

For Immediate Release



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## **The Al Ghurair Hub for Digital Teaching and Learning launches in partnership with the American University of Beirut**

- *The Al Ghurair Hub for Digital Teaching and Learning will be based at AUB out of the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, AUB.*
- *The partnership aims to increase access to education for thousands of Arab youths by offering high quality online and blended learning opportunities at scale.*

During a virtual signing ceremony today attended by HE Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair, Chairman of AGFE, and Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri, President of AUB, The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education (AGFE) announced the launch of the Abdulla Al Ghurair Hub for Digital Teaching and Learning in partnership with the American University of Beirut (AUB) at the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (MSFEA) with the aim of improving access to quality online education for thousands of Arab youth across the region.

A first of its kind initiative in the region, the program will leverage cutting-edge learning technologies that respond to the rapidly evolving needs of regional and global employment markets. In addition to launching a combination of at least 15 online master's programs, diplomas, and certificates in its first 3 years, the Abdulla Al Ghurair Hub for Digital Teaching and Learning will be carefully structured to align with industry needs, and to fill a gap in the regional higher education and online education market.

In order to achieve the goals of the initiative, AGFE and AUB will pursue a two-pronged approach in which existing residential courses at MSFEA will simultaneously be digitized to enable improvements in the teaching and learning experience for students, at the same time new courses and programs are being developed.

In light of the shared commitment of AGFE and AUB to increasing access to high quality higher education through quality online learning, the Hub will also provide support to underserved students, enabling lifelong learning and skill development opportunities.

H.E Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair, Chairman of Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education (AGFE), said: “With today’s unprecedented challenges in providing high-quality learning opportunities to Arab youth, we are delighted to collaborate with strategic regional partners such as AUB, to make quality online learning more accessible to a larger pool of young people. The future of online learning in the region will be further catalysed by initiatives such as these, and we are confident that more educational institutions will follow suit, in order to provide greater access to education across many more fields of study.”

Dr Sonia Ben Jaafar, Chief Executive Officer of Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education (AGFE), said: “The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education’s collaboration with AUB reflects our collective and steadfast commitment towards promoting higher education standards that meet the need for greater access to quality online learning platforms in the region. Our main objective is to be a catalyst for innovation in education as well as provide access to higher education opportunities for Arab youth. We are confident that this initiative will consequently serve as a benchmark and knowledge hub for training and supporting other regional universities interested in building their online and blended learning capacities, so that more Arab youth can have access to better higher education at scale.”

The Hub is based on an outcomes-based impact financing model, a groundbreaking financing mechanism for education in the Arab region. This innovative approach aims to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of philanthropic funding, by fostering commitment from all partners to meet pre identified outcomes tied to social impact as defined by key indicators. Moreover, the Hub will become self-sustaining over the coming years as all revenues it generates will be reinvested back into its growth and development for the benefit of Arab youth.

The Hub has already powered two new active online programs: the immersive, flexible, and interactive Engineering Management Master’s degree tailored for engineers and architects; as well as the Building Energy Systems graduate diploma that leverages renewable energy solutions which is increasingly demanded in this era of global warming.

Fadlo R. Khuri, MD, President of AUB, commented: “Today, the region faces unprecedented challenges in providing high-quality learning opportunities to Arab youth. That’s why we are pleased to partner with the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education who share our values of providing the best educational opportunities for Arab youth. We need to make learning in critical fields for the development of the Arab region, such as engineering and architecture, more accessible, more interactive, and more engaging. This partnership reflects the confidence of

regional business leaders in the vision and growth of AUB that has one of the highest employer ratings in the region. We are upgrading the existing infrastructure to be more digital, adaptive, flexible and interactive and will serve as a regional leader in online learning for a greater positive social impact. We hope that this Hub will serve as a model to other institutions in the region who want to follow suit to cater to the growing population of youth in need of quality education.”

AGFE and AUB’s strategic relationship dates back to 2017 when AUB welcomed one of AGFE’s first fully funded Al Ghurair STEM Scholars at the university. AGFE engaged in a two-year project to train a number of faculty and instructional designers to redesign introductory undergraduate blended courses. To date, over 1200 students have benefited from such courses.

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**Note to Editors**

**About AUB**

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 140 programs leading to bachelor’s, master’s, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 365-bed hospital.

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