



الجامعة الأهلية
AHLIA UNIVERSITY
BAHRAIN

ANNUAL REPORT 2014 / 15



His Royal Highness
Prince Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa
The Prime Minister



His Majesty
King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa
The King of the Kingdom of Bahrain



His Royal Highness
Prince Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa
The Crown Prince,
Deputy Supreme Commander
and First Deputy Prime Minister

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President's Introduction



Welcome to Ahlia University's Annual Report for the academic year 2014/15, which contains an overview of our year, highlighting achievements and reporting on activities. While it is, of course, only a brief snapshot, I hope you will enjoy reading about our life.

I have been privileged to lead the University since the vision of establishing a new private university in Bahrain was first dreamed in the early 1990s, when we realised that innovative solutions were required to provide sufficient university places for the high school graduates of our beloved Kingdom. Ten years later, following the publication of the National Action Charter and the Reform Project of His Majesty the King, the Arab Academy for Research & Studies (AARS) was formed and we set out together on an ambitious journey. The dream became a reality on 25 March 2001 with the granting of Ahlia's license and in 2003 we admitted our first group of 50 students.

From these small beginnings Ahlia is now a high quality and well respected university of almost 2,500 students, with an excellent standing in the Kingdom and a growing reputation across the world.

Ahlia is well-known and admired because we follow international quality standards; we recruit highly-qualified local and international faculty; and we collaborate with well-respected international universities (Brunel University London in the UK; the George Washington University in the USA; and EPITECH in France). All of this means that, although a very young university compared to some, Ahlia is now one of the leading universities in Bahrain and the Gulf region.

2014/15 began with the review of the College of Business & Finance by the National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training (NAQQAET), which resulted in judgements of "Confidence" for all six programmes, thus continuing our 100% record of receiving the highest quality judgement available.

Ahlia's activities in 2014/15 focused particularly on internationalisation. You will learn more in the following pages about our international-facing activities, including presentations at international conferences; prizes from well-respected international organisations and publications; and a major project to internationalise our brand, making it outward-looking and global-facing as befits our vision to join the leading universities of the world and be ranked among the global Top 500 by the year 2030.

As part of our strategy, we plan to move from our current, temporary home in central Manama into new, purpose-built premises and we have been making steady steps with these plans.

In 2011, we signed an agreement with the Ministry of Finance for land in Al Madina Al Shamaliya; in the following years we developed the Conceptual Masterplan and the Financial Feasibility Study; and in 2013/14 the Ministry of Housing gave approval for the Ground-breaking Ceremony. In 2014/15 we continued to work with the architects to develop the designs for the new campus, with state-of-the-art facilities for a student population of 7,500 and all appropriate amenities, including a conference centre and a science park, to serve the full breadth of our dynamic and developing academic community.

In late 2014/15 we were honoured and delighted that His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, agreed to be the Patron of the New Campus Foundation Laying Ceremony. The event will be held during 2015/16 and we are all looking forward to celebrating this milestone in his gracious presence.

All of these are great achievements and I am very proud to have been at the heart of the establishment and development of this ground-breaking civic endeavour in the service of our beloved Kingdom of Bahrain.

In April 2015, I handed over the stewardship of this great University to Professor Mansoor Alaali. As Ahlia's Dean of Student Affairs for the last six years and as a member of our faculty since 2009, Professor Mansoor knows Ahlia very well and I know that I leave the University in safe hands. I wish all the very best to him in his tenure as President.

As we proceed forwards, I will continue to support our beloved Ahlia University in what I am certain will be a bright future of continued growth and prosperity.

I will conclude by placing on record my deep thanks and appreciation to all the management, faculty and staff who have been members of the Ahlia Family while I have had the honour to be the University's President. I am also deeply grateful for the support of all our stakeholders, our Board of Trustees, the Arab Academy for Research & Studies and above all for the wise leadership of the Kingdom of Bahrain, without whom Ahlia's success would not have been possible.

Professor Abdulla Al Hawaj

President





Global futures begin here

Ahlia's Vision emphasises our aspiration to be an outstanding international university – we aim to become a world Top 500 university by the year 2030. Our strategic goals commit us to achieving our vision through internationalisation and through collaborations with global partners. Since inauguration we have described our aspiration as providing “International Education... Locally” and this year we took further steps along this path.

Highlights of 2014/15 included:

- **International student community**
students this year came from twenty-seven different nationalities
- **International university community**
faculty and staff this year came from twenty-one different nationalities
- **International partnerships and collaborations**
active partnerships this year with ten international universities and organisations
- **International exchange programme**
27 French students came to Ahlia this year, which is the highest figure since the programme started – compared to 2013/14, this is an increase of 50%
- **International study semesters**
for the second year running, students from Ahlia went to study for a semester in London and in Paris. The chance to study abroad is a valuable opportunity for students to develop new academic and personal skills – and graduates who have studied abroad are increasingly sought after in the global marketplace.
- **International influencer**
Ahlia continued to exert influence in international higher education circles through active membership of the Association of Private Universities in the GCC (APUGCC) and the Association of Arab Private Institutes of Higher Education (AAPIHE). In addition, both Professor Abdulla Al Hawaj and Professor Mansoor Alaali were members of the International Academic Advisory Committee for the QS MAPLE conference on International Innovation & Cooperation in HE held in May 2015 and Professor Abdulla gave the opening speech in the Conference Debate
- **International brand**
A major project for 2014/15 was the development of our new global-facing brand. With the importance of new technology in communications, Ahlia recognized that new branding was required which would suit both traditional print and digital technology. An experienced HE Marketing Consultant was engaged to direct the project.

Through a process of stakeholder surveys, consultative workshops and competitive tendering, the logo used since 2001 was developed into a vibrant new brand which was approved by the University Council and launched formally in January 2015.

The new brand portrays our USPs, our values and our international outlook – an outlook that is clear to local and regional students and to international students. To embody this broader outlook, the Ahlia message was developed from “International Education... Locally” into “Global futures begin here”.

The “Ahlia Brand” is the idea that people will carry in their hearts and minds about Ahlia University. Our new brand portrays the strengths of the University through consistent imaging and messaging. It is a key part of ensuring that Ahlia University's image conveys a commitment to internationalisation. It further cements our place as the Kingdom's leading private institution and is integral to the process by which Ahlia University will take its place among the leading universities of the world.



French Exchange students 2014/15



Culture Day



Launching the new Ahlia University brand



Arabic Poetry Festival



Culture Day

Programmes & Quality

In pursuit of Ahlia's vision to be an outstanding international university, the University is committed to developing programmes that are viable, innovative and relevant to market needs. We aim to integrate liberal studies and professional education, through programmes which meet international quality standards and provide our students with breadth of knowledge and depth of specialisation.

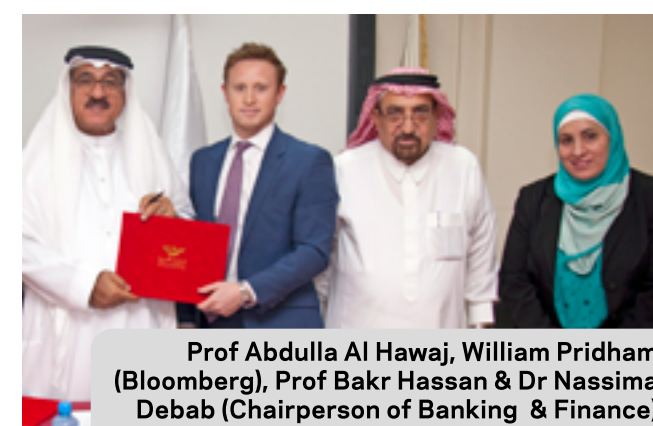
Highlights of 2014/15 included:

- **Judgements of "Full Confidence"** from the National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training (NAQQAET) were received for all six programmes in the College of Business & Finance reviewed in 2014/15. This maintains Ahlia's perfect record in programme quality reviews* which now reads as follows:
 - BSc Accounting & Finance (2015)
 - BSc Banking & Finance (2015)
 - BSc Distributed Systems & Multimedia (2014)
 - BSc Economics & Finance (2015)
 - BSc Information Technology (2014)
 - BSc Management & Marketing (2009 & 2015)
 - BSc Management Information Systems (2015)
 - BSc Physiotherapy (2013)
 - Master of Business Administration (MBA) (2012 & 2015)
 - MSc Information Technology & Computer Science (2011 & 2014)
- **Ahlia's quality management system (AUQMS)** was benchmarked against quality systems in New Zealand and the UK (among others) in a project commissioned by the University, conducted by Jafcon Consultants and part-funded by the Tamkeen Labour Fund. The comparative study undertaken firmly endorsed the quality systems of the University
- **National Qualifications Framework** listing was a further endorsement of our academic quality, as Ahlia became one of the first two universities to make a successful application for Institutional Listing in 2014/15
- **Guest Speakers** were arranged to enrich our students' learning experience, including
 - Deputy Political/Economic Chief at the US Embassy, Bahrain, Ms Rebecca Seweryn: session on the US-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement
 - Financial Sector Specialist at the Central Bank of Bahrain, Mr Sourabh Bhargava: session on risk management and capital management of banks
 - Managing Director of GAM-Consulting & Advisory Services WLL, Mr Ghulam Mohatarem: session on monetary and financial systems, drawing on his 40 years' experience in the banking industry
 - CEO of Karvy Computershare, Mr Avneesh Mishra: session on Portfolio Management, Concepts & Practical Applications
- **Ahlia/Brunel PhD programme** was featured in the UK's Financial Times newspaper, in an article which noted the programme's success in creating a knowledge environment in the Gulf, fostering a local research culture, and developing women leaders
- **Bloomberg** signed an agreement with Ahlia to supply the Bloomberg Terminal integrated solution, so that our students, faculty and researchers have access to real-time all-market data, comprehensive news, research, analytics and communications tools

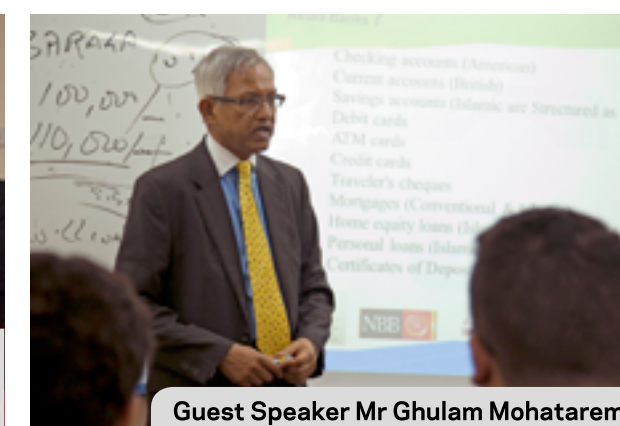
*Dates are Review Report publication dates



NAQQAET review of Business & Finance programmes



Prof Abdulla Al Hawaj, William Pridham (Bloomberg), Prof Bakr Hassan & Dr Nassima Debab (Chairperson of Banking & Finance)



Guest Speaker Mr Ghulam Mohatarem



National Qualification Framework Mapping Workshop

Research & Scholarship

Research is one of the three core functions of an international university and a key strategic objective for Ahlia. Our Strategic Plan and our Research Plan have both been developed in light of the needs of the Kingdom and we ensure that academic enquiry, scholarly activities and collaborative research are central to our activities. Ahlia encourages research by faculty and by students on all programmes, and we work with external partners in industry and the community as part of our commitment to research that can develop and present the solutions which our global society needs.

Highlights of 2014/15 included:

- **Annual Research Forum** was held in March 2015 and included presentations on a wide variety of topics and guest speakers from the University of Applied Sciences and the American University of Beirut
- **Publications by Ahlia faculty** included
 - Professor Abdulla Al Hawaj: *Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century II*
 - Professor Mansoor Alaali and Ms Samia Yousif: three books entitled *Computer Jobs and Certifications*; *Teaching English Language Semantics Using Object Orientation Techniques*; and *Work Ethics*
 - Dr Said Al-Hajjar: a two-volume set entitled *Basic Business Course in Statistics I and Basic Business Course in Statistics II*
 - Dr Zuhair Dhaif: a book entitled *Arab Press and Culture Difference: An Analytical Study*
 - Dr Ali Omran: a book entitled *Principles of Word Analysis*
 - Prof Mohamed Shamsa: a book entitled *Audit Methodology and Business Audit Risks*
 - Several faculty members published articles and papers in a number of refereed journals and conference proceedings
- **External lectures given by Ahlia faculty** included
 - Professor Ismail Mseer: a lecture presented at the Foundation for Humanitarian Dialogue, London UK, in November 2015 entitled *Marginalized people in history*
 - Dr Hasan Saeed: several lectures and workshops for the Bahrain Potters Society
- **Arab Centre for Research & Policy Studies (ACRPS)** awarded third prize in the annual Arab Prize in the Social Sciences and Humanities (theme "Universities and Scientific Research in the Arab world") to Dr Allam Hamdan for his study entitled *The Road towards World-Class Research Universities: A Holistic Study of Arab Universities*
- **Rashid Bin Hamid Award for Culture & Science** (sponsored by HH Sheikh Humaid bin Rashid Al Nuami, Governor of the Emirate of Ajman, UAE) was awarded to Dr Allam Hamdan for his paper *Economic diversification in the United Arab Emirates and its role in economic growth*
- **Brunel University, UK: Dean's Prize for Innovation & Impact in Doctoral Research** was awarded to Dr Ahlam Hassan, President's Assistant for Quality Assurance, for her PhD thesis *Effective leadership styles for deans of colleges and institutions of higher education*
- **Editorial board memberships and reviewer appointments** for various international peer-reviewed journals were held by several faculty



Prof Shawqi Al Dallal & Dr Samia Costandi (Dean & Associate Dean of Graduate Studies & Research) with other speakers and organisers at the 2015 Research Forum



Prof Abdulla Al Hawaj congratulates Dr Ahlam Hassan on her award



Book Exhibition at Research Forum 2015



Ms Samia Yousif and Prof Mansoor Alaali showing their new book



Prof Abdulla Al Hawaj with Dr Allam Hamdan and the ACRPS Prize

Students & Activities

Ahlia University encourages the growth and development of our students, by ensuring a balance of curriculum-related learning and wider activities which provide a rich and varied university life. In this way, we foster students' personal growth and support the transition to responsible adulthood in a rapidly changing world so that they can take their place as international citizens.

Highlights of 2014/15 included:

- **Careers Day 2015** was held in April 2015, involving almost forty organisations, ministries and companies from across the private and public sectors
- **High Achievers Ceremony 2014/2015** was held in April 2015 – more than thirty ministries, companies and other institutions joined us to celebrate our students achievements
- **Qatar's Supreme Council for Delivery & Legacy** visited Ahlia to talk to students about Challenge 22, with the theme of "Deliver Amazing – Finding Your Idea"
- **University Debate Competition** led to further success this year as the Ahlia student team won first place in the national heats (against Bahrain universities) and achieved third place in the international finals
- **Course field visits** were made to various ministries, companies and other institutions in order to enrich education on our programmes, including
 - Bahrain Institute for Political Development
 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 - Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA)
 - Huawei Technologies Bahrain SPC
 - Bahrain Information Affairs Authority
 - Al Ayam Newspaper
 - Bahrain Public Relations Society
 - Zain Telecommunications
 - TAKAUD insurance and pensions company
- **Student football teams** competed in the XVth Indoor Football Championship
- **Student basketball teams** competed in Ahlia University's first Basketball Championship
- **Events organised by the Student Council and the Student Activities team** included
 - Depression Awareness
 - Integrity for University Students
 - Stand-Up Comedy Show
 - The Annual Winter Camp-Out
 - Red Bull Paper Wings Challenge
 - Al Nukhba Youth Empowerment Programme



The Al Nukhba Youth Empowerment Programme



Finding out about volunteering opportunities with AIESEC



Ahlia students working on their designs for the Red Bull event



Careers Day



Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa presents the prize to Ahlia's Student Debate Team

University & Community

At Ahlia we celebrate and contribute to all our communities: our 'internal community' of faculty and staff and our 'external community' of stakeholders in Bahrain and in the wider world. We promote active participation in constructive social change through volunteering and other activities by faculty, staff, and students. In addition, we support worthy causes and ensure that our programmes and our research are outward-facing and take into account the needs of our society.

Highlights of 2014/15 included:

- **National Day Carnival 2014** was held in December, under the patronage of HE Sheikh Hisham Bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa, Governor of the Capital Governorate. As ever, this was a joyous event which showcased the many talents of our students
- **Ministry of Labour's Shield of Excellence** was awarded to Ahlia University for the quality of our annual training and development programme for faculty and staff. The presentation was made at a ceremony held under the patronage of His Excellency the Minister of Labour and chairman of the Supreme Council for Vocational Training, Mr Jameel bin Mohammed Ali Humaidan
- **International Year of Light & Light-based Technologies (IYL) was promoted by CERN** (the European Laboratory for Particle Physics in Geneva, Switzerland) in 2015 and as part of Ahlia's outreach activities, Dr Maria del Mar de Fez Laso (who is CERN's representative in Bahrain as well as a lecturer in Mathematics & Physics in Ahlia's College of Arts, Science & Education) led an initiative to select students and teachers from high-schools in Bahrain to participate in the CERN IYL Workshops
- **Training entrepreneurs** is an important part of Bahrain's strategy as set out in the *Economic Vision 2030*. Several of our faculty became recognised trainers this year and conducted sessions in how to train entrepreneurs at the SEED Centre for International Private Enterprise (CIPE)
- **Nader Sabry, CEO and founder of TIMEZ5 Global Inc**, visited Ahlia in 2015 to launch an innovation initiative with the motto "Dream your way to innovation", aiming to inspire Arab youth to reach their potential
- **International interns and leadership programme (AIESEC)** attracted several of our students again this year, promoting community engagement and developing their leadership potential through experiential learning, volunteer experiences and professional internships
- **Charity activities** included
 - UCO Parents Care Centre visit
 - Diabetes Awareness Walk-A-Thon
 - Blood Donation Campaign
- **Cultural events** included
 - Bahraini Cultural Tour
 - Jerusalem Day Celebration
 - Bahraini Women's Day Celebration
 - Bahraini National Day Celebration
 - Culture Exhibition at Research Day
 - Arabic Poetry Festival
 - Cultural Festival



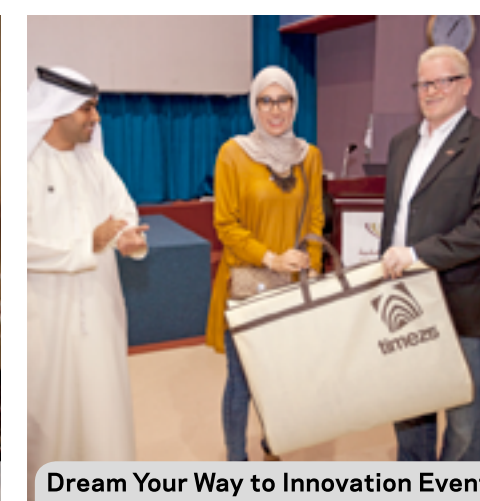
School students visit Ahlia



School students at Ahlia's exhibition stand



Entrepreneurship Curriculum Launch Event



Dream Your Way to Innovation Event



Blood Donation Campaign



National Day



The Arab Academy for Research & Studies (AARS) is the parent company for Ahlia University, Ahlia School and the Bahrain Institute of Technology. Comprising a number of high-profile educators and business people in Bahrain and the GCC, AARS acts as the University's financial guarantor.

Members of the Board of Directors

- Mr Farouk Almoayyed, Chairman
- Dr Ali Jaffar Al Aradi
- Mr Saud Al-Ashqar
- Dr Zamil Al Mokrin (to June 2015)
- Mr Khalid Janahi
- Mr Mohammed Al-Naki
- Prof Abdulla Al Hawaj
- Dr Jaffar Al-Tarif
- Mrs Layla Al-Araifi
- Mr Hameed Salman
- Mrs Fawzia Zainal
- Dr Lulwa Mutlaq (elected at AGM, June 2015)

Annual General Meeting

The AARS AGM was held in June 2015, chaired by Mr Farouk Almoayyed and attended by shareholders representing 76.8% of the company's shares. The meeting approved the report of the Board and the report of the company's final accounts (at year end 31 December 2014).

The Chairman thanked members of the University's management and academic and administrative staff, praising their dedication and contribution to achieving the high status and reputation of the University in the Kingdom of Bahrain and in the region.

Following confirmation of the continued Board membership of the Managing Director, Professor Abdulla Al Hawaj, and the independent member Mr Hamid Salman, a secret ballot was held to elect the remaining nine members of the Board.

The new Board of Directors held its first meeting immediately after the AGM and re-elected Mr Farouk Almoayyed as Chairman of the Board and Mr Mohammed Al-Naki as Vice President. The memberships of the Board's Standing Committees were also established for the coming year.



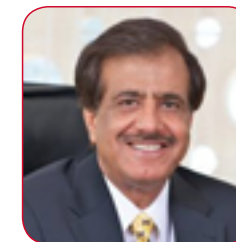
Ahlia University is a legally separate division of AARS and has its own Board of Trustees, clearly distinct and separate from the AARS Board, in order to ensure effective governance and management through external oversight of activities.

The University Trustees ensure that Ahlia determines its own strategic direction with an appropriate balance between financial self-reliance and academic excellence.

Board of Trustees Meeting

The Ahlia University Board of Trustees met in February 2015. Business at the meeting included progress on the plans for the new University campus; restructuring of the Board of Trustees; nomination of a new University President; the University's budget for the year 2015; discussion of arrangements for the 10th Ahlia Graduation Ceremony; and consideration of a new University management structure, including vice president and nomination of deans.

Members of the Board of Trustees



Mr Abdul Razak Al Qassim
Chairman



Prof Marwan Kamal
Vice Chairman



Prof Abdulla Al Hawaj
Member



Prof Ali Abdul Rahman
Member



Dr Zamil Al-Mokrin
Member



Dr Anwar Al-Naki
Member



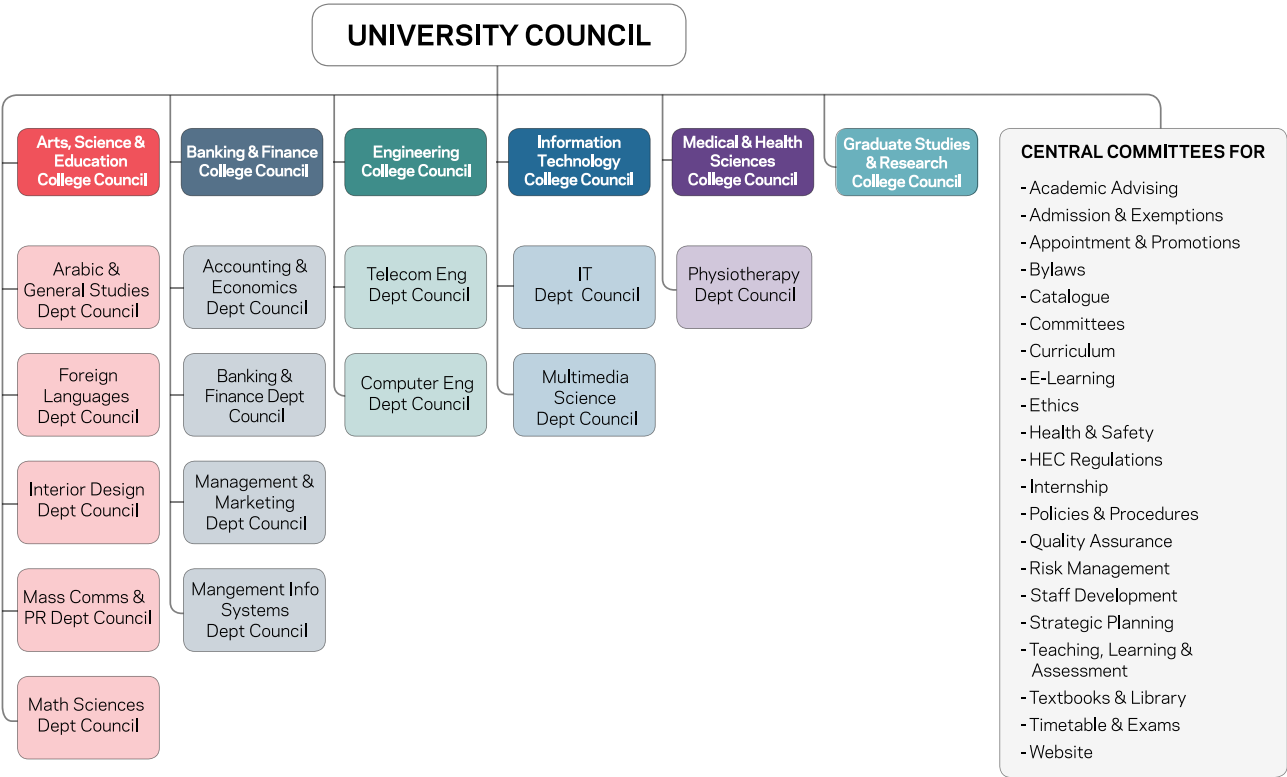
Mr Saud Al-Ashqar
Member

University Council

The University Council is the senior policy-making body within the University and comprises the President, the Vice Presidents, the Deans and representatives of faculty. 2014/15 was a busy year and covered various important items of business:

- Discussion of the University's Strategic Plan for the next period (2016 to 2020)
- Regulations and directives to implement new HEC regulations relating to teaching load
- Revisions to terms of reference of Standing Committees
- Improvements to the processes for supervision of student projects, to optimise the support given to students
- Establishing a process for auditing the ADREG student records system
- Approving proposals to develop the University's brand and external communications strategy
- Appointments and promotions of academic faculty
- Improvements to the course evaluation process
- Updates to various student-related policies designed to make regulations clearer and more helpful to students
- Approval of new Ahlia graduates
- Improvements to the content of the undergraduate project course to make it more beneficial to students and relevant to their future careers
- Revisions to study plans for various programmes

University Committee Structure



Members of University Council 2014/15



Prof Abdulla Al Hawaj
President



Prof Bakr Hassan
Vice President
Academic Affairs



Prof Wajeeh Elali
Vice President
Administration & Finance



Prof Mansoor Alaali
Dean of Student Affairs



Dr Husain Dhaif
Dean of College of
Arts, Science & Education



Prof Amer Al Roubaie
Dean of College of
Business & Finance



Dr Madina Hamiane
Dean of College of
College of Engineering



Prof Kailash Madan
Dean of College of
Information Technology



Prof Shawqi Al Dallal
Dean of College of Graduate
Studies & Research
Acting Dean of College of
Medical & Health Sciences



Dr Samia Costandi
Associate Dean of College of
Graduate Studies & Research
Representative of Associate
Professors



Prof K. Vizaya Kumar
Representative of
Professors



Dr Ebrahim Rajab
Representative of
Assistant Professors



Dr Abdul-Muneim Al Shirawi
Representative of Lecturers



Dr Ahlam Hassan
Director of Finance &
President's Assistant for
Quality Assurance



Prof Nabil Moussa
Adviser to the President for
Faculty Development



Dr Ebrahim Malalla
Assistant Professor

College of Arts, Science & Education



The College offers three programmes: a bachelor's degree in Mass Communication & Public Relations, a bachelor's degree in Interior Design and a master's degree in Mass Communication & Public Relations. In 2014/15 we reviewed and benchmarked our three programmes and made various curriculum changes and enhancements. The College also delivers the University's liberal arts programme of elective courses which can be taken by students on all programmes, including subjects as wide ranging as Arabic, history, Islamic culture, law, mathematical sciences, photography, physics, sociology and video production, plus foreign languages (English, Chinese, French, German, Spanish).

The College emphasises employment-related skills in the learning outcomes of its courses, to support the future careers of its graduates. In addition, we continue to strengthen links with the labour market through field visits and internships. Surveys show that our graduates are valued by employers – in fact statistics show that, despite difficult economic circumstances in the public and private sectors, two-thirds of our graduates are employed. The College plans to build on this, by focusing on workplace skills including technology in the workplace.

Research activity in the College increased significantly in 2014/15 and engagement in the staff development programme was enhanced through participation in local and international conferences and conducting college seminars on a monthly basis.

Research areas in which our faculty published articles and books this year included Arabic language learning; cultural difference; energy and green design; higher education; language and grammar; literary criticism; media studies; narrative enquiry; queuing theory; physics; public relations; and statistics.

During 2014/15 College staff were also involved in community engagement activities through events as varied as a lecture on marginalized people in history at the Foundation for Humanitarian Dialogue in London; organising and participating in art and pottery exhibitions in Bahrain; and organising a competition for Bahraini high-school students to spend a week at the European Centre for Particle Physics in Geneva.

College of Business & Finance



The College was reviewed by the National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training (NAQQAET) during 2014/2015 academic year and we were pleased to note that shortly after the year concluded the review judgements were published showing full "Confidence" in all six of our programmes. This achievement is a reflection of the College's quality and of the cooperative input of academic and administrative staff.

Prior to the NAQQAET review, we benchmarked our programmes against international universities to maintain their viability and competitiveness and to ensure that our curriculums are in line with those taught in some of the best universities in the world.

The recent paradigm shift in education from "teaching" to student-centred "learning" is reflected in our curriculum through new learning outcomes, revised assessment methods and an emphasis on critical thinking. This approach is designed to improve student skills and competences to meet the requirements of the labour market and to become leaders in the future. Internships are a key part of our programmes and our faculty arrange field trips to places such as the Stock Exchange, the Ministry of Information Affairs and financial services companies to give students an understanding of the business world. Skills are also developed through our extensive use of e-learning using the Moodle platform for subject-related information including videos, assignments, case studies, etc.

College faculty have been active in publishing articles and writing books. Some members were rewarded with prizes in recognition of their contribution to the literature reflecting the advancement of the research culture among our faculty members.

Research areas in which our faculty published articles this year included accounting; audit; corporate governance; economic growth; finance; globalisation; Islamic economics; knowledge transfer; marketing; and privatisation.

In 2014/15 we continued our regular programme of seminars by faculty and external guests, covering topics as wide-ranging as corporate governance; entrepreneurship; free trade; globalisation challenges; Islamic finance; and voluntary work.

College of Engineering



During 2014/15, the College continued its mission to produce competent well-rounded graduates in the fields of computer, telecommunication & network engineering. Engineering is one of the foremost driving forces in our ever changing world and to be an engineer is to have the capabilities and know-how to make lives safer, more comfortable and more productive.

This year we built on the course curriculum modifications introduced in 2013/14 and the additional hardware components, experiments and new courses have proved very popular with our students.

A major focus of college activity during 2014/15 was the in-depth review of different aspects of the programme and this proved to be a valuable exercise. It was pleasing to note from stakeholder feedback that the incremental improvements over recent years have strengthened our programmes and made them more relevant to the needs of students, graduates and employers.

The College held its Major Projects Exhibition in May 2015 and our final year students demonstrated their work to an interested audience of faculty, staff and guests.

As part of our continuing efforts to link our courses with the sector, our students also made industry visits to various companies including Huawei Technologies Bahrain SPC and Zain Telecommunications.

Research areas in which our faculty published articles this year included bio-signal processing; digital communications; engineering and computer science; satellite channels; and signalling.

Our faculty attended various regional and international conferences during the year and the College itself organised five seminars on topics ranging from online multimedia networks to teaching mathematics to engineering students in developing countries.

College of Information Technology



In 2014/15 the College maintained a good level of new student recruitment even though similar programmes exist at other universities in Bahrain. This is due in part to the fact that our programme and curriculum quality was recently endorsed by the review judgements of "Confidence" in all College programmes by the National Authority for Qualifications & Quality Assurance of Education & Training (NAQQAET) published late in 2013/14.

Our graduate employment levels are in line with international programmes and we are pleased to note that, as well as our graduates obtaining employment in appropriate sectors, employer surveys indicate that our graduates are in demand and valued. Benchmarking exercises also show that our programmes are well-structured and contain industry-required content. The College reviews its curriculums regularly to ensure they provide employment-related skills that meet market needs; feedback also comes from the College Advisory Board.

Our graduates enhance their suitability for employment due to the academic curriculum and the industry-relevant qualifications which are embedded in our programmes (Oracle 10g Database Administrator Professional Certificate in BSIT; Microsoft Certified Technology Specialist in BDSM). This blend of theoretical knowledge and practical skills was noted with appreciation by the NAQQAET in the review and it is clear that employers welcome the education we provide.

College faculty are actively progressing research opportunities and are encouraging students to do so as part of project work for their programmes.

Research areas in which our faculty published articles and books this year included big data; computational intelligence; computer science; e-learning; ethics in IT; information security; semantics-related programming; and the semantic web.



Our bachelor's programme in Physiotherapy provides a thorough grounding in theoretical and clinical practical practice, through sessions delivered in the classroom and in a variety of healthcare environments. In 2014/2015, we updated the programme in light of benchmarking against top international universities and in line with the requirements of HEC. Standardised assessment criteria for clinical practice were implemented and we conducted clinical induction sessions for students and the newly-joined clinical instructors from our partner hospitals.

The College organised an international workshop entitled "Introduction to the Mulligan Concept", which was delivered at Ahlia by the world-renowned physiotherapy inventor, Dr Brian Mulligan. This was attended by professional physiotherapists from across Bahrain and by faculty, staff and students. The College also arranged periodic in-house seminars.

Our faculty presented at international conferences in Singapore, USA, Dubai and KSA. Scientific papers by our faculty were published in regional and international journals, in areas including healthcare; management and physiotherapy. Faculty members also acted as editorial board members and reviewers in various international journals. The College also participated in the Ministry of Health's "Health Promotion Week" and in the "Physiotherapy Day" organised by the Bahrain Physical Therapy Association.

All second-level physiotherapy students were certified in Bahrain and the UK for attending the "Emergency First Aid At Work Course with Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Training".

Our graduates are successful in obtaining professional certification and licenses (in Bahrain and internationally), demonstrating that we are achieving our goal of producing highly competent health care professionals. More than 20 students graduated in 2014/15 and we were pleased to note that some of them achieved among the highest academic performance in the University.

College of Graduate Studies & Research



The College is responsible for oversight of Ahlia's graduate programmes:

- Ahlia's own master's programmes (MBA, MITCS, MMCPR), internationally-benchmarked programmes which all recruit high numbers of students.
- The joint master's degree in Engineering Management in collaboration with George Washington University (USA), an international programme which attracts students from across the Gulf region.
- The PhD Without Residence programme in collaboration with Brunel University London (UK), an innovative international programme which allows students to study in Bahrain for a Brunel award and which regularly features in the media (eg articles during 2014 in UK's *Guardian* and *Financial Times*)

The College is also responsible for promoting Ahlia's research strategy and supporting research activity. During 2014/15 we established various new systems and guidance aimed at encouraging our researchers to publish in highly-ranked journals and to collaborate on research activities, including a register of research interests and a permanent display of published books and articles.

During 2014/15 Ahlia's research activity grew and our faculty obtained several regional and international awards for their research profile.

The Annual Research Forum was hosted by the College in March 2015 and included twelve presentations on a variety of topics, together with speeches by Professor Ghassan Awad, President of the University of Applied Sciences and Dr Syrine Hout, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at American University of Beirut.

Also in 2014/15, as part of its outreach work, the College jointly-organised (with ASE) an initiative led by one of Ahlia's faculty, Dr Maria del Mar de Fez Laso, to select high-school students and teachers from Bahrain to participate in Workshops for the International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies (IYL) to be held at CERN (the European Laboratory for Particle Physics) in Geneva, Switzerland (see details on p18).

The Deanship of Student Affairs is the main contact point for students regarding their administrative and non-programme requirements. The deanship includes several sections providing services and facilities aimed at helping students to achieve better academic performance during their academic life at Ahlia.

- **Admission & Registration** deals with admissions, registration, examination and graduation matters. During 2014/15, a major archiving/scanning project was started, to scan students files from 2010 onwards for easier and more secure reference. The section also employed a receptionist to improve the enquiry service provided to students and applicants
- **ADREG Support** manages the student record system (ADREG), used by faculty, staff and students who all have access to relevant records and reports through secure usernames. During 2014/15, further enhancements were made to the ADREG system, especially to add new reports
- **Student Counselling** assists with challenges that might hinder students' learning, ranging from short-term advice to help for on-going situations or conditions; and covering academic life (liaison with academic advisers; help with general settling in and study skills) and personal life. The team also works with students who have special needs. In 2014/15, awareness-raising strategies (including workshops and updated handbooks) resulted in a higher number of referrals
- **Student Activities** supports students in developing as people and living a balanced life. During 2014/15, the team worked with students to organise activities including football, basketball, blood donations, lectures, charity activities and festivals. The SA team also supports student teams participating in competitions outside Ahlia, including football championships and the universities debates competition. The team also works closely with the Student Council
- **Professional Relations** supports current students and graduates with their careers, by organising placements for Ahlia's (compulsory) Internship course and by offering training, workplace visits and other activities. Annual events organised are the Careers Day (attended by almost forty well-known employers in 2014/15); the Alumni Gathering; and the Employer Gathering held to show appreciation for our partners in the private and public sectors.

Ahlia's administrative directorates and units are essential contributors to its success, through work which supports the programme offering. During 2014/15, achievements included

- **Administrative Services** supported activities for Ahlia's current and future operations, including facilities management; security and safety; liaison with Tamkeen on various funding projects; and significant activity for the new campus project, including architect workshops; the Pre-conceptual Master Design Technical Study and Financial Feasibility Study; and on-going meetings with Ministry of Housing on infrastructure matters
- **Centre for Accreditation & Quality Assurance (CAQA)** monitored our quality management system (AUQMS) and supported departments with quality processes for Programme Review; National Qualification Framework (both Institutional Listing and Programme Listing); Institutional Review; accreditation by AACSB; and HEC accreditation
- **Finance:** various activities to improve internal processes and the service provided to Ahlia departments, in order to improve the support to students and sponsors (faster processing times; reconciliations; cheque preparation; reduction in fee debts; etc)
- **Human Resources:** as well as activities supporting recruitment, training, ministry liaison and payroll, HR implemented HEC's new requirement for qualification accreditation; planned for further automation of processes; and organised 40 training courses for faculty and administrative staff. Ahlia was recognised for this achievement by the Ministry of Labour's Shield of Excellence for training
- **Information & Communication Technology Centre (ICTC):** provided user support; purchased new hardware and software for teaching labs; added e-learning and virtual lab features to Ahlia's website; and added a search facility to the internal data repository (Sharepoint)
- **International Relations:** increased French exchange student numbers by 50% over 2013/14 levels; supported visiting students; and identified new collaboration partners
- **Library:** provided learning resources for faculty and students; increased stocks by an extra 913 books and 29 databases; added 3 new study spaces and a new RFID gate; updated library brochures and held open days and training sessions
- **Media Production Centre:** supported daily requirements of students, faculty and staff to a higher level than previous years; and transferred the photo gallery back catalogue to archive
- **Public Relations & Media:** liaised with media for press coverage; arranged Ahlia's PR activity; and planned and managed Ahlia events
- **Strategic Planning:** supported the strategic planning and operational planning processes; monitoring implementation; and ran the strategic planning awareness staff competition



Final Exams



Careers Day



Director of Admin Services with the Campus Architects



Prof Abdulla Al Hawaj with Ahlia's Head of Training and the Ministry award

Concluding Remarks



As mentioned in the Introduction to this Annual Report, I took up the role of President in April 2015.

I am honoured by the role and to be asked to follow in the footsteps of my illustrious predecessor, Professor Abdulla Al Hawaj. I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Professor Abdulla who, as Ahlia University's Founding President, has contributed so much to the University, taking it from small beginnings in February 2003 to the well-respected institution that it is today. I have been proud to work with Professor Abdulla for many years, particularly since I joined Ahlia University in 2009, and our partnership will continue as Ahlia advances into the future.

I hope that you have enjoyed reading Ahlia University's Annual Report for 2014/15 and learning about some of our achievements and major areas of activity during the past year. Of course, a publication such as this is only brief summary of what was an extremely active, busy and eventful year – however, I hope that you have found it interesting.

2014/15 brought more endorsements of our academic quality, in the Confidence judgements awarded to our six programmes in the College of Business & Finance; the development of our new brand; increasing the number of students studying with us, including students from across the globe; and broadening our international scope. Our academic achievements and active community engagement demonstrate the lasting contribution that Ahlia is making to higher education and the wider community in Bahrain and beyond. As ever, our faculty and staff continued to deliver their objectives and contribute to Ahlia's progress along our strategic path.

Ahlia's achievements result from the commitment and contribution of our faculty, staff, students and stakeholders; guided by our Board of Trustees and the Board of Directors; and supported by the leadership of the Kingdom of Bahrain. We are very grateful for the input and efforts of all of these supporters – they are an essential part of the University's continuing success.

It is a privilege and a great responsibility to take up the role of President and I look forward to working with all of Ahlia's stakeholders – students, staff, employers and society – in the service of this great University.

In 2015/16, we will be shaping our Strategic Plan for the next five years and continuing to build for the future – “building” metaphorically as we plan for our academic and aspirational growth and “building” literally as we advance the plans for our new purpose-built campus to support the full breadth of our developing academic community.

I am confident that we will rise to greater success in 2015/16, as we continue in our mission to provide the highest quality education and research that supports the needs of Bahrain and of our regional and international communities.

Professor Mansoor Alaali

Appointed as University President, April 2015



Ahlia University Graduation Ceremony 2015



National Qualification Framework validation event for MSc Information Technology & Computer Science



National Day with the Governor of the Central Governorate



Deliver Amazing Session by Qatar SCDL



At the Student High Achievers Event

2014/15 in Statistics

2451

Students Registered
in 2014/15

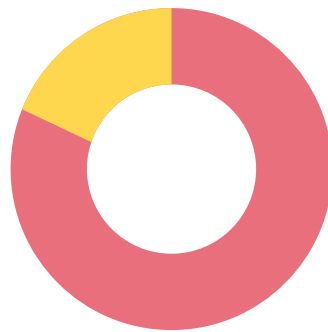


27

Student
Nationalities

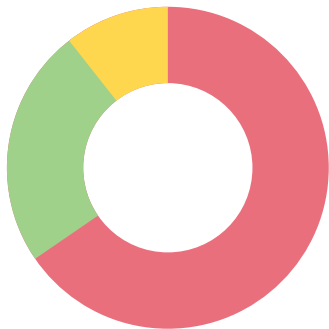
100%

Success Rate for
programmes reviewed
by NAQQAET



Government
School (80%)

Private
School (20%)



Bachelor
Degrees (12)

Master
Degree (4)

Doctoral
Degree (2)

80%

Student Satisfaction Rate
(CME exit survey 2014/15)

38

organisations
at **Careers Day**
2015

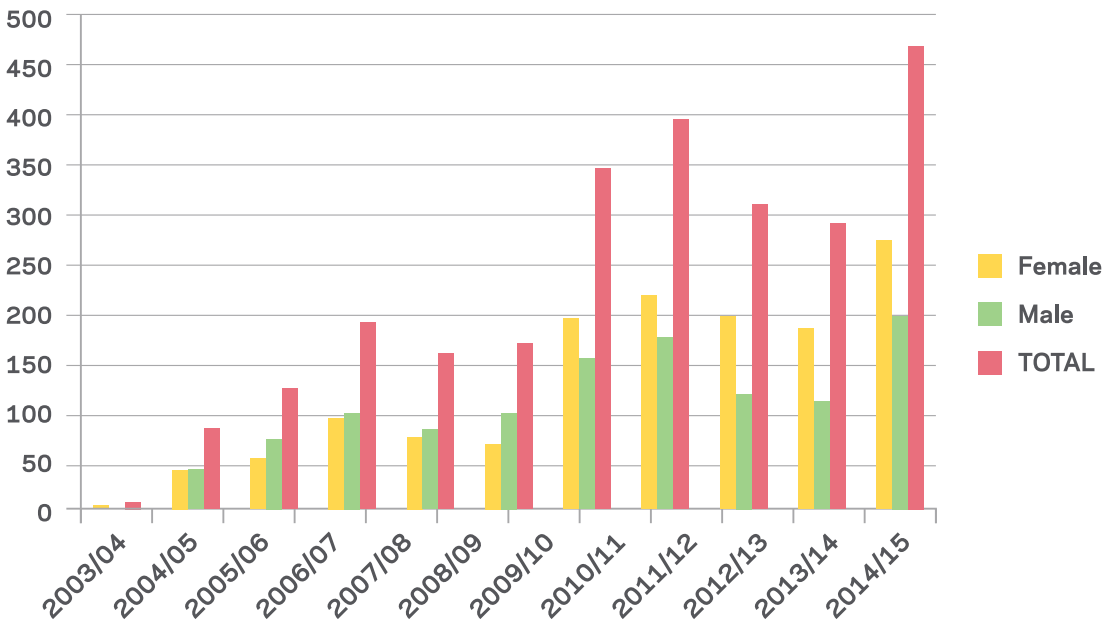
over
400

courses
available
(core & options)

STUDENTS REGISTERED



GRADUATES







الجامعة الأهلية
AHLIA UNIVERSITY
BAHRAIN

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