

Academic Quality Management at ULF

The main Reason and Role of Strategic Planning and Academic Quality

At ULF whether in research, teaching and learning or in administration operations, the conduct is integrated and part of our common quality strategy which aims at quality. ULF academic and administrative processes and procedures are set up to support and implement the University's quality strategy, quality conduct in all of its work and to endure continuous improvement.

The University status is a registered, licensed and approved higher education institution and is bound by the Lebanese Higher Education Rules & Regulations and the 285/2017 Law governing the conditions, requirements and activities of HEIs in Lebanon and we continue to be in full compliance.

The 285/2017 law, Ministerial Directives, MoEHE circulars, requirements and decisions are the main framework of standards, that is in addition to our Accreditors requirements, conditions and standards, that the University complies with; we also observe the local and international standards (through our Accreditors requirements) the need to ensure that the matters permanent and dynamic management process are in place to also identify any risks arising from our operations, education activities and that we manage such anticipated and or occurred risks and mitigate them effectively.

Our operations and processes for compliance with HE requirements also enforces the continuous process of regular internal auditing and monitoring, comprehensive reviews, external certifications of accreditors for referencing and development as well as students, staff and faculty feedback use to mitigate occurring risks and possible future one that may hinder the quality of education provided by us as well as the guidance and evaluation for improvement we should consider to ensure quality and valid education continuity at the University.

The university's quality strategy is designed with our strategic goals and objectives to ensure that quality enhancement in our teaching and learning, research and students experience during their study paths at the University. Therefore, our broad quality strategies for this is based on continued enhancements in the areas of teaching and learning as well as our curriculum, academic programmes, majors, courses/subjects and or specialisations, this we believe will continue to attract qualified learners and faculty members to the University which will contribute to its development and quality offerings; we also believe that such a strategy will contribute to the satisfaction of our alumni who hold positions in the workplace and to our stakeholders who hold sound judgement based on science, an aptitude for critical thinking, and the readiness to take on responsibility. In addition to the University to offer appealing, valid and meaningful education through our carefully designed and selected academic programmes, majors, course/subjects and or specialisations, other objectives also include good standard quality in teaching and learning, a teacher-student relationship based on the principle of dialogue, scientific inquiries, critical thinking and commitment to the global attitude of responsibilities in all of its today's forms.

Our quality strategy is also focused on the continuous enhancement of the University's research quality which is within the core of our strategic goals, objects and plan. The aim of this strategy is to increase the meaning, validity, suitability, usefulness, competitiveness and co-operation capabilities of the University's researchers at local, regional and international levels.

The University's quality strategy for our personnel is orientated towards the systematic development of human resources at both academic and administrative levels. The strategy aims to develop our human resources skills and teams, team work attitudes, thus encouraging them to get involved in formulating their own personnel development plan and the advancement of all without any prejudice to gender.

We, therefore, work at the University within our quality management system that our operations and divisions are functioning effectively in a continuing sustainable manner and that constant risks assessment to our education operations are adequately identified and managed accordingly for effective mitigation.

We, therefore, put the quality management system, policy and strategy to continue to enhance the quality of our education operations, teaching and learning, research and publications as well as community and student services among many others to ensure the continuous delivery of quality, valid education and services provided by the University.

We have designed the following system (see Figure 1 below) for our academic quality management through two interrelated and interacted sets of processes: (i) strategic planning and reporting processes which is based on our strategic goals, KPIs and monitors our performance to determine the degree in which we have achieved such goals; (ii) the processes as determined in this policy to enhance the quality of:

1. the degree major/ academic programme/ Academic Programme, Major, Course/Subject and/ or Specialisation,
2. teaching and assessment,
3. the student learning experience, and
4. faculties, centres and academic departments.

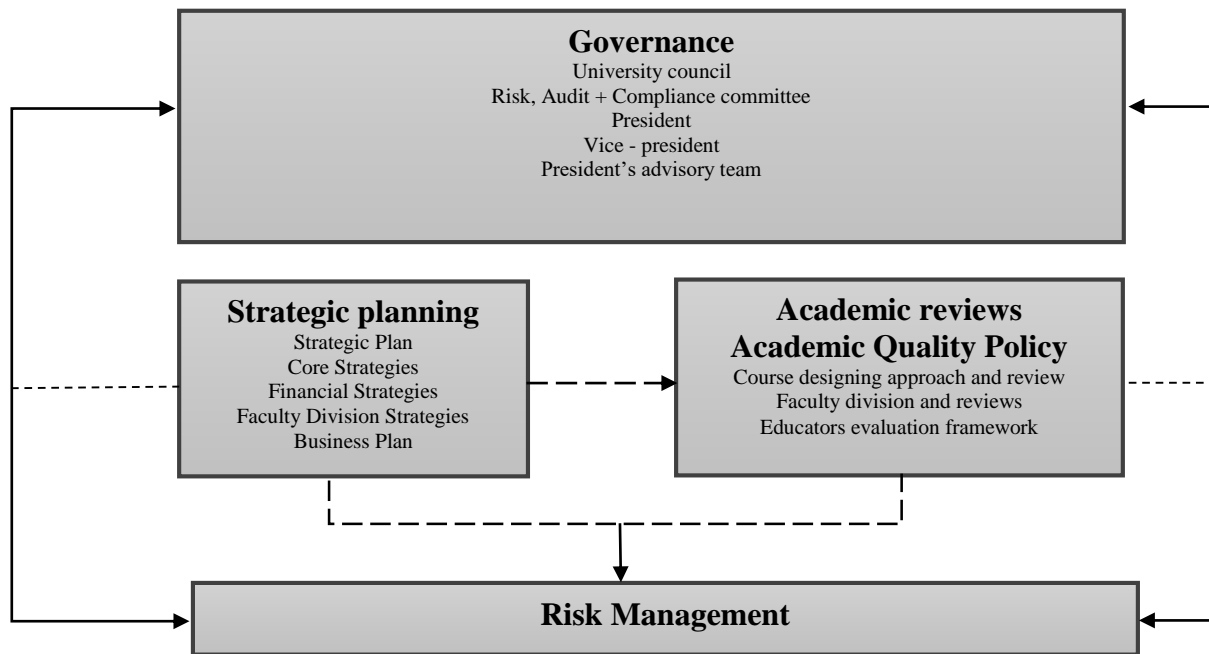


Figure 1: Academic Quality Management at ULF

Our strategic goals, strategic objectives, business plan and strategies designed in and for the University plans, policies and operations, provide key solutions and reference points for the design, approval and review of degree majors, academic programmes and Academic Programme, Major, Course/Subject and/ or Specialisations, review of academic divisions / Departments and the enhancement of the student educational, learning and research experience. The results of such processes also assist to mould the development of our future strategic goals and strategic objects objectives as well as our business plan and strategic priorities leading to the strategies for their continuous development and for successful achievement.

Within this framework, our developed quality management system such as ISO 9001 for business excellence frameworks that is externally assessed by an international accrediting and certifying organisations, are also used, where necessary and appropriate, as mechanisms for enhancing quality in specific areas (academic, co-academic and administrative), divisions and or departments within the University. Our quality management system includes a comprehensive quality manual and complete operating procedure manual. The quality management system includes 19 standard operating procedures (quality planning, control of documents, quality record, internal communication, management review, training, infrastructure, working environment, purchasing procedure, verification of purchased products/services, control of teaching and learning and services provisions, validation processes for teaching and learning and services provision, education learning—identification and traceability, control of monitoring and measuring devices, internal quality audits, monitoring processes, control of non-conforming services, corrective and preventative actions, monitoring services); 142 processes/QMS documents, for the process master list, across most functions at the university. The quality management system at the university is internally audited twice a year and externally audited once a year; top management reviews based

on the internal audit reports and the university plans are generated twice a year. The QMS quality policy, objectives, quality strategic plan, quality actions plan, SWOT and quality risks analysis are also conducted and reviewed twice a year.

Academic Quality Enhancement Principles

Reason of Policy

Academic quality enhancement is our top priority and ultimate goal of the University's risk and quality management activities focused on teaching and learning. The academic quality enhancement combines, in an effective manner, quality assurance and risk management. Therefore, our academic quality enhancement should:

- a. provide opportunities to reflect on achievements against strategic goals, strategic priorities and stated outcomes;
- b. identify University strengths to be built on and opportunities for improvement, while working on turning any identified weaknesses into strength to further support the process;
- c. include external reference points, primarily from our local governing laws, rules and regulations of HE and the standards of our international accreditors and quality certifications organisations; and
- d. strengthen engagement by faculty, staff, students and other relevant stakeholders with the PDCA process adopted by the University.

Process

Our academic quality enhancement process includes:

- a. a clear statement of purpose, the scope of and terms of reference for any faculty, division /unit, process or activity under review (including clear links to relevant strategic goals, strategic priorities, objectives, business plan and strategies);
- b. clearly defined responsibilities for initiation, execution and implementation;
- c. a clear and realistic and achievable timeframe;
- d. reference to stakeholder feedback (e.g. from students, faculty, staff, committees, councils at the University and from the external community including our partners);
- e. reference to institutional, faculty and/or academic department performance indicators and relevant data;
- f. reference to relevant external reference points, from our international accreditors, quality certifications organisations, local governing rules and regulations, including standards or benchmarks;
- g. external input into major reviews; and
- h. appropriate approval by the University Council, President and the University BOT, reporting, communication and implementation of the outcomes of the review.

External referencing activities, and external assessment of standards, including our accreditors, quality certifications organisations and the contribution of our appropriate partners (where applicable and needed), at a national and international level, enables the University to compare and evaluate its performance and, in so doing, monitor standards, compare good practice and make quality improvements.

External referencing authorities and projects undertaken by Faculties, Divisions, Centres and Academic Departments of the University will:

- a. supports the University's mission, strategic goals, objectives and strategic priorities;
- b. be founded and focused on the commitment to: learning from good practice(s); implementing potential improvements arising from external references, standards, benchmarking findings (where available and applicable; and sharing of good practices including post projects completion;
- c. be founded on and focused on mutuality: the sought outcomes, expectations of the proposed external referencing and benchmarking activity(s) where available and applicable, should be founded on an already established and prior to the commencement of the particular activity, with a view to establishing mutual interest and benefits for all concerned parties;
- d. be balanced and financial sound, in terms of the value received once compared to costs involved in undertaking the activity / projects; and
- e. has the approval of the relevant Dean of Faculty, University Academic Council, University Quality Council and the Director of the University Quality Management.

External referencing projects and activities should be carried out in accordance with the standards, rules, regulations of the external authorities, that being the local higher education authorities, our international accreditors, European education standards (ESG), and our international quality certification organisations.