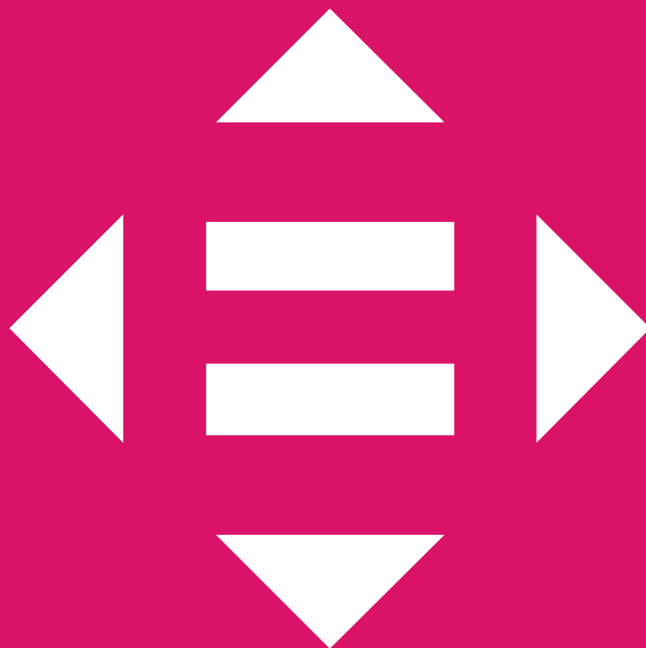




SDG 10

REDUCED INEQUALITIES



Equality needs to underpin every aspect of sustainability if the objectives of the SDGs are to be met. Although SDG 5 explores this through the prism of gender, SDG 10 takes a broader look at the intersectionality of disadvantage. This disadvantage can be felt through all of the other key issues raised by the SDGs – disadvantaged groups are both more likely to be unable to take advantage of progress and to suffer from the effects of climate change. Universities play a key role in tackling economic, health based and international inequalities.

10.2 First Generation Students

10.2.1 Indicator: Number of Students Starting a Degree

Data Collected	Data AY 23/24
Number of Students Starting a Degree	1,368 Enrolled

10.2.2 Indicator: Number of First-Generation Students

Data Collected	Data AY 23/24
Number of first-generation students starting a degree	-----

10.3 International Students from Developing Countries

10.3.1 Indicator: Number of Students

Data Collected	Data AY 23/24
Number of Students	5,233 Students

10.3.2 Indicator: Number of International Students from Developing Countries

Data Collected	Data AY 23/24
Number of International Students receiving Financial Aid	2,214 Students

10.4 Proportion of Students with Disabilities

10.4.1 Indicator: Number of Students

Data Collected	Data AY 23/24
Number of Students	5,233 Students

10.4.2 Indicator: Number of Students with Disability

Data Collected	Data AY 23/24
Number of Students with Disability	50 Students

10.5 Proportion of Employees with Disabilities

10.5.1 Indicator: Number of Employees

Data Collected	Data AY 23/24
Number of Employees	346 Employees

10.5.2 Indicator: Number of Employees with Disability

Data Collected	Data AY 23/24
Number of Employees with Disability	0 Employees

10.6 Measures Against Discrimination

10.6.1 Non-discriminatory Admissions Policy

AUS accepts applicants from all over the world, regardless of their race, gender, color, religion, age, or natural origin. Students from all nationalities are encouraged to apply as outlined in the Student Handbook Policy, which is shared with students upon admission. The policy handbook was created in 2021 and was reviewed in 2024.

AUS has succeeded in building a multicultural education environment that brings together people from diverse nations and backgrounds. AUS strives to instill in its students the importance of appreciating and understanding diversity, global issues and their own roles in society.

The Student Code of Conduct is set forth by the Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution Department and is highlighted in the Student Handbook. The Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (SCCR) is a non-academic student support service of the Office of Student Experience. It is committed to promote an open and understanding environment that is conducive to learning and the pursuit of knowledge. SCCR is responsible for educating students about their rights and responsibilities and encouraging them to maintain the highest standards of ethical behavior, both to protect the AUS community and to promote students' moral development. The student conduct system provides students with a fair adjudication process in instances where there are alleged violations of the Code. The purpose of student conduct proceedings is to determine whether the University's standards of conduct have been violated.

Policies are also shared in the Student Handbook with regards to Social Media Usage, highlighting that posting or sharing offensive, discriminatory, defamatory, or harmful content that is linked to AUS or its community members will result in disciplinary action. This includes content that promotes violence, discrimination, undermines the inclusivity of AUS, or is offensive to the local customs of Sharjah.

10.6.2 Access to University Track Underrepresented Groups

Applications

AUS tracks and measures the admission applications of students from all nationalities, including low and lower-middle income status, as well as women and ethnic minorities for each semester. Some examples of tracking are below:

India: From Fall 2022-Fall 2023- the number of students admitted went up from 11%to 11.6% and from Fall 2023-Fall 2024- the number went up from 11.6% to 12.4%.

Lebanon: From Fall 2022-Fall 2023- the number of students admitted went up from 3%to 3.2% and from Fall 2023-Fall 2024- the numbers went from 3.2% to 3.1%.

Jordan: From Fall 2022-Fall 2023- the number of students admitted went up from 10%to 10.8% and from Fall 2023-Fall 2024- the number went up from 10.8% to 11.2%.

When tracking the applications of women, 1,395 women applied in Fall 2022, and out of that, 568 were fully enrolled. While in Fall 2023, 1,494 women applied, and out of that, 725 were fully enrolled. The students are also given the opportunity to apply for financial aid and are encouraged to do so.

AUS also supports refugee student applicants by hosting large scale fundraising events, such as the AUS Giving Day which, in collaboration with the Big Heart Foundation, AUS organized its second drive to extend support to the people in Gaza. The campaign “From AUS to Gaza with Love” held in November featured Palestinian-themed workshops, films, children’s activities, and businesses, and a silent auction. Throughout the day, AUS community members were also able to take part in a silent auction to bid on a curated selection of Palestinian-themed items, proceeds for which would go towards the campaign.

AUS is dedicated to providing a unique and comprehensive educational experience to our students. As with all competitive universities, we only admit the most qualified candidates to fill the available places. Our applicants are considered strictly on the basis of their qualifications regardless of race, color, gender, religion, disabilities, age or national origin. With approximately 90 nationalities represented, our campus is a reflection of how diversity in today’s world can lead to tolerance, goodwill and understanding. It also reinforces the importance of appreciating cultural and religious differences and how they impact societies around the globe. Our students are also encouraged to gain firsthand experience of other cultures and countries through our international exchange program and our various study tours.

10.6.3 Access to University Underrepresented Groups Recruit

Every year, AUS takes planned actions for supporting the admission and recruitment of students from underrepresented groups and for the hiring of employees.

On November 12–13, 2024, AUS hosted its 48 Hours of Impact Giving Campaign, with strong support from Her Excellency Sheikha Bodour bint Sultan Al Qasimi, President of AUS. Sheikha Bodour played an active role in the event, which was organized by AUS’ Office of Advancement and Alumni Affairs to support underrepresented groups, including AUS students with disabilities, those facing financial and social challenges within their communities, and students from under-served backgrounds.

The 48 hours of impact, titled **“Pay It Forward,”** began on November 12 with an online campaign encouraging the entire AUS community—students, alumni, faculty, staff, corporate partners and friends of the university—to unite in the spirit of generosity. The Giving Day celebration, held on November 13, from 4:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the AUS Sports Pavilion, was the culmination of the 48 Hours of Impact campaign. This final gathering brought the AUS community together to recognize and celebrate the collective generosity and commitment that fueled this remarkable campaign.

Get Active for Education is part of a series of fundraising events AUS has held since the start of this year in support of the AUS Advancement and Solidarity Fund, which was established to recruit and support bright students facing social changes within their communities, helping them receive quality education at AUS. The proceeds from this year's fund will ensure that deserving students, particularly those from Palestine facing financial difficulties amid the crises, have the opportunity to pursue their dreams of higher education at AUS. Throughout the event, AUS corporate partners, alumni, students, faculty and staff participated in a range of exciting challenges, from a four-kilometer walkathon to tug of war competitions and football and basketball matches.

AUS also takes an active approach on recruiting refugee student applicants by hosting large scale fundraising events, such as the **AUS Giving Day** which is in collaboration with the Big Heart Foundation. AUS organized its second drive to extend support to the people in Gaza. The campaign **“From AUS to Gaza with Love”** held in November featured Palestinian-themed workshops, films, children's activities, and businesses, and a silent auction. Throughout the day, AUS community members were also able to take part in a silent auction to bid on a curated selection of Palestinian-themed items, proceeds for which would go towards the campaign.

For staff and faculty, planned actions were taken to follow the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization's goal of recruiting more Emiratis in the workforce due to their under-representation in the employment sector. Emiratization is defined as a government-led initiative in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to increase the employment of its citizens, the Emiratis, in both the public and private sectors by the Ministry. For this, the Board of Trustees planned to hire more Emirates employees as part of the university's new strategies to further enhance its Emiratization efforts, members of the board endorsed the establishment of a taskforce from the Board of Trustees to lead a search for distinguished national cadres to champion Emirati recruitment, development and retention initiatives. A specialized Emirati expert was appointed to support Emiratization and employment initiatives.

10.6.4 Anti-Discrimination Policy

As per the Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy at AUS that applies to the institution and their operations, AUS is committed to an environment that encourages collegiality and respect for all persons regardless of their religion, caste, creed, doctrine, race, color, ethnic origin, natural origin, mental or physical disability, or gender. AUS will not tolerate discrimination or harassment on these characteristics or any other legally prohibited basis. Further, AUS ensures that any person raising a concern about discrimination or harassment shall suffer no retaliation as a result. In accordance with this, the acts of making a complaint of discrimination or harassment, assisting in an investigation, opposing discrimination or harassment, or otherwise exercising rights protected by law or university policy are all protected under this policy. This policy was created in 2020 and was last reviewed in 2024.

10.6.5 University Diversity Officer

The AUS Academic Support Center (ASC), as an office, was tasked by the administration to advise on and implement policies, programs and trainings related to diversity, equity, inclusion and human rights on campus. In accordance with AUS' strategic plan, the ASC coordinates Academic Accommodations for students with documented disabilities that are impacting their academic performance, to the extent permissible by available resources.

The ASC provides a mandatory Diversity and Inclusion Training to all AUS members, including AUS faculty, staff and students. This training is meant to share fundamental information and awareness with the AUS community, offer a welcoming and positive environment where students with disabilities can thrive academically and socially, and build meaningful connections.

Additionally, the Human Resources department has also set a policy for Anti-Harassment Policy for all external and internal AUS employees, interns, volunteers, or third party employees. AUS is committed to an environment that encourages collegiality and respect for all persons regardless of their religion, caste, creed, doctrine, race, color, ethnic origin, natural origin, mental or physical disability, or gender. AUS will not tolerate discrimination or harassment on these characteristics or any other legally prohibited basis. Further, AUS ensures that any person raising a concern about discrimination or harassment shall suffer no retaliation as a result. In accordance with this, the acts of making a complaint of discrimination or harassment, assisting in an investigation, opposing discrimination or harassment, or otherwise exercising rights protected by law or university policy are all protected under this policy.

At AUS, the safety and wellbeing of our students are primary concerns. In support of this, AUS has formed the Students of Concern Committee (SOCC), which provides a centralized process to coordinate the university's response to support students who are exhibiting concerning behavior. This behavior can include physical signs, academic signs, interpersonal signs, and emergency signs of concern. The committee coordinates efforts when a student's behavior could potentially be harmful to self or others and when student welfare is a concern. If necessary, the committee may meet with the student, but most of its communication is with the Executive Director of Student Experience.

Some of the goals of the SOCC include:

- To help a student who may be in distress and address the behaviors that may be causing a disturbance
- To coordinate, as a committee of professionals from different departments on campus, efforts to strategize on a plan of action for the student
- To communicate with those on campus concerned about a student's wellbeing
- To train community members to identify and refer students in distress
- To review and revise policies and procedures related to student wellbeing

Recognition of a student with concerning behavior is identified using a "Red Card" system which includes relevant contact information and outlines the process that is followed by the committee.

10.6.6 Support for Underrepresented Groups

AUS has a number of programs that include mentoring, counseling, and peer support programs for all members of the AUS community to ensure cultural competence and mental health of all individuals, including those from underrepresented groups, is addressed. These include the University Counseling Services (UCS) at American University of Sharjah which provides free, confidential psychological support to students, faculty, staff and their families. The aim of the UCS is to promote positive mental health and well-being across the diverse AUS community by offering services that are responsive to the individual needs and cultural backgrounds of the community members.

In addition to the counseling services offered by UCS, students can access TalkCampus, a global peer support network designed to help them manage their mental health. TalkCampus is a world-first global peer support community for students that provides them with 24/7 access to trained peer supporters and professional staff with the TalkCampus app.

AUS also offers peer mediation training to students, allowing them to become certified peer mediators. Mediation is an activity in which a neutral third party—the mediator—assists two or more parties in order to help them achieve an agreement on a matter of common interest. Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution facilitate mediation and offer training in peer mediation.

The AUS Office of Student experience at AUS promotes cultural competence and social inclusion awareness through a diverse range of extracurricular activities, such as providing opportunities to be a part of cultural clubs by having over 40 different cultural clubs, and allowing them to showcase their culture during the annual AUS Global Day. All clubs are encouraged to participate in the AUS Global Day where they get to showcase their culture and promote cultural awareness across campus.

10.6.7 Accessible Facilities

At AUS, we are committed to fostering an inclusive environment where all students have equal opportunities and facilities to thrive both academically and socially. We believe in providing comprehensive support to students with disabilities, ensuring they have the necessary facilities to excel in their academic pursuits. AUS conducts accessibility audits, adheres to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) definitions and requirements for students with disabilities, and is a member of the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD).

Here are some of our currently available facilities:

Long-term disabilities:

Students who have a documented disability diagnosed by a qualified professional in the field may apply for Academic Accommodations through ASC in order to have equal access for educational opportunities at AUS. The university is committed to supporting students with disabilities.

The Academic Support Center (ASC) works to coordinate academic accommodations (AA) for students with documented disabilities recognized by the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) that are impacting their academic performance, to the extent permissible by available resources.

Short-term disabilities:

A new policy has been developed to address the needs of students experiencing short-term disabilities, including sudden illness or injury. This initiative is a collaborative effort involving multiple departments to ensure swift and effective support for students in need.

Office of Student Experience initiatives:

Efforts are underway to empower students with disabilities through involvement in extracurricular activities and leadership roles. Personalized communication, training opportunities and on-campus employment options are being provided to facilitate their engagement within the university community.

Campus infrastructure:

AUS conducts accessibility audits and adheres to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for campus infrastructure. Plans are in place to address accessibility concerns across the campus, including short-term and long-term strategies and adequate funding.

AUS offers ADA-compliant rooms in the residential halls, specifically designed to accommodate students using wheelchairs. These rooms include features such as wider doorways and accessible bathrooms. AUS has two ADA rooms for male students and two ADA rooms for female students. In addition, there is a dedicated residential hall section for female students that is equipped with an elevator and a larger number of ADA-compliant rooms to accommodate more students with accessibility needs. All these rooms are fully modified to meet the necessary accessibility requirements.

Diversity and inclusion training:

The Academic Support Center provides online diversity and inclusion training to AUS faculty, staff and students. This training is meant to share fundamental information and awareness with the AUS community, offer a welcoming and positive environment where students with disabilities can thrive academically and socially, and build meaningful connections.

Academic Testing Services:

The Academic Support Center provides academic testing services (ATS) for students needing the academic accommodations of extended testing time and reduced-distraction testing spaces. ATS also extends to students with short-term physical disabilities that hinder their ability to write their exams. ATS include providing the appropriate testing space and proctoring to ensure appropriate and equitable conditions for students needing these accommodations.

Safety and security measures:

AUS is continuously advancing its campus developments and infrastructure to create more inclusive, accessible and secure environments for all students, including students with disabilities. Recent initiatives focus on expanding accessible pathways, upgrading emergency response systems, and implementing universal design principles across new and renovated facilities.

Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL):

The AUS Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL) provides mandatory cultural awareness training to all new faculty members joining AUS, regardless of whether they are full-time and part-time, during the "New Faculty Orientation" sessions at the beginning of the spring and fall semesters.

The primary goals of CITL are aligned with the AUS institutional values:

- Instructional Innovation (Transformative Student Experience): Cultivating a culture of classroom innovation that equips faculty members with pedagogical tools, strategies and knowledge necessary to support the integration of educational technologies that foster an inclusive and engaging learning environment for students of different backgrounds, experiences, cultures and abilities.
- Faculty Diversity and Inclusion (Inclusive Community): Providing faculty members with a mutually respectful intellectual environment in which diversity and inclusion are valued.

10.6.8 Disability Support Services

The Academic Support Center at AUS has set their goal to provide support services, and help the community think about university education as a world of possibilities for those with disabilities. The center recognizes academic coaching as a critical component of the educational experience at AUS. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that significantly limits a major life activity including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, working, breathing, learning, performing manual tasks, etc. The Academic Support Center provides different outlets for support for those with disabilities. These include:

Long-term disabilities:

Students who have a documented disability diagnosed by a qualified professional in the field may apply for Academic Accommodations through ASC in order to have equal access for educational opportunities at AUS. The university is committed to supporting students with disabilities.

The Academic Support Center (ASC) works to coordinate academic accommodations (AA) for students with documented disabilities recognized by the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) that are impacting their academic performance, to the extent permissible by available resources.

Short-term disabilities:

A new policy has been developed to address the needs of students experiencing short-term disabilities, including sudden illness or injury. This initiative is a collaborative effort involving multiple departments to ensure swift and effective support for students in need.

Office of Student Experience initiatives:

Efforts are underway to empower students with disabilities through involvement in extracurricular activities and leadership roles. Personalized communication, training opportunities and on-campus employment options are being provided to facilitate their engagement within the university community.

10.6.9 Disability Access Scheme

To support individuals with disabilities, AUS provides various access schemes that include mentoring, training, and other targeted support options. These include the following:

Academic Support Center Peer Mentors:

ASC Peer Mentors are academic achievers typically in their junior or senior year at AUS who use first-hand experience to advise fellow undergraduate students, including students with disabilities. Peer Mentors can recommend strategies for success in their specific college/school at AUS and answer questions from a student's perspective. Students are encouraged to book one-on-one meetings with the peer mentors for targeted support.

Academic Testing Services:

The Academic Support Center provides academic testing services (ATS) for students needing the academic accommodations of extended testing time and reduced-distraction testing spaces. ATS also extends to students with short-term physical disabilities that hinder their ability to write their exams. ATS include providing the appropriate testing space and proctoring to ensure appropriate and equitable conditions for students needing these accommodations.

AUS online accessibility:

AUS is actively advancing the accessibility of its digital platforms to ensure an inclusive online experience for all users. Ongoing efforts to enhance the AUS website are complemented by the successful transition to Blackboard Ultra in Fall 2024, which included the integration of Ally plug-ins to improve accessibility of academic platforms and content.

AUS Library support:

The AUS Library is actively working to improve support for students with diverse learning requirements. Recommendations for enhancing accessibility in library resources, facilities and services are being implemented.

Office of Student Experience Trainings and Initiatives:

Efforts are underway to empower students with disabilities through involvement in extracurricular activities and leadership roles. Personalized communication, training and mentoring opportunities and on-campus employment options are being provided to facilitate their engagement within the university community.

Campus infrastructure:

AUS conducts accessibility audits and adheres to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for campus infrastructure, such as ramps for wheelchair access. Plans are in place to address accessibility concerns across the campus, including short-term and long-term strategies and adequate funding.

AUS offers ADA-compliant rooms in the residential halls, specifically designed to accommodate students using wheelchairs. These rooms include features such as wider doorways and accessible bathrooms. We have two ADA rooms for male students and two ADA rooms for female students. In addition, there is a dedicated residential hall section for female students that is equipped with an elevator and a larger number of ADA-compliant rooms to accommodate more students with accessibility needs. All these rooms are fully modified to meet the necessary accessibility requirements.

10.6.10 Disability Accommodation Policy

AUS has set support for persons with disabilities as part of their strategy and policy for the overall wellbeing of the university. We do so by conducting accessibility audits, adhering to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) definitions and requirements for students with disabilities, and are members of the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD). The intention is to ensure there are reasonable accommodations with proper funding mechanisms through the university for supporting students with disabilities.

Academic Testing Services:

The Academic Support Center provides academic testing services (ATS) for students needing the academic accommodations of extended testing time and reduced-distraction testing spaces. ATS also extends to students with short-term physical disabilities that hinder their ability to write their exams. ATS include providing the appropriate testing space and proctoring to ensure appropriate and equitable conditions for students needing these accommodations. The center is fully supported and funded for by the university, and has an in-house dedicated space with employees and student peer mentors to ensure support for students with disabilities.

Long-term disabilities:

Students who have a documented disability diagnosed by a qualified professional in the field may apply for Academic Accommodations through ASC in order to have equal access for educational opportunities at AUS. The university is committed to supporting students with disabilities.

The Academic Support Center (ASC) works to coordinate academic accommodations (AA) for students with documented disabilities recognized by the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) that are impacting their academic performance, to the extent permissible by available resources.

Short-term disabilities:

A new policy has been developed to address the needs of students experiencing short-term disabilities, including sudden illness or injury. This initiative is a collaborative effort involving multiple departments to ensure swift and effective support for students in need.

Campus infrastructure:

AUS conducts accessibility audits and adheres to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for campus infrastructure, such as ramps for wheelchair access. Plans are in place to address accessibility concerns across the campus, including short-term and long-term strategies and adequate funding.

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Safety and Security Measures:

AUS is continuously advancing its campus developments and infrastructure to create more inclusive, accessible and secure environments for all students, including students with disabilities. Recent initiatives focus on expanding accessible pathways, upgrading emergency response systems, and implementing universal design principles across new and renovated facilities.

10.6.11 Anti-Harassment Policy

As per the Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy at AUS that covers the institution and their operations: AUS is committed to an environment that encourages collegiality and respect for all persons regardless of their religion, caste, creed, doctrine, race, color, ethnic origin, natural origin, mental or physical disability, or gender. AUS will not tolerate discrimination or harassment on these characteristics or any other legally prohibited basis. Further, AUS ensures that any person raising a concern about discrimination or harassment shall suffer no retaliation as a result. In accordance with this, the acts of making a complaint of discrimination or harassment, assisting in an investigation, opposing discrimination or harassment, or otherwise exercising rights protected by law or university policy are all protected under this policy. This policy was created in 2020 and has last been reviewed in 2024.