

Amended on 2nd March 2023

MFHEA External Quality Assurance – Programme Audit Report (27th and 29th April 2022)

Received on 21st of November 2022

Programmes Audited:

1. BSc in Business Administration
2. BSc in Business and Finance
3. MBA

No	Recommendation	Type of Recommendation	Timeframe for recommendation	Responsible units	Actions to take
Section A – Design and Development of Programme of Study					
A1- Policy for Quality Assurance					
A1	The main responsibility of the QA Department shall be refocused from ensuring MFHEA accreditation to an ongoing, internal QA Improvement process that will enable future improvements in QA.	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	QA, Deans, Coordinators, Provost	MFHEA accreditation is handled by Acting Deans, Program Coordinators, and the provost. Discussions take place on Teams Channels (documentation on Teams) and QA participates in comments and internal review on the channel. This has been implemented for all audited programmes and QA Manager leads

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					the yearly reviews . This year the annual was done in February.
A2	The QA Department shall ensure that the roles, responsibilities and authority are also visible in documented processes and academic bodies.	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	QA	This has been completed and all roles, responsibilities, and authorities for all positions have been revised and the relevant policy documents and HR documents have been updated. Policy documents are published on website on an ongoing, continuous improvement basis.
A3	The QA Manager, although involved in the process of reviewing learning outcomes of the programme and modules' descriptions, shall also authorise that the formed versions abide by the directions provided.	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	QA, Provost	Same as for A2. QA reviewed program documents and provided feedback on formed versions. This was facilitated and documented on Teams Channels for each separate program.
A4	The QA Manager should be supported by specialised personnel. The resulting department/unit should continue to report to the President	Key Recommendation	6 months	University Council/ President/ Board of Trustees	Specialized personnel from the Provost Office, and other units support the activities of QA. While keeping all academic and administrative units informed, the QA manager continues to report directly to the President. Additionally, the QA office is seeking the appointment of a junior staff member to assist in daily activities.

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A5	A versioning system for internal QA forms and processes should be developed and maintained.	Key Recommendation	6 months	QA, VP for Administration and Development, Provost	A versioning system has been suggested by the Faculty Council and approved by the Academic Council (see Council minutes of Feb 24, 2023).
A6	The procedures for the appointment or election of student representatives in AUM bodies should be detailed in the Student Handbook	Key Recommendation	6 months	QA, VP for Administration and Development, Provost	The procedures for the appointment or election of student representatives at the American University of Malta have been implemented and they are outlined in the Student Handbook with a link to detailed procedures. Students are aware.
A7	It should be ensured that all academic bodies have sufficient representation of faculty members and students.	Key Recommendation	6 months	QA, VP for Administration and Development, Provost	All academic bodies have sufficient representation of faculty members and students. An effort to complete the inclusion of student representatives in all academic bodies is underway.
A2 Design and Development of Programme					
A8	The American University of Malta shall institutionalise the role of a Dean for the College of Business and shall assign a Dean of the College of Business with full authority and responsibility.	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	President, VP for Administration and Development, Provost	Provost has applied to the University Council with the proposal to appoint full-time Dean for the College of Business (Feb 13, 2023). AUM President will apply to the Board of Trustees for the opening of the

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					Dean's position (BOT meeting scheduled for April 24, 2023)
A9	Module titles shall become more reflective of the content and contextualised accordingly	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	Dean, College of Business, Provost	Two workshops on improving syllabi, including module titles, conducted in Fall 2022. Discussion channels on Teams for continuous improvement of titles in place. Process of updating and re-accrediting programs (including for title-changes of modules) in place and scheduled.
A10	The individual modules/courses of the programmes shall address all required learning objectives defined for the programmes overall.	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	Dean, College of Business, Provost	- Two workshops on writing Learning Outcomes by external expert were completed (Dec 16, 2022, and Jan 13, 2023) to train faculty into writing better LOs for their modules, including the inclusion of the relation to program objectives. - Updates to syllabi under continuous improvement.
A11	Each module outline shall address at least one of the learning objectives defined for the programmes.	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	Dean, College of Business, Provost	Same as for A10 (online MBA subject to the same process).
A12	The programmes' goals/learning outcomes and learning objectives shall follow and reflect international good practices design at a level that is appropriate for the degrees.	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	Dean, College of Business, Provost	Same as for A10.

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A13	The weight for the final exam shall be increased significantly to prevent students with very poor performance in the final examination acquiring a grade that enables them to pass a course based on homework assignments and other types of formative assessment.	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	Dean, College of Business, Provost	Final exams or final projects now reflect at least 30% of all courses taken by students in the College of Business (as of Spring 2023).
A14	A smaller number of general education courses should be offered to allow the introduction of more business-related subjects	Key Recommendation	6 months	Dean, College of Business, Provost	The contribution of the General Education Program to the various undergraduate programs of the College of Business are on the agenda of the Curriculum Development Committee and will be reviewed in Spring 2023.
A15	The programmes' learning goals and learning outcomes/should be redesigned together with the development of clear road-mapping for each module for students' suggested pathway for the programmes.	Key Recommendation	6 months	Provost Office, College of Business	Same as for A10
A3 Internal Review-Monitoring and Periodic Review					

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A16	A formal disciplinary process that addresses all breaches of academic integrity, not only plagiarism, shall be institutionalised and communicated to all involved parties.	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	QA, Provost Office	<p><i>The Students' Appeal and Misconduct Committee</i> has been in existence for a long time. It follows set procedures that address wide-ranging issues related to academic integrity. Policies relating to academic integrity are currently being reviewed and developed. They will be published on the website. The responsibilities of this committee are outlined in the Student Handbook.</p> <p>This committee has been directly assigned to the Vice-President.</p>
A17	The programmes should be reviewed regularly for relevance and currency. Both students and FT faculty should participate in the review process.	Key Recommendation	6 months	QA, Provost Office	<p>Same as for A1.</p> <p>Also, feedback from students will be collected by the Curriculum Development Committee and will be considered during the regular discussions of the CDC starting in Spring 2023.</p>
Section B – Student -centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment					
B1 Teaching and Learning Strategies					

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<p>B1</p>	<p>Reading Lists for each module shall be updated to reflect latest developments in the area</p>	<p>Mandatory Recommendation</p>	<p>3 months</p>	<p>Faculty staff, Dean, Provost</p>	<p>Module updates are under continuous improvement and reading lists for current modules have been updated for many of the courses.</p> <p>From now on and before each semester, both full-time and continuing part-time faculty will be requested to update their syllabi with particular emphasis on updating textbooks. For modules that are to be taught by new part-time or full-time faculty, the provost with the assistance of acting Deans or coordinators updates the reading lists.</p>
<p>B2</p>	<p>The aims and objectives of the thesis shall be clarified to improve the overall student experience</p>	<p>Mandatory Recommendation</p>	<p>3 months</p>	<p>Faculty staff, Dean, Provost</p>	<p>Thesis objectives have been clarified for each student by their supervisor for Spring 2023.</p> <p>An update to the Academic Policy document in this regard is underway and expected to be complete before the Fall 2023 semester.</p>
<p>B3</p>	<p>The College of Business should set an official maximum study limit for the programmes in terms of maximum duration of studies</p>	<p>Key Recommendation</p>	<p>6 months</p>	<p>Faculty staff, Dean, Provost</p>	<p>Duration of study for all programmes have been included into the Academic Regulations and website.</p>

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B4	Modern teaching and learning tools should be considered (<i>e.g., simulations, serious games, etc</i>)	Key Recommendation	6 months	Faculty staff, Dean, Provost	Modern teaching methods have been introduced; Examples include PBL, student-centred learning, using web tools, case-study, gamification, flipped classroom, etc. In addition, a series of workshops (through Centre of Excellence) will be offered to address and improve teaching methods.
B2 -Student Assessment					
B10	Turnitin software shall be used in ALL assignment submissions.	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	Provost	Turnitin software shall be applied for <u>all</u> assignment submissions. Compliance of Faculty staff will be insured
B11	Clarification and rationalisation of the use of different learning pedagogies and assessment methods shall be included in module outlines.	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	Provost, Dean	Same as for A10
B12	An escalation procedure for all breaches of academic integrity shall be developed and shall be communicated to and followed by ALL faculty in a consistent manner.	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	Provost, Dean	Same as for A16

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B13	Clarification and rationalisation of different learning pedagogies and assessment methodologies should be reflected on rubrics used for evaluating assignments of studies	Key Recommendation	6 months	Provost, Dean	Learning pedagogies and assessment methodologies are being clarified. Rationalisation and reflection in rubrics in assignments is underway.
B14	Regular training on academic integrity should be offered to both students and faculty.	Key Recommendation	6 months	Provost, VP for Administration and Development	University organises annual Orientation sessions for Faculty and Students including academic integrity. And these will continue. Multiple workshops on ethics and sensitivity to gender and cultural bias are planned
B15	Software licenses for qualitative or quantitative data analysis (examples include Nvivo and SPSS) should be bought for future use by the students.	Key Recommendation	6 months	Provost, President	SPSS and Mathematica licenses have been bought and deployed and student and faculty training are underway in Spring 2023.
Section C – Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification					
C1 Student Admission Regulations					
C1	The number of international students is very high in comparison to the number of local students; recruitment efforts should also be directed to local students who will	Key Recommendation	6 months	VP for Administration and Development	AUM announced exempting Maltese and EU nationals from tuition fees for both graduate and undergraduate programmes.

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	provide the programmes with links to the local community and industry				
C2 Student Progression					
C3	Management of students' <i>progression and advising</i> shall be delegated to dedicated Student Advisors	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	Provost	Done. All students have dedicated full-time faculty as advisors. Names of advisors can be obtained in OIS (AUM's Student Information System) by the students.
C4	The role of Programme Coordinator shall be introduced. For each programme offered, a different Full time faculty member should undertake the role of Programme Coordinator	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	Provost, Dean	The role of Programme Coordinator for all programs in the College of Business has been undertaken by the Dean. Distinct faculty have been assigned and the transition of each of the 3 available undergraduate programs and the MBA to those distinct faculty in the College of Business will be completed.
C5	The HR Department shall create and communicate job descriptions with assigned responsibilities and authority for Dean, Programme Coordinators, Course Leaders,	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	VP for Administration and Development, HR	HR has created or updated job description of roles and responsibilities for Dean (update) and Registrar (update). Programme coordination is not a position, but a responsibility included

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	Moodle Administrators and Registrar				<p>in a faculty's contribution to university service. The scope of work and targeted tasks is identified by the provost and approved by the academic council.</p> <p>MOODLE Administration is divided into 3 parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ensuring software updates, provisioning on servers and other technical support is provided by the IT department. 2) Usernames and passwords and integration with the OIS (AUM's student information system) regarding grades is identified through a contractual responsibility in the Registrar's contract. 3) Content and content monitoring is the joint responsibility of the instructors, acting Deans or program coordinators.
C6	The vacancy at the post of Student's Affairs shall be filled, with qualified personnel	Mandatory Recommendation	6 months	VP for Administration and Development, President	Vacancy has been filled as of the beginning of Spring 2023 semester.
C7	It appears that the number of dropouts is very high and therefore remedial actions should be	Key Recommendation	6 months	Provost, Dean	- The system of monitoring students' academic progression was updated, and it has improved the situation with

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	undertaken to improve the situation				<p>dropouts and other academic achievements of students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The Student Monitoring Committee has been taking individual intervention with students (two faculty meeting each at-risk student one-on-one).- In-person teaching has resumed at AUM for most courses having more than 2 students.- Tutoring initiative has been developed and implemented.- Polls and internal studies to identify problem were done and a faculty meeting to discuss results. Two new committees were created with specific goals for Spring 2023. The two committees are "Classroom Environment Committee" to improve teach and classroom resources and an "Industrial Outreach Committee", whose mandate include facilitating internships, co-op programs, and job shadowing opportunities for students. Also, develop partnerships with industry professionals to provide guest lectures, mentorship, and networking opportunities for students. Both of those measures aim at improved benefit and satisfaction of students.
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C8	The individual study plan per student and personal tutoring/advising should be improved and linked clearly to student progression	Key Recommendation	6 months	Provost	Concerning tutoring, a peer-to-peer tutoring system has been established and has been deployed since Fall 2022. Concerning study plans per student, the Student Monitoring Committee is discussing and organizing logistics.
C9	Efforts should be undertaken to increase the numbers of expected graduates in the next years as now these are expected to be very low	Key Recommendation	6 months	Provost	Same measures as for C7.
C10	The role of Course Leader should be introduced. A full-time faculty member can be a Course Leader for up to 5 courses and he/she should be responsible for student progression in the course he/she leads.	Key Recommendation	6 months	Provost, Dean	An initiative has been started. This role was internally discussed during workshops, the logistics are too difficult in terms of the size of the faculty, number of programs and number of associated courses. The university is looking at implementation modalities.
C11	The role of the Registrar should be focused on record keeping for students' transcripts, pathways, and eligibility for graduation	Key Recommendation	6 months	Provost, advisors.	This has been done. Every academic decision is now documented as originating from the advisor or the provost.
C4 Student Certification					

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C15	Degree authorisation shall include signatures from the Registrar and the Chief Librarian; the latter should ensure the proper upload of the thesis dissertation document in the institutional repository	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	Provost, Registrar, Librarian	The process has been delineated and documented. The aspect relating to uploading thesis dissertation will be applied starting in Spring 2023.
Section D Teaching Staff					
D1	A Faculty recruitment plan shall be created in the very near future	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	VP for Administration and Development, HR	Done. Plans for faculty recruitment were created and a report presented to the Board of Trustees in September 2022.
D2	A Faculty recruitment process shall be documented and followed in all future recruitment initiatives	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	VP for Administration and Development, HR, QA	Current recruitment process updated. Search committees, interviews and decision processes have been implemented and documented for the latest faculty positions (search done in Fall 2022, faculty started in Spring 2023).
D3	The role of HR Manager in the faculty recruitment process should be enhanced and improved in the very near future	Key Recommendation	6 months	VP for Administration and Development, HR	HR has been included in all faculty interviews and has a prominent role in the recruitment process.
D2 Teaching Staff Numbers and Academic Background					

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D5	An institutional publication pool or registry (i.e., Google Scholar, Pure, etc.) shall be created	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	Provost, Dean	A Teams channel for this purpose has been created and populated with files from faculty who will keep them updated. Plans to include those on the website are underway.
D6	A list of Faculty publications shall be included in AUM website	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	Provost, Dean	In process. The university website is being redesigned and the process of creating content is being re-defined.
D7	Special incentives (bonus, time-release) should be introduced for existing faculty to pursue publications in Scopus-listed international peer reviewed journals/conference proceedings to keep faculty with a good publication track at AUM	Key Recommendation	6 months	Provost, Dean	Done. Current contract conditions already include 40% of workload for research, besides a significant financial support from the university for research and publications.
D3 Teaching Staff Professional Development					
D9	A plan focusing on the role of faculty for the achievement of the goals and their associated key performance indicators shall be created and implemented.	Mandatory Recommendation	3 months	Provost, VP for Administration and Development, QA	Plan was developed and is multi-faceted. It involves new committees and industry involvement. Plan was deployed and is under continuous improvement. Note that part of faculty evaluation has always been done through Course

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					<p>Evaluation Surveys by students for every course and every semester. Their results are ranked and linked to performance assessment. Those results are also discussed with each faculty and shared on a common platform (Teams Channel).</p> <p>In addition, class observation of each faculty is also done and discussed.</p>
D10	Beyond actions taken by the HR Department, the QA Department/Unit should also undertake actions to minimise faculty turnover, to maintain consistency in the delivery of courses.	Key Recommendation	6 months	VP for Administration and Development, Provost, QA	<p>Workshops, social events, better faculty support has been implemented.</p> <p>Also, a Centre for Excellence has been established with progression plans for faculty development.</p>
D11	A 360-degree evaluation process, to enhance transparency in academic governance, should be created.	Key Recommendation	6 months	Provost, QA	Same as for D9
D12	Progression plans and incentives should be agreed and set up for each full-time faculty member.	Key Recommendation	6 months	VP for Administration and Development, Provost, QA	Same as for D7

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D13	Faculty incentives for staff development for each faculty progression plan are recommended to minimise faculty turnover.	Key Recommendation	6 months	VP for Administration and Development, Provost, QA	Same as D10. Also, salary raises have been done this year, and contract durations have been extended for most faculty.
E2 Facilities and Learning Resources					
E2	Support procedures for students with learning disabilities is recommended to be documented and established	Key Recommendation	6 months	VP for Administration and Development, QA	An annual survey will be conducted during each semester (in October and March) to identify students with learning disabilities. For this semester, the survey has already been completed (in March) using Microsoft Forms. The next step in providing support includes planning and then execution during the subsequent semester. The spectrum of support includes additional academic assistance, such as consulting, exam accommodations, and tutoring, depending on the specific needs related to the identified disability. Targeted support plans are developed before the start of the succeeding semester in which the survey was conducted and in consultation with a counsellor. We are currently in the process of developing support plans for Fall 2023.

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E3 Student Support					
E3	Provision for an institutionalised in-house or outsource service should be examined for students experiencing psychological and emotional health issues	Key Recommendation	6 months	VP for Administration and Development	A part-time Counsellor has been hired starting at the beginning of Spring 2023.
Section F – Information Management					
F1	Learning material for ALL modules should be uploaded on the same learning management system. The faculty should decide whether the platform to be used is Moodle or Team; the QAAP recommends MOODLE	Key Recommendation	6 months	Dean, Provost	Policy has been proposed and adopted by the faculty (MOODLE). Monitoring is underway.
F2	The role of MOODLE administration should be decoupled from the role of Registrar	Key Recommendation	6 months	Provost	Currently, Moodle and OIS (AUM's Student Information System) are integrated and the person with key expertise is the Registrar. An assistant registrar has been recently hired and will start in March 2023. The assistant will be delegated the role of administrating MOODLE after a period of training.
Section G – Public Information					

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G1	The redesign of the website for the BBA, BSC and MBA courses shall be in line with the look and feel and the academic content of reputable international universities	Mandatory Recommendation	6 months	VP for Administration and Development Provost	The AUM programme webpage on the website is under continuous improvement and is in the process of being significantly redesigned (see D6)
G2	The redesign of the institutional BBA, BSc and MBA websites shall include learning goals/learning objectives and academic path, and short CVS and publications for selected faculty.	Mandatory Recommendation	6 months	VP for Administration and Development, Provost	The AUM website redesign includes learning objectives, academic pathways, Faculty publications and short CVs (see D6).
G3	Consistency of internally defined learning outcomes and objectives, which are also publicly available on the website and brochures, shall be observed.	Mandatory Recommendation	6 months	VP for Administration and Development, Provost	A database to move all syllabus-related content, including learning outcomes, into a database is underway. After this step, this database will be the reference for all past, present, and future updates of syllabi. Consistency will then be ensured by having a reference source for all related data. Updated learning outcomes will be published in brochures and website from a common and dynamically updated source with clear processes and a documented trail of changes.