

For Immediate Release



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The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education and the American University of Beirut sign MOU to transform teaching and learning

The partnership will involve establishing the Al Ghurair Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning with Technology at the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture

The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education and the American University of Beirut (AUB), one of its first university partners in the Arab world, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to deliver on the University's vision to transform teaching and learning at the university and the Arab region; and to increase access to education for thousands of Arab youth by offering online and blended learning opportunities at scale. The Al Ghurair Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning will be established at the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture.

The initiative marks a new partnership between the two organizations, focused on making high quality blended and online education more accessible to Arab youth. This initiative was born out of the Foundation's three years of offering online degrees to Arab youth and marks the conclusion of a successful two-year project led jointly by the Foundation and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to develop blended learning courses at AUB and the American University in Cairo (AUC).

The objective of the new initiative is to expand AUB's reach and impact by providing a wider pool of students and members of the community with access to quality English language post-secondary education via online and blended learning courses and programs. The three-year initiative will be based out of the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, with the intention of expanding the work to other faculties at AUB in the future. The initiative also aims to position AUB as a regional leader in online learning, consequently serving as a

knowledge hub for training and supporting other regional universities interested in transforming their teaching and learning and building their online and blended learning capacities.

Dr. Alan Shihadeh, Dean of the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, said “The Arab world faces daunting challenges to provide high-quality learning opportunities to its social majorities. We are delighted to partner with the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation to make learning engineering and architecture more accessible, more interactive, and more engaging, and we look forward to sharing with other institutions what lessons we learn over the coming three years.”

Speaking on the occasion of signing the MOU, Maysa Jalbout, the Chief Executive Officer of the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education, said: "Expanding the collaboration between AUB and the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education reflects the strong commitment of both institutions in promoting system change in higher education in the Arab world. We hope that this move will spur more universities and governments in the region to explore the potential that online learning offers to provide quality, affordable education to more youth at scale."

The initiative was endorsed in an exchange of letters of commitment by both the President of AUB, Fadlo Khuri and the Chairman of the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education, H.E. Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair. The details of the new initiative will be revealed at the official announcement following a six month period of planning and consultation with a view to commence transforming programs in 2020.

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,100 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

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