increased Number of HEA Fellows After becoming the first and only private higher education institution accredited by Advance HE in Bahrain, ASU helped more of its staff members achieve fellowship of the Higher Education Academy resulting in 71 awardees and counting.

AdvanceHE		
Category of Fellowship	No. of Recognized Individuals	No. of Fellowships Awarded
Principal Fellow	1	1
Senior Fellow	16	16
Fellow	42	53
Associate Fellow	12	12
Total	71	82

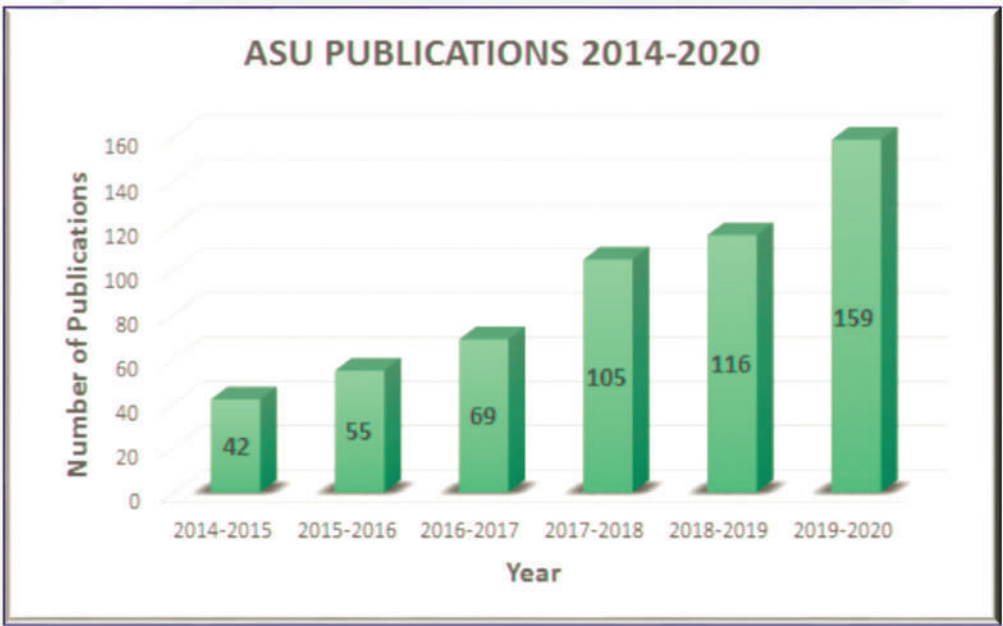


Research

Research is the second Pillar of our Strategic Plan and the second of our core activities

Impact of the pandemic

The University continued investing heavily in its research activities and the number of research publications did not decrease during the COVID-19 period. In fact, the total number of publications increased from 116 in AY 2018/2019 to 159 in academic year 2019/2020. That said, some of the research projects implemented were delayed because of the impact of the pandemic worldwide (travel restrictions, disruption of global supply chains, and so on).



In conclusion, the University believes that the Covid-19 pandemic had no noticeable impact on the University’s Research activities during the academic year 2019/2020.

Key Achievements

International Conference on Innovation, Technology, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship This was the second international scientific conference organized by ASU, and it was held on the 24th and 25th of November 2019, in association with London South Bank University under the patronage of HE, the Minister of Education and Chairman of the Higher Education Council in Bahrain, Dr. Majed bin Ali Al Nuaimi. Sixty-nine papers from 130 researchers from 16 countries (Bahrain, UK, Australia, Canada, Spain, Italy, South Africa, Turkey, Indonesia, Nigeria, Lebanon, Jordan, KSA, UAE, Kuwait, Jordan) were included in the peer-refereed proceedings, with 29 papers produced by ASU staff members. The ICITEE was, by all measures, yet another success for ASU.



The Director of Scientific Research at the Secretariat General of the HEC addresses ASU staff and students

Dr. Ferzana Almaraghi, Director of Scientific Research at the Secretariat General of the Higher Education Council was hosted by ASU on Thursday 28 November 2019 where she delivered a very interesting presentation titled “Bahraini Women in Higher Education”. The presentation, which was attended by a large number of ASU students and staff, highlighted the history of women's role in education in the kingdom and a study she conducted on the current state of women's contribution in higher education. The presentation was of particular importance as it is in line with one of ASU’s main research themes which is women leadership.



Life After Corona: A Research conducted by the President with the contribution of 41 Colleagues from ASU Academic and Administrative Staff

The President of ASU fittingly conducted a large study about how people viewed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the various aspects of their lives by collecting and analyzing contributions from over 40 ASU staff members. The result was an inspiring report which provided an insight into the future of humanity and what the “new normal” would look like post COVID-19.



Community Engagement

Community Engagement is the third Pillar of our Strategic Plan and the third of our core functions

Impact of the pandemic

The University strove to maintain its community engagement activities and it organized many online workshops, events, and free training workshops oriented towards local communities. Certainly, the total number of community engagement activities showed a slight decrease when compared with the pre-COVID-19 era; however, that was as a result of the fact that some of the planned activities required physical presence and interaction, and the University took the pragmatic decision to cancel such events as part of its contribution to the national efforts to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

In conclusion, the University believes that the Covid-19 pandemic had no noticeable impact on the University's CE activities during the academic year 2019/2020.

Key Achievements



Participation at the "Spread Hope" October Walk-A-Thon 2019 Represented by a large number of academic and administrative staff, students, alumni and their families, ASU participated in "Spread Hope" Walk-A-Thon 2019. The Walk-A-Thon was organized by Bahrain Cancer Society under the theme "Spread Hope" and was held in Water Garden City –Seef District on Friday 25 October 2019.

ASU is honored by HE Minister of Labour and Social Development On 26 December 2019, ASU was honored by HE Mr. Jameel bin Mohammed Ali Hamaidan, the Minister of Labour & Social Development, for supporting an online platform system to train Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) remotely on financial management. The cooperation between the University and the Ministry comes as part of an initiative by ASU's Community Engagement Office to help build an online platform to train 400 employees and volunteers from NGOs for 12 months and grant them a professional certificate in the management of funds of NGOs.



Increase of Student Fund As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic which affected some ASU students and their parents, ASU increased the amount of the Student Aid Fund by BHD 100k for the Second and Summer Semesters 2019/2020 in order to help students who were struggling financially. In addition, ASU allowed some flexibility in the payment of fees for an additional 3 months.



Generous contribution to the "Feena Kheir" campaign The University, through the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, made a generous donation of BHD 30K to the campaign "Feena Kheir". This fund is dedicated to help Bahrainis who were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and is intended to help the national economy recover as soon as possible.



Student Support

Student Support is the fourth Pillar of our Strategic Plan and the first of our enabling areas

ASU students won "Product of the Year" and "Boeing STEM Challenge Award" at INJAZ Arab World Competition ASU's strong and ongoing support for its entrepreneurial students was rewarded by a distinguished regional achievement. After winning the national "INJAZ" competition last year at country level, Team "Al Fazaa", composed of ASU students, represented Bahrain at the Arab level and lifted the trophy for "Product of the Year" and "Boeing STEM Challenge Award" at the INJAZ Arab World Competition held in Oman in November 2019.



Student Council Elections for the Academic Year 2019/2020 In joyful yet competitive environment, ASU students elected their representatives for the academic year 2019/2020. Election Day was held on 20 November 2019 at the Dome hall. Approximately 1000 students came to vote. Eight seats went to the College of Administrative Sciences, four seats to the College of Law, two seats to the College of Arts and Science by acclamation, and one seat to the College of Engineering by acclamation. The Deanship of Student Affairs supported the students throughout the entire process that help build their personalities, strengthen their skills, and heighten their civic engagement.

Launching a Hotline Service to Support Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic The University was keen to support its students during the COVID-19 pandemic by launching a dedicated Hotline Service with 5 lines/operators to answer all questions during these challenging times. The students were very pleased to learn about it and acknowledged that it was very useful to them.



Internationalisation & Partnerships

Internationalisation & Partnerships is the fifth Pillar of our Strategic Plan and the second of our enabling areas

Engineering Virtual Open Day In partnership with London South Bank University, ASU organized an open virtual day in June 2020 to present its Engineering programs to a large audience of high school graduates and potential applicants, along with their parents and school principals and representatives. The event was successful and new students joined the University as a result.



Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Ranking 2020 This year, ASU ranked at 401+ in the Times Higher Education (THE) University Impact Rankings. For the 2020 ranking, 766 universities from 85 countries were assessed which is more than the previous year. This international recognition is a testimonial of the quality of teaching and learning at Applied Science University and its strong commitment to become a renowned university with international appeal.

A visit to The British University in Egypt (BUE)

Professor Ghassan Aouad, President of the University, and Mr. Abdulla Waheeb Alkhaja, Director of Administration and Finance and President's Advisor for Follow Up Affairs, visited the British University of Egypt (BUE) and had fruitful discussions with the BUE President, the Registrar, the Dean of Engineering and other colleagues from the College of Engineering. Both ASU and BUE have collaborations with London South Bank University to deliver quality education in the region. On the same occasion, the President and his Advisor also attended a conference in Alexandria on The Role of Higher Education in Providing the Relevant Skills Needed for the Digital Age (Life Skills, Digital Skills, & Leadership Skills).



Participation in Bahrain Exhibition for Training and Education Pre-Employment 2020 ASU did not miss the opportunity to participate in the Bahrain Exhibition for Training and Education Pre-Employment 2020. It was organized by MEDPOINT in partnership with TAMKEEN, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Development. As can be deduced from the picture, this was prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Bahrain (February 2020).



Quality Assurance

Quality assurance is the sixth Pillar of our Strategic Plan and the third of our enabling areas

QS Arab Region Ranking and QS Stars Rating ASU improved its QA Arab Region ranking by moving up to the 37th spot from the 45th spot in the previous year, which again makes it the top private university in Bahrain. Additionally, ASU achieved 4 Stars overall in the QS Rating System which is a unique distinction for a Bahraini university.



Successful Retention of the ISO 9001:2015 Certification ASU successfully retained its ISO 9001:2015 Certification after it passed the 2nd external surveillance audit by the certifying body, demonstrating once again the rigor and commitment of ASU to quality assurance and continuous improvement.

NQF Placement of Academic Programmes As of the end of the academic year 2019/2020, the following programmes were successfully placed on the NQF Register: Bachelor in Business Administration, Bachelor in Law, Master in Human Resources Management (MHRM), Master in Business Administration (MBA), and Bachelor in Accounting. Many other programmes will follow as they are at various stages of the placement process.



Sustainable Growth

Sustainable Growth is the seventh Pillar of our Strategic Plan and the fourth of our Enabling Areas

UI GreenMetric World ASU improved its UI GreenMetric World ranking by climbing to the position of 636. This is up from 692 for the year 2019, despite the fact that new universities joined the ranking this year. Such an achievement goes to show how sustainability and being environment-friendly is at the heart of everything ASU does.



Virtual Open Day and Participation at Virtual Universities Fair Adapting its efforts in terms of Marketing and Student Recruitment to the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, ASU shifted its focus to digital marketing and it increased investment in social media advertising and virtual events. For instance, the University organized its own virtual open days to a great deal of success, and it also participated at virtual educational fairs organized by third parties. Thanks to this approach, ASU managed to reach a large number of applicants and prospective students despite the restrictions of the pandemic.



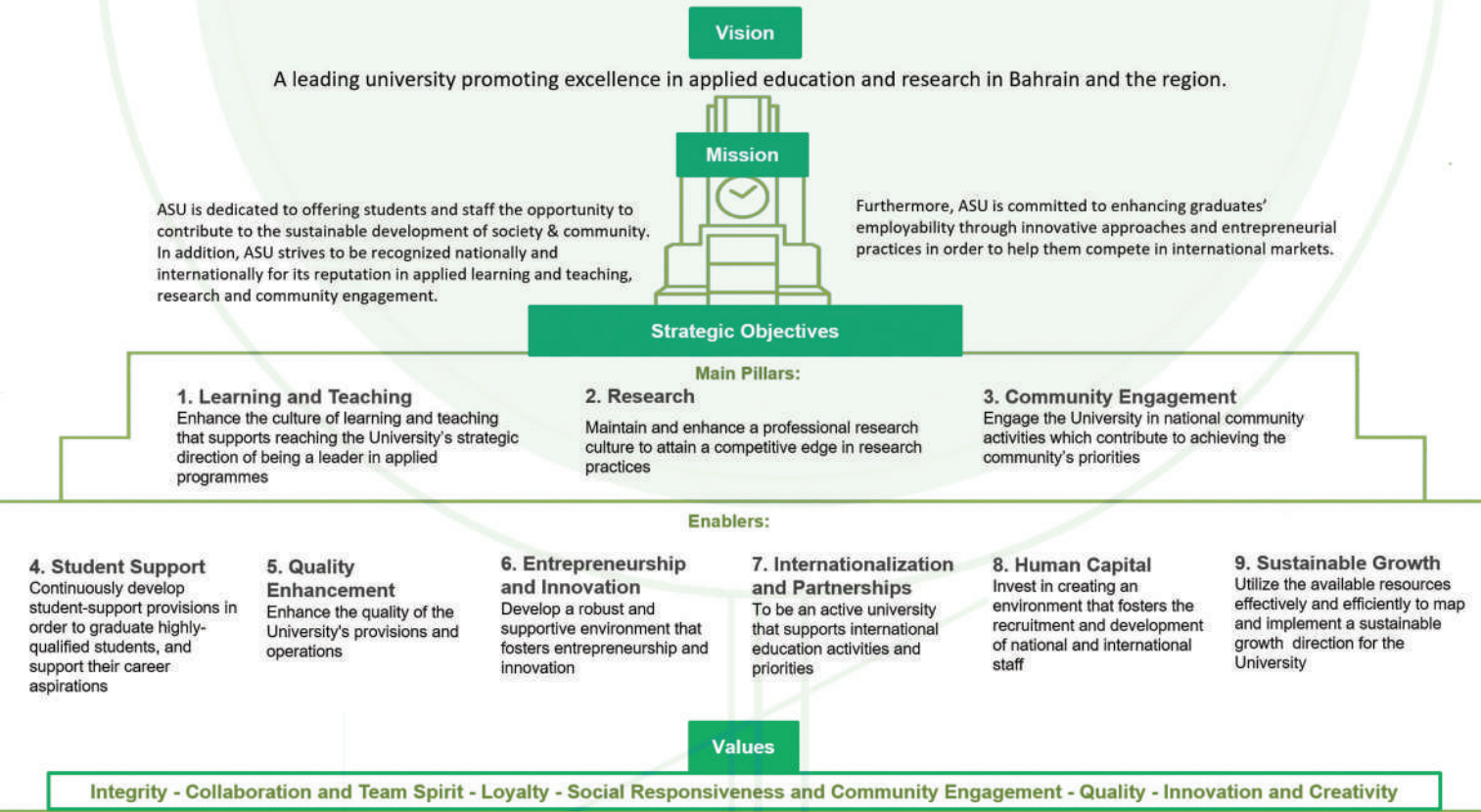
New Strategic Plan 2020-2025

The University has developed a new Strategic Plan 2020-2025 after multiple consultation sessions with the key stakeholders, including the senior management, the Board of Trustees, Advisory Boards, and the Student Council among others. The new strategic plan takes into consideration the coronavirus pandemic and its short-term and long-term impacts resulting in more realistic KPIs. However, before presenting the new plan, it is fitting to capture the main achievements related to the previous Strategic Plan 2015-2020.

Key Strategic Achievements of the Strategic Plan 2015-2020

Over the past 5 years, ASU has achieved many strategic achievements that have formed the launchpad for the next strategic plan. The main strategic accomplishments of the past five years include the successful NQF Institutional Listing and the placement of a certain number of academic programs on the NQF Register; the launch of the College of Engineering and the introduction of British hosted programmes in partnership with London South Bank University and Cardiff Metropolitan University; the achievement of HEC Institutional Accreditation; the fulfillment of the BQA Institutional Review requirements; the launch of a Business Incubator inside the campus; stellar participation in the various sports leagues for Universities; breaking into university ranking league tables and achieving remarkable rankings at regional and international levels; and the attainment of ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 21001:2018 certifications.

High-Level Presentation of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025



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