



This review method
is ESG-compliant

International Quality Accreditation

Mid-Cycle Review

American University of the
Middle East

Review Report

May 2026

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About this mid-cycle review

This is a report of a mid-cycle review conducted by The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at American University of the Middle East. The mid-cycle review is desk-based and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Professor Vish Maheshwari
- Dr Julian Ellis.

The full International Quality Review (IQR) in June 2023, resulted in a [published report](#). The QAA review team concluded that American University of the Middle East met all 10 standards set out in Part 1 of the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\)](#). The team identified eleven features of good practice and made four recommendations.

This mid-cycle review evaluates progress against the key actions since the IQR and considers any significant changes that may impact on the ability of American University of the Middle East to continue to meet the ESG standards.

In 2026, QAA revised the IQR method. This mid-cycle review was therefore conducted under the revised method known as International Quality Accreditation (IQA).

Outcome of the mid-cycle review

- 1 From the evidence provided, the mid-cycle review team concludes that American University of the Middle East is making **satisfactory progress** since the June 2023 International Quality Review and that the period of validity of the IQR be extended to **October 2028**.
- 2 The outcome of satisfactory progress was reached through an evaluation of evidence by the reviewers that demonstrated the American University of the Middle East has taken clear, effective, and sustained action in response to the 2023 International Quality Review (IQR).

Summary of IQR outcomes

Overview of the institution

- 3 American University of the Middle East (AUM), established in 2005 under Kuwait's Law on Establishment of Private Universities (2000), is a private higher education institution that has grown significantly since its founding. From an initial intake of a few hundred students, AUM now has more than 10,000 learners on its campus in Kuwait.
- 4 AUM offers academic programmes in business and engineering, designed to blend theoretical foundations with practical application. Its educational model emphasises multidisciplinary learning environments that prepare graduates for professional employment. The university is organised into two main colleges, the College of Engineering and Technology and the College of Business Administration, supported by a Liberal Arts Department and an English Preparatory Programme.
- 5 AUM's mission and vision guide its commitment to fostering leadership, entrepreneurship, and engaged learning. Its vision is to be a recognised regional and international institution for knowledge creation and dissemination. Over time, the mission statement has been refined to be more concise and to better emphasise learner-centric education, ethical conduct, and professionalism.

6 To fulfil its mission, AUM adopts a student-focused approach, delivers both theoretical and applied learning, ensures high academic quality, and promotes creativity, innovation, critical thinking, and continuous learning throughout the student experience.

Good practice identified by the 2023 International Quality Review

7 The 2023 International Quality Review identified the following good practice:

- Commitment to embedding sustainable development goals (SDGs) in institutional processes, including the institutional quality assurance (ESG Standard 1.1).
- Approach to delivering of programmes encourages students to engage with a range of immersive and experiential learning opportunities, both academic learning and extracurricular learning (ESG Standard 1.3).
- Approach to assessment design enabled students to demonstrate the development of both core academic and employment ready skills (ESG Standard 1.3).
- There is a comprehensive onboarding and learning support in place starting from an insightful orientation and personalised integration at the beginning of the academic year followed by a broad array of support services throughout the student journey ensuring success for all (ESG Standard 1.4).
- MyPath programme provides a distinct opportunity for students to co-create, monitor, and customise their learning journey and continuously review progress across both the credited and non-credited curriculum offer (ESG Standard 1.4).
- Institutional encouragement and faculty embedding of undergraduate student participation in research as part of the learning experience and wider skills development (ESG Standard 1.5).
- Strategic approach taken to supporting and increasing staff participation in continuous professional development (CPD), including the routine evaluation to ensure its ongoing effectiveness (ESG Standard 1.5).
- Support provided by the Academic Advancement Centre and Tawteen Career Centre to all current students and AUM graduates to academic and career progression, which also aligns with national priorities (ESG Standard 1.6).
- Institutional application of integrated data management and coherence evaluation to ensure student success, such as the Student Performance Progress Report (SPPR) to identify students at risk and initiate appropriate interventions (ESG Standard 1.7).
- Management of stakeholder relations through various external and internal communications channels such as institutional CRM, social media platforms, and MyPath Programme powered by DegreeWorks (ESG Standard 1.8).
- Strategic commitment to continuous improvement and development of internal processes to promote a culture of excellence through external quality assurance, accreditations, regional and international rankings (ESG Standard 1.10).

Recommendations of the 2023 International Quality Review

8 The 2023 International Quality Review also identified the following recommendations:

- Develop an institutional planner outlining regular review of the Quality Assurance Policy Implementation guide (ESG Standard 1.1).
- Explore how feedback from stakeholders, such as students and industry, could be further formalised through existing University forums (ESG Standard 1.2).
- Increase consistency of the established approach to ensuring new or redeveloped policies are communicated to students and staff (ESG Standard 1.3).
- Reflect on existing mechanisms and practices relating to programme monitoring and review to ensure a cohesive internal approach and consider explicit external stakeholder involvement (ESG Standard 1.9).

Changes since the last International Quality Review

9 One of the most significant developments since the IQR review in 2023 has been the revision of American University of Middle East (AUM)'s mission and vision statements. The updated statements place greater emphasis on international recognition, research excellence, innovation, sustainability, and wider societal impact. It demonstrates that AUM is no longer focused only on growth and consolidation but is now positioning itself as a globally recognised institution. The revised direction aligns academic development with the future needs of Kuwait, the region, and the international higher education environment.

10 To support this, AUM introduced new strategic goals for 2025-2030:

- Academic Growth and Institutional Excellence
- Excellence in Teaching, Research, Innovation and Workforce Development
- Sustainability and Digital Transformation
- Student-Centredness, Alumni and Industry Relations
- Internationalisation and World-Class Branding

The mid-cycle review team consider these goals show a more ambitious and outward-facing strategic model.

11 AUM has continued to use external accreditation as a key mechanism for assuring quality and benchmarking itself internationally. Since the last IQR, the University has achieved major accreditation successes such as ABET¹ reaccreditation for several engineering programmes including initial accreditation for Civil Engineering and Architectural Engineering, AACSB² reaccreditation for the College of Business Administration, NECHE³ candidacy status and continues to prepare for local institutional reaccreditations. The mid-cycle review team considered these achievements are significant because they provide independent confirmation that academic programmes meet recognised international standards. They also enhance student confidence, graduate employability, and institutional reputation.

12 AUM has expanded its academic portfolio by developing new programmes in Health Sciences, Engineering and English Language Teaching. This reflects responsiveness to labour market demand and national development priorities. It has been noted that the programme design, for these, involved benchmarking against international institutions such as Purdue University. At the same time, the Telecommunication and Networking Technology programme has been discontinued. Importantly, AUM introduced a formal Teach-Out Guideline, ensuring that if programmes are closed or substantially changed, students are protected and can complete their studies appropriately. This indicates to the mid-cycle review team stronger academic portfolio management and student-centred planning.

13 AUM has enhanced its learning and teaching practices through a range of initiatives. These measures include revised faculty guidance, more transparent expectations for course delivery, integration of AI tools and generative AI guidelines, as well as updated academic integrity procedures to improve assessment reliability and fairness. Moreover, it has also

¹ ABET originally stood for the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, but since 2005, we have operated exclusively under the acronym to reflect the broader range of disciplines we assure for quality

² Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business

³ New England Commission of Higher Education

expanded career fairs, employer engagement, internships, and alumni relations through its Academic Advancement Centre and Tawteen Centre outlining a clear commitment to graduate employability and industry relevance. The mid-cycle review team consider these developments reflect AUM's commitment to modernising pedagogy and boosting student outcomes while upholding rigorous academic standards.

14 During regional developments in early 2026, AUM moved quickly to protect continuity of learning. AUM used digital platforms and introduced online midterm examinations to avoid disruption to students. This demonstrates organisational resilience, effective contingency planning, and commitment to maintaining the student experience under challenging circumstances.

Findings from the mid-cycle review analysis

Recommendations

15 In 2023 the IQR team offered four recommendations to AUM. These were considered desirable, not essential. The evidence suggests that AUM has approached the post-IQR period constructively by treating previous recommendations as opportunities to strengthen its institutional systems even further. The mid-cycle review team consider recent developments show a strong culture of continuous improvement, where evidence based, strategic planning, and stakeholder involvement are becoming progressively integrated.

16 The IQR team recommended a more structured mechanism for monitoring the Quality Assurance Policy Implementation Guide. In response, AUM has developed and implemented an QA implementation guide and institutional planner, which serves as a comprehensive tool for systematically tracking actions, assigning responsibilities, setting measurable milestones, and recording progress across all relevant departments and units. The planner represents an active management and operationalisation approach to quality assurance processes, such programme evaluations and development, accreditation management and collaborative strategic decision making, throughout the institution. The mid-cycle review team consider further enhances AUM's approach to proactively address potential issues and transforming quality assurance from a reactive process into a cyclical, sustainable practice that is embedded in everyday operations, strengthening a culture of continuous improvement and ensuring that quality standards remain upheld.

17 The IQR team recommended that AUM formalise its processes for capturing and utilising stakeholder feedback, specifically from students and employers. In response, AUM now reports a wider array of surveys, direct consultations, employer interviews, alumni engagement, and labour market intelligence activities. The mid-cycle review team consider this represents a strategic advancement in collective responsibility for quality assurance by incorporating relevant stakeholder experiences and external considerations.

18 The enhanced systems at AUM demonstrate an understanding that students are primary evaluators of learning experiences and support services, employers offer perspectives on graduate preparedness and skill gaps, alumni contribute insights into the long-term value of programmes, and labour market trends should inform curriculum development. Employers have recognised AUM graduates for their strong soft skills, adaptability, and readiness for the workplace. The mid-cycle review team consider this recognition is especially significant as it demonstrates the connection between academic programmes and tangible employability outcomes.

19 The IQR team recommended enhanced consistency in communicating new or revised policies to students and staff. In response, AUM has established a consolidated Academic Leadership Bylaws and Master List of Bylaws, policies, and procedures, supplemented by

comprehensive user-oriented guidance for students and faculty staff. Some examples include updated Faculty Guidelines for Teaching and Learning; Mid-term exam Guidelines for Students; Student Orientations; Academic Advising; QA Policy Implementation Guide; enhanced approach to the development of Strategic Goals; and Guide for Unit-level Strategic Planning 2025-2030. The mid-cycle review team considered this initiative demonstrates a central, authoritative source for policy information, outlines improved version control and document ownership, facilitates stakeholder access, translates policy into effective operational practices, and enables more consistent interpretation across different units. The reference to alignment with automated workflows suggests that AUM is beginning to digitise governance processes, which can further strengthen compliance and transparency.

20 The IQR team recommended AUM create a more cohesive approach to programme monitoring, while involving external stakeholders more explicitly. The evidence presented outlines a structured use of direct and indirect evidence, implementation of programme evaluation tools, capstone outcomes (final years projects) with industry collaboration, formal employer feedback mechanism including Industry Advisory Boards, and accreditation linked monitoring. The mid-cycle review team considered this is a significant area of progress because programme review is where institutional quality systems meet the student academic experience.

21 Comprehensive programme monitoring is evident at the institutional level, incorporating systematic analysis of student achievement data, progression and completion rates, as well as feedback. Additionally, the mid-cycle review team saw evidence that academic teams consistently evaluate this evidence to identify opportunities for enhancement, document improvements, and ensure effective follow-up actions are implemented.

22 The introduction of “Making Assessment More Explicit” framework suggest AUM is continuously improving the transparency of how learning outcomes are assessed and how decisions are made from evidence. In addition, the mid-cycle review team considered that the inclusion of external stakeholder perspectives also strengthens relevance and currency, especially in professionally oriented disciplines. The benefits for AUM are better comparability of the programmes and clarity in preparation for various accreditations supported by stronger accountability for improvement actions and enhanced confidence in standards across departments.

Good practice

23 The evidence presented indicates that AUM has consistently built upon areas of recognised good practice identified during the 2023 IQR. Several ongoing examples of effective practice continues to be integrated at the institutional level, rather than existing as discrete initiatives, and are outlined below.

24 AUM is consistently embedding sustainability and the SDGs into institutional planning, student initiatives, and educational components, as specified in its strategic goals for 2025-2030. For example, Goal C specifically emphasises the AUM's commitment to comprehensive sustainability and digital transformation. Moreover, this commitment is evident in programs like the AUM Annual Startup Challenge, which involves more than 200 students each year in creating solutions for local and regional issues, and in participation in global competitions such as the Babson Global Challenge. It also demonstrates that AUM has further enhanced its whole-institution principle to embedding sustainability across all functions. This approach suggests that each student encounters sustainability through multiple touchpoints: curriculum, competitions, campus culture, and institutional priorities. It is consistent with international expectations for responsible higher education providers.

25 The continuation of internships, student clubs, competitions, field experiences, and applied learning opportunities including upgrades of the physical and digital infrastructure suggests AUM recognises that graduate readiness is shaped by experience as much as classroom teaching. Moreover, examples of visits to retail, construction and oil companies and others during 2024-2025 provide students the chance to gain practical insights through direct learning experiences. This integrated approach aligns closely with AUM's collaborative partnerships with industry and employer stakeholders, ensuring that students' development is informed by current professional standards and labour market needs. The mid-cycle review team consider that by embedding such experiential learning throughout the student journey, AUM equips its graduates with the communication, teamwork, initiative, and problem-solving capabilities that are highly valued by employers, thereby strengthening the institution's reputation for producing work-ready, adaptable professionals.

26 Strong onboarding, orientation, and transition support remain evident, as identified as a good practice during 2023 IQR. It is understood that such robust approaches to student orientations and broader academic support offer positively contributes to AUM's strong retention, and student outcomes. AUM's student orientation includes pre-arrival communication where advisors use CRM data to contact students and verify their details. On campus, students' complete verification, receive IDs and system access, and review academic policies. There is a supporting presentation covering attendance requirements, missed assessment procedures, essential handbooks and conduct guidelines, and introduces support services and digital tools like the AUM app and Moodle portal. Moreover, AUM's personalised integration model indicates awareness that successful entry into higher education requires concentrated academic, administrative, and social support.

27 The MyPath advising ecosystem appears to remain a strategic strength. Degree planning tools, progress tracking, and advisory support can reduce delayed graduation, inappropriate course choices, and disengagement. Through its integrated features such as personalised course selection guidance, real-time monitoring of academic progress, and proactive outreach by advisors, the MyPath system empowers students to make informed decisions about their educational journey. This comprehensive approach helps identify and address potential challenges early, ensuring students have access to timely information and swift interventions. The mid-cycle review team consider it demonstrates that AUM is using advising not merely as a support service, but as a core student success strategy, through Academic Advancement Centre. The result is a more robust retention rate, improved student outcomes, and a clear pathway for students to achieve their academic and professional goals.

28 AUM continues to demonstrate its good practice in staff development through a structured, continuous (CPD portfolio), and targeted training approaches. Regular programmes, such as monthly onboarding and repeated technical workshops, outlines consistency and broader participation opportunities, while clearly defined, practical objectives align learning with workplace needs. Training is tailored to specific staff groups and continuously enhanced through systematic use of participant feedback, ensuring responsiveness and ongoing improvement. AUM also exemplifies good practice through a holistic and forward-looking strategy, integrating technical, soft, and emerging skills, including AI, with well-being and community focused initiatives. Health awareness campaigns, engagement activities, and professional certifications support both personal and professional growth, while planned partnerships with global learning platforms position AUM to meet evolving workforce demands and sustain a culture of continuous development.

29 The Tawteen Career Centre and Academic Advancement Centre's training and workshop model represents an effective continued good practice for AUM, demonstrating a structured and relevant approach to student development. Through its Career Readiness and Employability track, initiatives such as 'LinkedIn Optimisation', 'Expand Your Network

Using LinkedIn', and 'How to Map Your Future Career' consistently equips students with practical job market skills, professional and personal branding, and clear career planning, reinforced by valuable industry-led insights. Equally, workshops such as 'Enhance Your Knowledge of Data & Digital Technology' and 'Motor Claims Digital Transformation in Action' align students with evolving digital and industry trends. The mid-cycle review team considered that together, these sustained efforts reflect a comprehensive, practice driven model that effectively prepares AUM students for both professional success and lifelong learning.

Development of quality assurance and enhancement procedures

30 AUM has developed a more structured and coherent governance framework, underpinned by clearly defined policies and formalised procedures that support academic quality and institutional effectiveness. The systematic development and implementation of policies related to assessment, academic integrity, and institutional learning outcomes indicate an established approach to managing academic standards. The use of unified policy templates and centralised documentation frameworks supports consistency in structure, approval processes, and institutional oversight.

31 The role of academic committees and senior leadership in reviewing and approving policies provides assurance that governance arrangements are both robust and appropriately monitored. This alignment between governance mechanisms and operational practice reflects an embedded culture of accountability and transparency. The mid-cycle review team considered that overall, AUM continues to demonstrate a mature and effective governance framework that supports the sustainability of its quality assurance processes.

32 AUM uses data to support quality assurance and improvement efforts. Institutional reports are provided promptly, allowing key performance indicators such as teaching effectiveness and graduate results to be tracked efficiently. For example, analysis of class sizes shows an average enrolment of 24.75 students per class, with most groups falling within ideal limits, providing evidence of effective resource planning and learning environment management.

33 Similarly, graduate employment outcomes indicate a strong level of programme effectiveness with most graduates securing employment within one year. The disaggregation of data by college, programme, and cohort supports targeted analysis and informed decision making. This reflects an embedded culture of evidence-based enhancement, although further integration of data into strategic decision-making processes could strengthen its impact.

34 The evidence outlines a structured approach to programme evaluation and assessment, supported by clear procedures and institutional oversight. The implementation of clear set of guidelines for mapping learning outcomes to assessment methods and documenting evidence of student achievement has strengthened consistency and transparency across programmes. AUM has shown adaptability in addressing new challenges, particularly by improving its assessment methods to guarantee they are valid, authentic, and aligned with intended learning outcomes. This responsiveness has been especially noticeable since regional developments began in February 2026.

35 Programme level monitoring is further supported by the analysis of performance data and the implementation of improvement actions. These processes indicate a coherent approach to closing the feedback loop, with evidence of alignment between assessment practices and learning outcomes. While these arrangements are effective, further

formalisation of how enhancement actions are tracked and evaluated could strengthen consistency and comparability across programmes.

36 AUM has adopted a comprehensive approach to the review of its Learning and Educational Philosophy and Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). The formal policy framework outlines a clear and structured process, including benchmarking, stakeholder consultation, curriculum mapping, and the development of assessment tools, ensuring alignment with institutional priorities and international expectations. The mid-cycle review team consider this reflects a coherent framework for defining and assessing student learning at the institutional level.

37 The effectiveness of this approach is reinforced through active academic governance, with evidence of iterative review and refinement through committee engagement. For example, academic committee discussions have led to updates in the structure and content of the Educational Philosophy and ILOs, incorporating themes such as experiential learning, career readiness, and sustainability. The mid-cycle review team consider this demonstrates a dynamic and reflective approach, although continued monitoring of implementation and impact will be important to ensure sustained effectiveness.

Commentary on the impact that QAA accreditation had on the institution since the review

38 The mid-cycle review team considered that AUM had constructively engaged with all previous recommendations, treating them as opportunities for enhancement. Evidence shows that the University has implemented systematic enhancements to its quality assurance framework, including the introduction of a comprehensive institutional planner and Quality Assurance Policy Implementation Guide, enabling more consistent monitoring, accountability, and continuous improvement across departments.

39 Further justification for the outcome lies in demonstrable progress across all recommendation areas. AUM has strengthened stakeholder engagement through expanded use of surveys, employer input, and labour market intelligence; improved the communication and accessibility of policies via centralised governance structures and guidance; and developed a more cohesive, evidence-informed approach to programme monitoring, including the increased use of external stakeholder perspectives and performance data.

40 The outcome is also supported by broader institutional developments since 2023, including updated strategic goals, enhanced teaching and learning practices, expansion of academic provision, continued success with international accreditations, and strong links to employability outcomes. These indicate that improvements are not isolated but embedded within a wider strategic and operational framework.

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