



PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN LEBANON

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS,
ACCOUNTABILITY
AND VALUE-FOR-MONEY

November 2010

THE MUHANNA FOUNDATION

Private Universities in Lebanon

**Performance Indicators, Accountability
and Value-for-Money**

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About the Muhanna Foundation

The Muhanna Foundation, created in 1994, is a non-profit organization established in Switzerland and based in Beirut, Lebanon. It is dedicated to the promotion of actuarial education & continuing education for professionals involved in social security, pensions, healthcare, insurance industry & supervision, in actuarially underdeveloped countries, in general, and in the Arab world in particular.

The Foundation organizes conferences, seminars and workshops in a variety of fields including insurance, investment and governance on a regular basis in the region. The Foundation also runs three separate Diploma Programs; the first in Actuarial Sciences, the second in Social Insurance & the third in Healthcare. The Foundation acts as well as a forum for discussions with regards to actuarial and demographic issues in the region. In its commitment to actuarial education, the Muhanna Foundation provides awards and scholarships in the fields of Actuarial Science and Mathematics to students who are completing actuarial education in several countries, namely: Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria & Yemen.

Finally, in 2006, the Foundation's mission and objectives were modified to further contribute to the education and research areas at large, annually publishing studies that can serve as starting points for broader policy discussions. Hence this report is part of this commitment to the public good, and which serves Lebanon's developmental agenda.

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List of Acronyms

AERES: L'Agence d'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur

AY: Academic Year

BA: Bachelor of Arts

BE: Bachelor of Engineering

BS: Bachelor of Science

BT: Baccalaureate Technique

CERD: Center for Educational Research and Development

FA: Financial Aid

FT: Full Time

FTE: Full Time Equivalent

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GS: General Science

HC: Headcount

HE: Higher Education

HEIs: Higher Education Institutions

IELTS: International English Language Testing System

KAM: Knowledge Assessment Methodology

KPIs: Key Performance Indicators

LH: Letters and Humanities

LMD: License-Master-Doctorat

LS: Life Science

MEHE: Ministry of Education and Higher Education

NEASC: New England Association of Schools and Colleges

OB: Operating Budget

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PhD: Doctor of Philosophy

PT: Part Time

QA: Quality Assurance

SAT: Scholastic Aptitude Test

SE: Sociology and Economics

TOEFL: internet-Based Test of English as a Foreign Language

VTE: Vocational and Technical Education



List of 26 Universities

Acronym	University
AOU	Arab Open University
AUB	American University of Beirut
AUCE	American University of Culture & Education
AUL	Arts, Sciences & Technology University in Lebanon
AUST	American University of Science & Technology
AUT	American University of Technology
Balamand	University of Balamand
BAU	Beirut Arab University
GU	Global University
HCU	Hariri Canadian University
HU	Haigazian University
IUL	Islamic University in Lebanon
Jinan	Jinan University
LAU	Lebanese American University
LCU	Lebanese Canadian University
LGU	Lebanese German University
LIU	Lebanese International University
MEU	Middle East University
MUBS	Modern University for Business & Science
MUT	Al-Manar University of Tripoli
NDU	Notre Dame University
Sagesse	Université la Sagesse
ULF	Université Libano-Française de Technologie et des Sciences Appliqués
UPA	Université Antonine
USEK	Université Saint Esprit de Kaslik
USJ	Université Saint- Joseph

Foreword

It goes without saying that the importance of evaluating the private higher education institutions in Lebanon stems from the very importance that this sector plays in knowledge economy and in preparing new generation of citizens capable of dealing with all challenges. This sector has witnessed an unprecedented expansion in the past decade, which requires more scrutiny to be able to make an opinion about its capability to play this role.

The Muhanna Foundation's interest in higher education stems from its general mission of providing continuing education and training for mid-career and professionals, in actuarial, social insurance, and healthcare education. The Muhanna Foundation is primarily supported by i.e. Muhanna & co. (Actuarial Services), with a leading expertise in the field of pension, social insurance and healthcare for more than twenty years, in addition to its rating model for insurance companies in the Arab world.

Indeed, based on this last expertise, the initial aim of this study was to create a rating model for private universities in Lebanon. The idea was based on a value-for-money approach to this educational service, evaluating what these universities are offering in return to tuition. However, this model needs data and information as input in order to make informed opinions. After initial testing and research, we came to the conclusion that the current situation of the sector does not allow for such detailed undertaking, due to lack of information and transparency, as well absence of national frameworks regulating the sector in a more effective way. Hence we redefined our initial objective into a broader one, by looking at an extensive range of data and information, building some indicators in order to do a gap analysis among those universities. It is our hope to open a discussion surrounding these issues. The importance of not just this dialogue but the responsibility of these institutions to report their standings, for public accountability, is a main impetus behind this report.

This final report is a result of one year of work. It is a pioneering approach seeking to quantify what private universities do and a first attempt to ask new questions and provide preliminary answers. Indeed, moving from perception to evidence is a challenge in Lebanon, and in the higher education sector data seems a "taboo". Performance indicators constructed and analyzed in this study were built from data from various sources: mainly surveys from cooperating universities, as well as other published material in print and online, and from the Center for Educational Research and Development. Data was verified, validated, and compared from various sources for more reliability and accuracy. This daunting task was complicated because of the extent of data our survey contained, as well lack of cooperation from universities, either because they did not have the data themselves, or simply they did not want to share. Full appreciation remains for those universities who fully engaged with this research and agreed to fill out the survey. Some other institutions thought of it as an inspiration in starting their own internal data generating processes.

This report does not make a judgment per se, rather asks core questions, provides evidence, and makes initial observation just to stress on the need to further standardize and provide data and information concerning this sector. It is not our job to be the authority in charge, but rather a civil society actor trying to open discussion, so that future progress can happen. Nonetheless, this report has a plethora of new data, either



never published before, or not synthesized in such a meaningful way. It serves as an initial tool for universities to “locate” themselves in the market. Eventually, it is our hope, that this can be expanded and used for benchmarking purposes. We believe that this study is important for universities so it can be a roadmap for future reporting. However our initial target group, students and their parents, should be part of this discussion, and be more aware of their right to know about such issues, something that will be the focus of Muhanna Foundation in the future.

On education and labor market

It is clear from this study and elsewhere that higher education in Lebanon is facing real challenges, especially with regard to producing adequately qualified human capital responding to the needs of the local labor and job market, and also with regard to the sector’s quality assurance and broad standing in the region.

Linking higher education outcome to job market is the ultimate goal of an efficient system, enhancing this organic relationship between both sectors. Here the responsibility is on all actors, mainly higher education and job market stakeholders (governmental bodies, private sector) by providing all kind of data and information on performance of those sectors, their inputs, outputs, and outcomes. This can serve as a first-step in understanding dynamics, and making evidence-based policy and action.

A higher education policy is needed for Lebanon. It is our responsibility to ask for it, and work to provide inputs for such policy. This study falls into this spirit. However it is the responsibility of all parties to do their share of the job, and take the lead in this endeavor. If we are to keep our flagship education system in the region, we have to know that competition is now global, the challenges and issues broader, and defying them more difficult. Legislative and administrative reforms are needed in public and private sector alike. A system where quality is monitored and auditing is available and open is the ultimate assurance for all stakeholders. We hope the current draft law on higher education will soon pass in the parliament.

Finally, I would like to thank all universities who have participated in this study, and who made it possible by providing all data and information, as well as those who received Muhanna Foundation team of researchers, providing their insights. As for other universities who chose not to participate, we hope this can be a re-assurance that we tried to create from the beginning. We hope this study will open much-needed discussion on the future of higher education in Lebanon, and the reforms needed in this regard. I would like to thank as well all experts and decision makers who provided knowledge and advice, as well as media for providing coverage allowing greater outreach to the public, and the team at the Muhanna Foundation.

ibrahim muhanna

Chairman of the Board of Trustees

The Muhanna Foundation



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We thank the Ministry of Education and Higher Education support in launching the findings. Staff at the Center for Educational Research and Development was extremely helpful on many occasions and provided requested data, as well as officers at the Directorate for Vocational and Technical Education.

We thank as well all higher education professionals, and other policy makers and officials who made time available for us to provide advice and expertise at different stages of the study.



I. Higher Education in Lebanon: Bridging the Gap between Perceptions and Realities

A. Introduction

Data on higher education institutions (HEIs) in Lebanon is in a major state of dismay, not to say almost non-existent. Collecting data on HEIs is burdensome, and at some point almost impossible. Footnotes are the only mean to explain nuances and to clarify differences, thus making the case for the need to standardize. This report was initially meant to produce a rating model for different HEIs in Lebanon, based on some internationally- recognized, locally-contextualized, indicators and models. Gradually, the dilemma of data collection and analysis re-focused our initial aim into broader sectoral, system-wide level: the status of higher education in Lebanon, with focus on private universities undergraduate education, and their responsibility to report and release accurate and periodic data. We researched to the fullest extent of our abilities institutions and their operations and have reported findings here in the best way in order to make them useful, meaningful, and to the utmost close to comparability.

Higher education in Lebanon has historically been at the forefront of national human development and a model for human capital formation in the region. The higher education sector is largely built on the historical reputation of some institutions, and the general role that Lebanon has played before 1975 in educating generations of Lebanese and Arabs, and providing quality education in a challenging regional context. Private universities, along with the Lebanese University- the only public institution of higher education in Lebanon- have constituted the engine for “producing” high quality graduates. This residual reputation nowadays is becoming merely a perception, in an era of the changing landscapes of higher education in the region, the globalization of the sector, and the convergence of standards and services. The legitimacy of higher education institutions concerning reputation and academic achievements are in jeopardy for several reasons. Lebanon has lost some major advantages in attracting foreign students at the same levels as before 1975. In addition to the growing regional competition to become educational hubs, and the increased funding and investment required to cater such needs, a main reason is the failure of the sector to communicate its advantage to the region while competition is highly on the rise. This is combined with the lack of **quality assurance** mechanisms on a national level, while efforts towards establishing a body in charge of the matter have remained fruitless. The past decade has witnessed an unprecedented mushrooming in new private universities, with no adequate parallel developments in related legislations and quality control mechanisms.

A mere growth in enrollment figures, something always celebrated in Lebanon, is furthering the image that things are going well. In this study, a reality check of the sector will be taken at micro levels, analyzed on institutional parameters, and then compared cross-sectoral and against system-wide standards, though those were lacking in most cases.



B. The importance of higher education in a new knowledge economy

It is being increasingly agreed that HEIs cannot operate anymore in the traditional sense, or old-fashioned way strictly confined to enrollment levels, with no related qualitative and quantitative guiding frameworks and performance measurement. The higher education sector has been identified as that of great importance within any strategic national development objectives. Hence Lebanon's HEIs should shift discourse into results-oriented one with regard to quality, access, research, and related integrated action plans and performance.

The World Bank knowledge economy framework places education as one of its four main pillars¹. Literacy rates, secondary and tertiary education enrollments rates have been identified as indicators for evaluating education for a competitive economy, producing graduates able to compete in a global economy, and innovating for growth and development. Indeed the future of a country's human capital is based mainly on how extensive these areas are concerning education given their performance should be closely monitored. For the purpose of this study, we are interested in national indicators as they relate to secondary and tertiary education, however, our interest remains in the importance of other more specific national and institutional data to help better illuminate and understand the issues at hand and how to better frame them.

If education is a competitive advantage for Lebanon, then the past has shown that it did not really translate into broader economic and social development. A look at the main indicators in this area regarding: Adult literacy rate (% age 15 and above), Gross secondary enrollment rate, and Gross tertiary enrollment rate, was undertaken. Figure 1 below shows Lebanon's standing in the overall index compared to a regional group- 13 Middle East and North Africa countries-², and an income group- 46 Upper-Middle-Income Countries (Lebanon belongs to both). Figure 2 takes only education indicators.³

¹ Mainly through the Knowledge Assessment Methodology (KAM) which is meant to provide an assessment of countries' and regions' readiness for the knowledge economy. It adopts a cross-sectoral approach including in addition to education and skilled labor force, elements such as innovation and technological adoption, information infrastructure, and the economic and institutional regime.

² Excluding GCC countries.

³ Figures 1 and 2 are constructed from the World Bank Knowledge Assessment Methodology tool:

www.worldbank.org/kam



KAM -Normalized Performance Scores

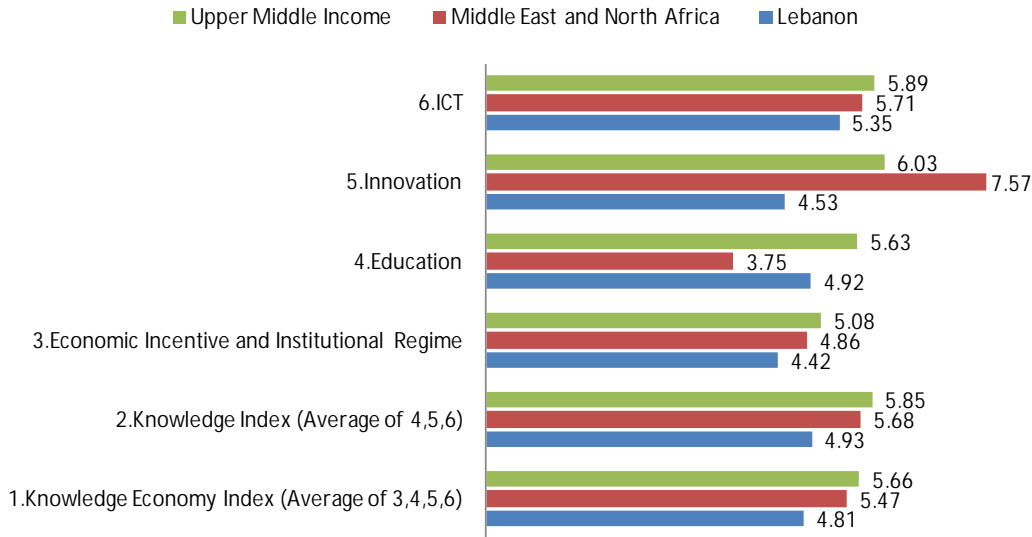


Figure 1: Knowledge Assessment Methodology (KAM) - Normalized Performance Scores for Lebanon, Middle East and North Africa, and Upper Middle Income Countries.

Education Indicators

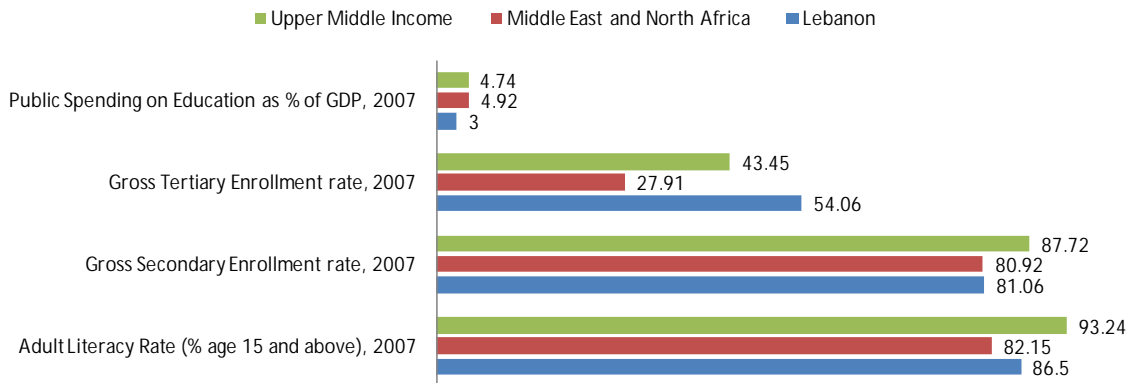


Figure 2: Education Indicators for Lebanon, Middle East and North Africa, and Upper Middle Income Countries.

These indicators are important on a macro level, and for cross-country, regional and global comparisons. However, they are not complete and directly relevant for our purposes here. Tertiary gross enrollment includes other than higher education institutions, mainly vocational and technical levels. It is a ‘gross’ ratio, meaning it disregards the age of those enrolled to the age group to which it is being compared. These indicators are not enough to make further analysis on higher education sector and its stance on national and regional level, or to answer a core question - what do individual institutions (universities in this report) actually do? What are their characteristics, and how can we attempt to classify them based on what they do rather than based on their name or reputation?



C. A Brief Context of Higher Education in Lebanon: Pre- and Post-1992

Higher education in Lebanon dates back to 1866 when the Syrian Evangelical College (renamed The American University of Beirut) was founded, followed by Saint Joseph University in 1883. What is now known as the Lebanese American University (LAU) has evolved starting mainly in 1924 when it was transformed to a college-level education for girls after being a boarding school for few decades earlier. It is worth mentioning that all these three institutions were established by western missionaries. It was not until 1952 that the Lebanese University (LU) was established, being the only public higher education institution until now. Some other institutions developed at the time and before the Civil War of 1975-1990 (mainly the Beirut Arab University in 1960).

In the post-1992 period, Lebanon witnessed a rapid expansion in the higher education system which can be seen through the rapid increase in demand and corresponding supply of educational services through the licensing for new institutions. Here are some general notes which defined the landscape of HE in Lebanon during the past two decades:

1. The governance of the sector is mainly mandated to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE). The 1961 Law is the main law governing higher education institutions, in addition to the 1996 Decree 9274, which establishes detailed criteria on faculty, buildings, libraries, and staff, for licensing and operating of higher education institutions. **However these legal frameworks remain basic comparing to the expansion of the sector and the need for parallel legislative reforms**, mainly when it comes to auditing, supervising, and reporting mechanisms. While LU is an autonomous body, private institutions feel little need to talk to the government other than for granting initial licensing for establishment, and faculty, program, and geographical expansion. Even this basic requirement has been violated immensely by many institutions.
2. In the absence of a national HE policy framework, coupled with outdated laws, and weak corresponding supervision mechanisms, **the increase in licensing was not a designed process, rather mostly a private profit-seeking initiative.**
3. Quality assurance (QA) has been a main focus within the higher education circles and reform initiatives in the country for the past decade, however little progress has been made towards establishing and operating a QA body responsible for providing QA control for HEIs, in addition to granting accreditation. Options on how best to approach the matter are still under consideration, though many general frameworks are already documented. Some individual institutions have taken the initiative to audit their programs and institutions through external reviewers, resulting in either accreditation or an initial review document. **It is observed that this process might be leading to re-create differences among institutions on national level, since various universities have approached different bodies with different QA practices resulting in different outcomes or requirements.**



4. As much as governmental regulation has failed in providing good overseeing frameworks and implementation, **self-regulation is almost non-existent from the part of institutions on a sector-wide level.** Since private institutions dominate the sector, it is usually expected to see some form of common interest leading institutions to set standards for the industry. Though the “Association of Universities in Lebanon” has been established since 2003, little achievement can be observed in terms of bringing together members’ expertise for the betterment of the sector or for any common frameworks for operations. Most institutions have been keen at keeping their historical development circumstances as a reason -barrier- for converging with others. Taking a deeper look at their operations, one can see that many universities have undertaken internal changes which bring more similarities to the industry. Other new ones were established with modern academic and operational practices. However, wide differences were still observed. If structures and systems are in place, that doesn’t mean they are functioning properly.
5. It has become conventional to identify HEIs in Lebanon, mainly universities, as belonging to two groups: the old ones and new ones. Some made a political economy classification of universities, based on origin, affiliation, and historical development/circumstances. However the question remains: what do these institutions do? How do we move from perception-based to evidence-based classification? It is this last issue that our research has tried to quantify and assess. **How much do we know about higher education in Lebanon, or rather, how much don’t we know for that matter?** Access to accurate, comprehensive and relevant information is challenging for all stakeholders.

D. What We Propose: A Document for Public Accountability

It is important to note first that there is a possibility to strike a balance between reporting, accountability, and autonomy. Public accountability does not come at the expense of institutions’ autonomy, and Article 10 in the Lebanese Constitution preserves freedom of education for all.

Public accountability has rarely been a concern for higher education institutions in Lebanon. Part of the lack of public accountability is due to the prevalence of private sector institutions and the political economy of higher education in the country. Historically, the state has been weak, and private parties have often taken the role of providing services, but this phenomenon was not accompanied by a sense of public accountability and transparency. Particularly the expansion of these institutions was not linked to public funds, as was the experience in many countries, hence circumventing the more stringent reporting requirements. Currently, there is no single incentive or stipulation for private institutions to report about their operations. Even the Lebanese University, the only public HEI, is not required to do so in way that is meaningful to



outside parties. On one hand, the need for public accountability stems from the fact that students are faced with confusing choices about universities and programs, but most of the times they are left to marketing campaigns, and not provided with information related to their immediate needs and their right to know. On the other hand, the sector has immense implications on the socio-economic development of the country. One may ask about the rate of return of private HE in Lebanon and the value for the investment of private and public money.⁴ In a recent study on financing and political economy of higher education in Lebanon, Charbel Nahas estimated private financing at 3.5% of total households' expenditure, and 3% of GDP comparing to only 0.5% direct public expenditure. When approaching returns on higher education, an internal rate of return (IRR) was calculated for private higher education with a 3.5% result. Calculating marginal IRR further reconfirmed the belief that Lebanon's private higher education cost cannot be justified on the basis of catering for local labor market.⁵

There is a major conflict and divergence with regard to this matter. Whereas HEIs want to stay away from regulation and public accountability, students and other stakeholders are pushing for more scrutiny so that institutions become more accountable and liable for their performance in various areas. However, this is not an accurate picture. We could not document much student movement for more transparency. Apart from the demonstration staged by AUB and LAU students in May 2010 questioning their administrations' plans to alter tuition structure and terms (leading to an increase), we could not find any similar movement resulting in an open discussion about financial operations, financial aid, and need -or not- for such policies. This students' activism can be replicated elsewhere in order to strengthen communication between students and their administrations when it comes to planning and decision-making.

Universities have constantly used the same reasons to explain the lack of national frameworks and their unwillingness to provide information, under the pretext of "*we have different systems*", "*we are different*", "*it's not necessary to compare*", thus we ended up in a no-reporting system, and hence no accountability. Some measures of comparability should be established, while acknowledging differences and nuances. The system should converge towards establishing national standards and frameworks upon which universities operations are based and defined. This will create a regular process for reporting, allowing all stakeholders to understand the system for informed decision making.

This report is a multi-dimensional attempt to measure performance of HEIs under existing conditions. Ideally, performance would measure differently and more comprehensively, however in the absence of national frameworks on most matters related to higher education, this study is an attempt to measure gaps and prevailing conditions. It may serve as an instrument for management for other universities and a way to compare

⁴ (Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2005). p. 14.

⁵ Nahas, Charbel. Financing and Political Economy of Higher Education in Lebanon, 2009.



with peer institutions. Indeed, it is a first attempt towards a national league table. It is our hope that this report can bring momentum to implement some international standards to national platform of HE. Further, we hope that this first, much-needed, benchmarking exercise for the sector will pave the way for wider reforms and initiate a culture of transparency and accountability.

E. Who should read this report?

This study addresses many issues while making sure all stakeholders find relevance. Hence we tried to tackle issues from a policy perspective, as well as students' rights perspective, while taking into consideration private universities interest.

Hence several stakeholders may have direct and indirect interest in this report:

- 1- For Higher Education Institutions:** numbers are often considered taboo in Lebanon, and in most sectors. By trying to track and report data, and by extracting indicators, this study invites HEIs to tell their story in a more compelling way which requires a paradigm shift in approaching their operations and related attitude towards the public. By emphasizing hard data on all levels we are signaling its importance ultimately to core issues in HE, mainly strategic planning, quality assurance and the accreditation processes. This is not intended as a comparison tool per se, but rather to show the importance of knowing such issues and publicly disclose them in order to initiate new directions in HE landscape. Finally, the build-up of such knowledge can allow for a benchmarking exercise to take place, which is always needed in performance management.
- 2- For Government:** tracking public discussion of HE reform in Lebanon during the past decade has shown a more “generalist” approach to matters and problems, rather than a detailed fact-based description of current situation. While quality assurance has received the largest focus, other important issues went unnoticed. Currently, there is no higher education policy or strategy in the country, and such discussion should start by asking such questions concerning what the country needs/wants in terms of: access, affordability, efficiency, or quality measures. All of these objectives require real and updated data in order to draw an acute understanding of the current situation. Obtaining and synthesizing such data is the first step towards setting and monitoring the goals needed to move forward. Furthermore, this study shows the need to adopt more HE frameworks that allow the sector to operate in conformity with basic laws and standards.
- 3- For Students:** In no way does this study mean to suggest to students what to study or at which institution they should study. Instead, we are providing an analysis of what one should think of when considering making an investment in private higher education in order to view what really counts for him/her and their



parents. Throughout different sections, we show the relevance of knowing particular information to students (from an educational, but mainly from a consumer perspective). For instance, cohorts' graduation rate can indicate for a student whether a particular institution is delivering, by showing how many students in a particular cohort do actually get a degree and in what time span. This approach can be thought of in other matters related to tuition fees, budgetary allocations, and resources.

- 4- For other stakeholders:** individual donors, international organizations, private donors, and businesses. This report can serve to look into the sector from a fresh perspective. It is intended that those parties, when dealing with universities mainly, ask same questions as we did here. It is thought that an increase in demand for data and information can lead the way for HEIs to become more responsive and responsible to their stakeholders by supplying such data.



II. The Importance of Data and Information on Higher Education Institutions and Performance Indicators

Before elaborating on our methodology and findings, an important question needs to be answered: What does the public need to know about HEIs, and why? More broadly, what data about HEIs should be produced, and for what purpose and audience?

A. Flow of Data and its Importance

Throughout our research, data and statistical information was thought of by institutions as a “compliance” issue, rather than as an essential tool for continuous self-discovery and improvement concerning its efficiency in the broader market. Establishing not just a permanent capacity, but willingness and culture for institutional data gathering and processing, is the basis for a quality institution.⁶

Data is not important by itself; rather it becomes so when it is translated into information and knowledge forming the cornerstone of in-depth analysis. In higher education, raw data is mainly a measure or code that will allow for some quantification of a characteristic related to an entity, being an institution, staff, or students. Information is data that after being processed in a meaningful way can be useful in a policymaking exercise. One can extract much from raw data depending on how one makes use of available data. Finally, this information will allow framing discussion into broader perspectives and forming knowledge. Knowledge is based on how we use, interpret, and compare this information and for what purpose. This is the final stage where in-depth analysis and understanding of situations can take place, allowing for what one may hope as evidence-based policy- and decision-making. Figure 3 below summarizes the flow. This flow of data can happen on several levels, mainly institutional and national. As much as this flow is important for institutions, it should be complemented with national-level aggregation and comparisons. Figure 4 shows this multi-level flow.

⁶ Adapted from “Developing and Maintaining the Information Infrastructure for State Level Higher Education Policymaking” by Dennis P. Jones, and Karen Paulson. July 2001. National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.



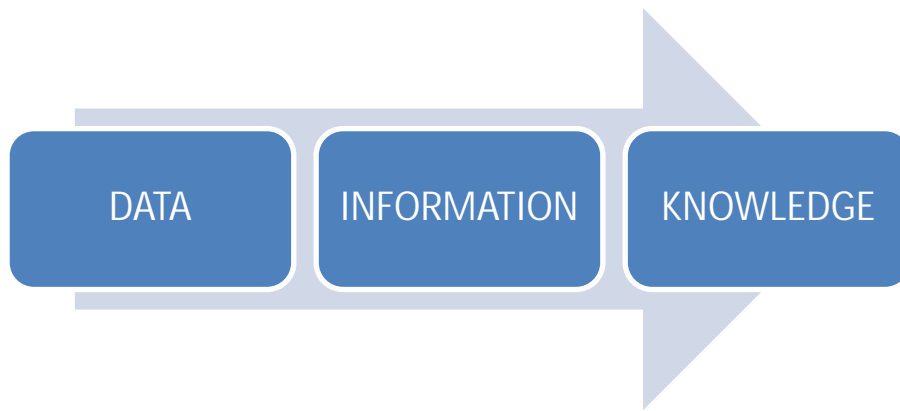


Figure 3: Flow of data-information-knowledge

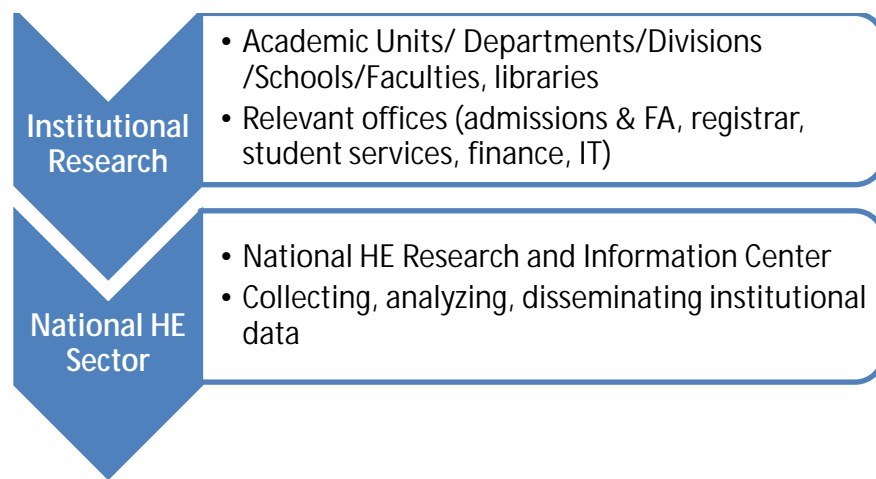


Figure 4: A multi-level flow: institutional and national

The availability of such defined flow can well serve main stakeholders. In this respect, the flow of data and information, from institutional to national level, can serve the institutions themselves in setting strategic planning and performance management; the government (mainly the Ministry of Education and Higher Education) in setting a higher education policy; customers of higher education services (mainly students and their parents) in deciding on what is best based on universities performance and by programs; and finally some other parties with stake in the sector (such as employers, donors, research centers...). Figure 5 presents a summary of such stakeholders' analysis based on a proposed "National Higher Education Data and Information Center". Furthermore, figures 6, 7, and 8 show (respectively) how this same data can further be used by institutions for internal and external quality assurance, accreditation and strategic planning; how it complements data on job market and secondary education; as well a proposed timeline for newly registered students reporting between MEHE and institutions.



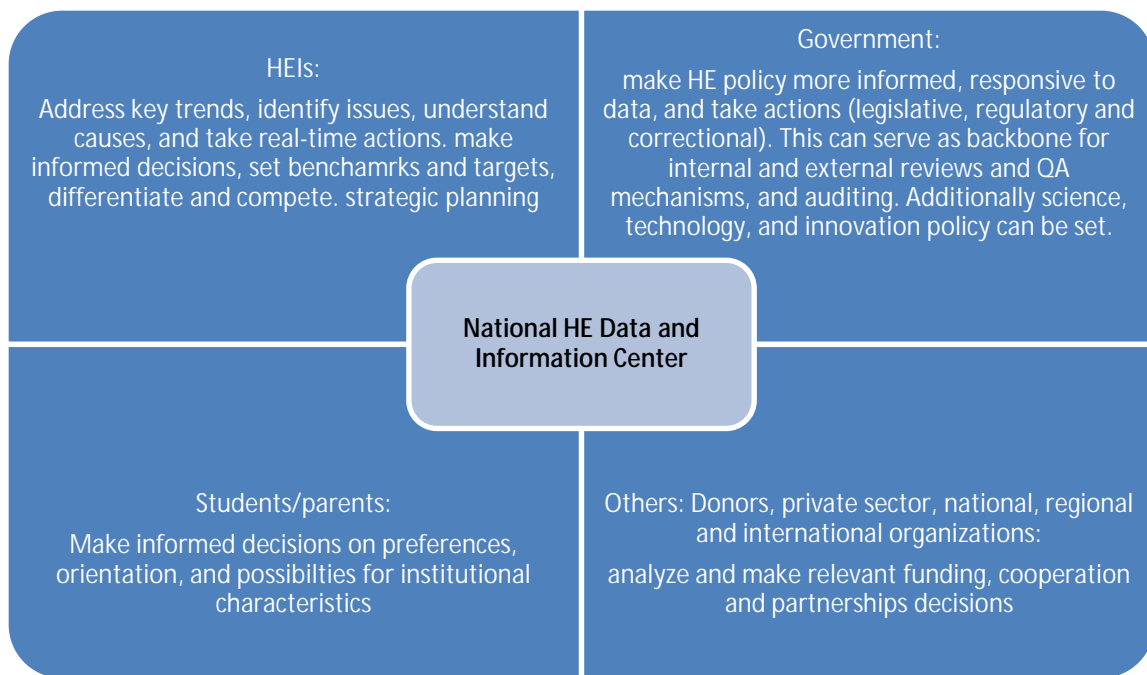


Figure 5: Stakeholders' analysis based on a proposed "National Higher Education Data and Information Center"



Figure 6: Institutions main benefits from generating quality institutional data and information

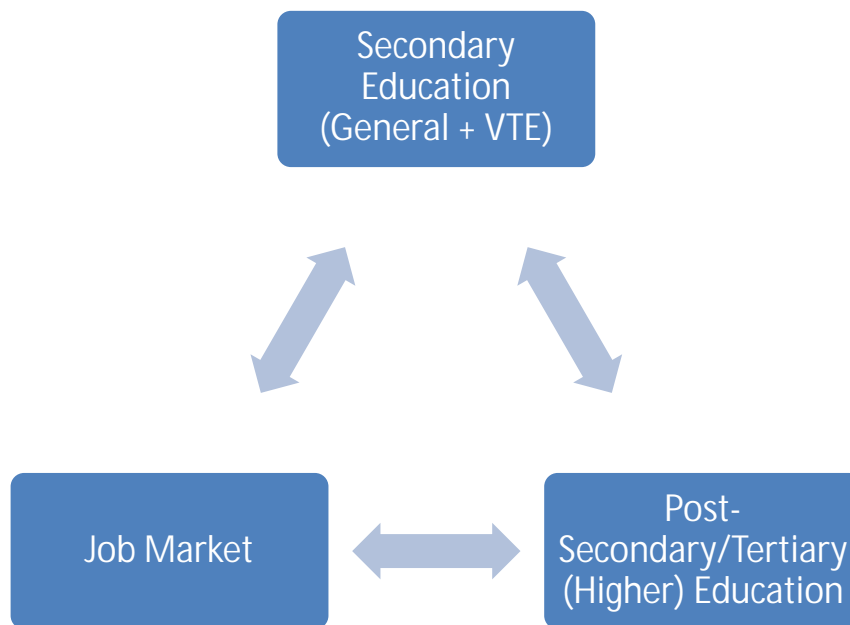


Figure 7: Importance of data in further complementing secondary education and job market data

August	October	December
<p>MEHE reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary Enrollement on 3 levels: 1st, 2nd, 3rd - Distribution: public, private, geographic - 3rd Secondary official exams results: geographic, public, private, sections, subjects averages 	<p>HEIs reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applications and Enrollment Figures: by age, feeding schools (public, private, geographic, sections) - Enrollment by schools, majors, FA - International students enrollments and fields of study 	<p>Data processing and dissemination: Policy and Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trends analysis, performance, achievements, forecasts based on facts and timely data - Take necessary actions on institutional and sectoral level: early warning, admissions strategy formulation and actions for next year

Figure 8: Importance of data: example on first-year first-time enrollment reporting and connectedness to secondary education data and overall system responsiveness timeline



B. Performance Indicators

This section will elaborate on the essentials of performance measurements of higher education institutions and their potential applications in Lebanon. From above, one can construct a road map, or an initial outline, on how universities performance can be understood and measured. It is worth noting that this is an open-ended discussion, and there is no single formula or a unified accepted framework that should be applied cross-institutional or sectoral. However, such indicators are nonetheless essential, helpful, and relevant in making initial understanding and measurement of performance.

This study identifies operations and practices from an institutional perspective in order to make the case for Lebanese higher education sector reform on this level. A culture of measurement and reporting is furthermore highlighted. First, it will help to shift discussions on HE from a perception-based to an evidence-based making it more standardized. Second, it will help to understand individual indicators in their own contexts, which make relevant and essential differentiation, assumptions, and nuances more pronounced.

Arguments on what to include have been at the core of debates during the past decade. However, some agreements appear to converge on basic means to construct indicators, paving the way to start performance analysis. Most indicators serve at the first level to analyze institutional trends and performance in different areas. At the same time they feed into national set of indicators which help analyze the HE sector as a whole.

What aspects of performance matter to institutions and their constituencies? Or simply, what to measure?

On the institutional level, the discussion revolved around input, processes, output, and outcome of the educational process from which indicators were derived. Measuring outcomes of HE seems the hardest to do, while input, processes, and output measures can be more readily available. Outcome measures essentially look at employability, income of graduates, satisfaction surveys, and teaching and learning outcomes. Additionally, there are three other aspects related to students, staff, and resources. Figure 9 shows some examples. Even among this list, there exist some differences in measurements and this report will highlight such differences throughout the findings in section V. All these indicators represent a roadmap for stakeholders to follow look at when trying to understand university operation, academic activities, and overall effectiveness and efficiency.

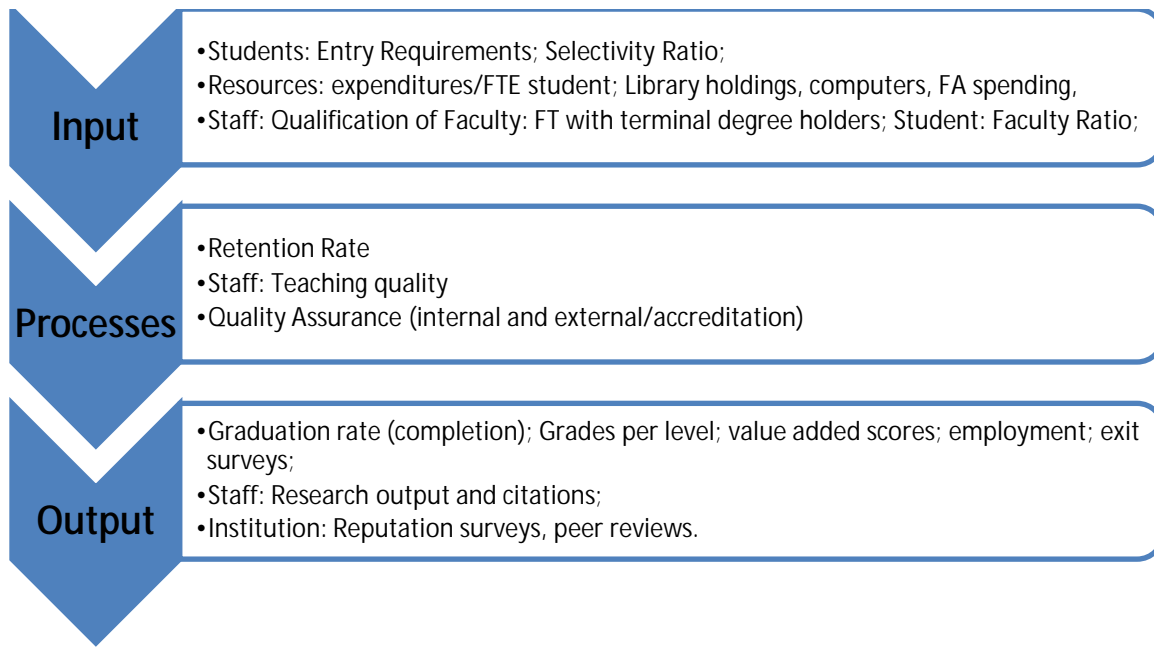


Figure 9: Input-Processes-Output model for measuring performance at universities

When doing strategic planning, internal or external quality assurance processes, institutions will have to, at some point, set key performance indicators (KPIs) in major areas. This begets the university to establish a baseline year and the targets or goals under consideration. In this study, we will focus on some indicators as they are related directly to students' experience, as well as to the extent of data and auxiliary information available.

How are these indicators constructed? Figures 10, 11, and 12 below construct the flow of Data—Information—Knowledge model. First, raw data need to be collected on the three categories.



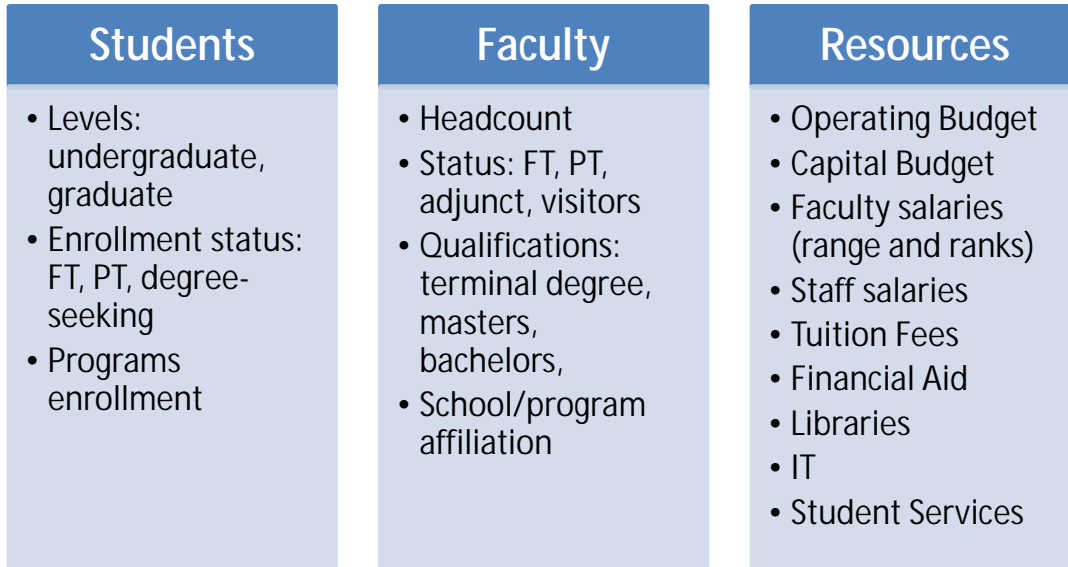


Figure 10: Raw data on all areas and aspects

Then information can be derived and constructed from the available data.

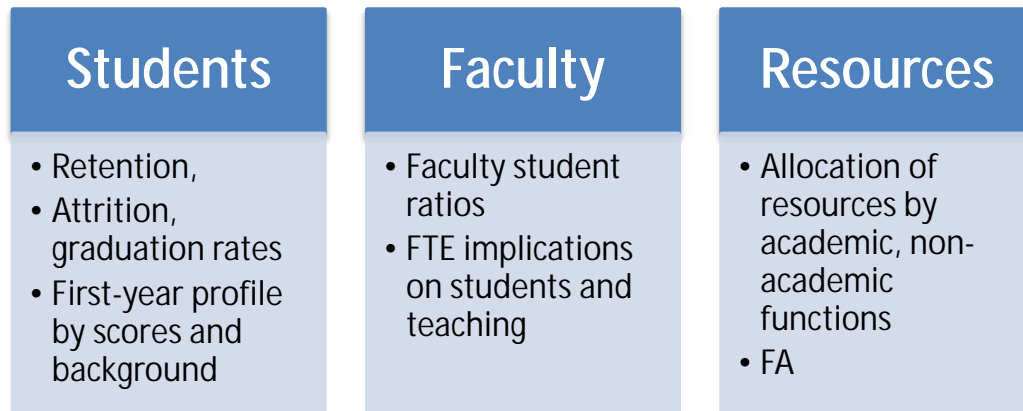


Figure 11: Deriving information from raw data on all areas and aspects

This all is translated into knowledge: for instance if retention and graduation rates are known, with some historical trends, then universities can start understanding their internal efficiency (by delivering what they promised, i.e. graduates). Institutions can further try to understand enrollment trends, status, and demographics, to further comprehend the



links between these measures. Admissions standards, academic programs and faculty performance might be questioned in the process as well. Additionally, comparing all such data with peer institutions would be helpful in conceptualizing broader national trends. In the presence of a national tracking system, high school students can be traced all the way in the higher education system, and furthermore national persistence rates can be obtained measuring the efficiency of the overall HE system.

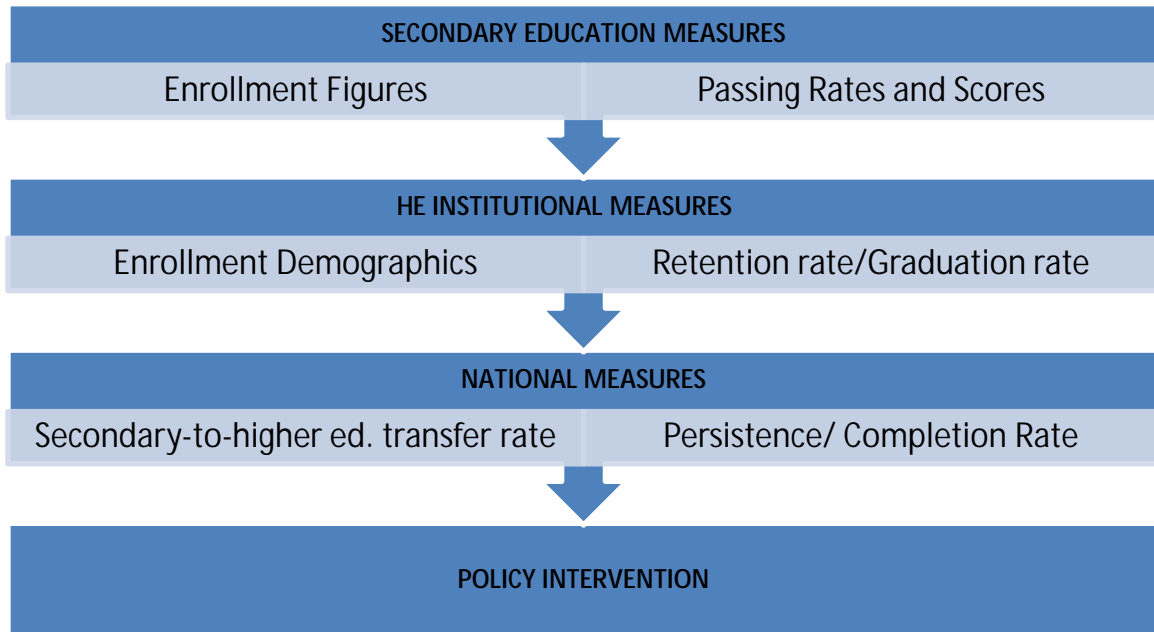


Figure 12: Formulating knowledge about higher education institutions and overall system

Proper reporting should not be a luxury or an option for HEIs. It is the first cornerstone on which HE policies should be based. In the absence of such crucial data, the sector will continue to operate in the same mediocre way that has ruled its expansion during the past two decades. Having nearly reached the peak, as some have suggested in terms of enrollment expansion, it is time to start planning how institutes of higher education can better use their inputs. Moreover, what outcomes for their individual institutions should be used to uphold their quality but also for Lebanon’s national economy well-being.



III. Methodology

The structure of this report emerged from the availability and relevance of data at hand. In a sense, this data analysis and the main findings of the report are constructed from data and information which we *were able* to obtain on both the institutional and nation-wide levels. As daunting as this task may seem, we have tried collecting, verifying, and sometimes reconstructing numbers through as many avenues as possible while also making informed assumptions when needed.

In Lebanon, universities are mostly teaching centers, with some few exceptions they are trying to become research centers – although with limited competitiveness to international standards, practices, and scale.

A. Data Collection, Analysis, and Coverage

We used two sources for data collection: primary sources and secondary sources.

- 1- Primary Sources:** a survey was designed to encompass questions about major aspects of university operations, classified in six areas: students, faculty, resources, research, internationalization/partnerships, and governance. A final section was included to weigh aspects of importance by attributing a percentage out of 100% to all six areas.
- 2- Secondary Sources:** Online and print materials of universities were surveyed. Many documents were relevant and detailed, while others were mostly marketing material. All other data about universities and the sector was primarily from the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD).

The surveys and online resources served as quantitative measures, while qualitative analysis emerged through interviews and meetings with key players in the sector such as administrators in universities, policy makers or other stakeholders.

Table 1 gives general quantitative snapshot of higher education in Lebanon by fall 2009. Twenty six private universities were contacted, 22 of them were visited where we met with senior administrators. After many kinds of follow-ups (phone calls, emails, and second visit) only five universities (AUB, Balamand, BAU, Haigazian, and LAU) agreed to fill-out the survey, almost in its entirety. Three other universities (NDU, USJ, and USEK) had some material available online. USJ's data was extracted mainly from the June 2009 Evaluation Report by "L'Agence d'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur (AERES)". USEK's data was taken from a November 2009 Evaluation Report conducted by the Institutional Evaluation Programme at the European University Association. NDU's data was taken from a January 2010 Eligibility Report for accreditation presented to the New England Association of Schools and Colleges



(NEASC), in addition to further help from administration. It is promising to see such institutions taking such initiatives; however, it also hints to the long road -- and even more for those institutions which have not yet started similar processes.

	Institutions	Students
Higher Education in Lebanon	39	174,297
Public University	1	74,134
Private HEIs	38	100,163
Private Universities	28	92,702
Study Initial Target	26	92,048
Collaborating Universities		
Number = 5	20%	35%
+ 3 others = 8	30%	60%

Table 1: Higher education in Lebanon: study population and sample, Nov. 2009.

B. Limitations

Though we engaged with institutions to compile data, to ensure accuracy and reliability, several issues remain outstanding:

- 1- Data quality assurance: while AUB and LAU have a dedicated “Institutional Research and Assessment Office” with a clear mission to mainly collect and disseminate data and information about the university, there is no similar capability at other institutions. This should flag more cautiousness the quality assurance of the data generation and collection. “Dirty” data may pose some serious problems when understanding and using it in analysis and decision-making.
- 2- The absence of national frameworks concerning higher education institutions was undoubtedly a challenge for this study. In many instances we had to clarify and check with institutions on what they meant by certain characteristics or indicators. For instance, graduation rates were defined differently at many institutions. FTE was another issue: while some divided the part time faculty by three, others thought it should be divided by two. For this reason raw data was needed in order to build comparable indicators when possible.
- 3- The classification as “universities” does not do justice for all institutions. Even for universities present in this study, there exist wide differences as not all institutions can be treated the same. Differences in origins, mission and focus contribute to different outcome, and this should constitute the basis for future classifications.
- 4- Finally, the task is rendered difficult as well since the debate of what constitutes a good higher education is still ongoing, and since quality and excellence are difficult to define and judge; hence the use of proxies for available or potentially collectible data.



In every section of the report, definitions, findings, and inferences are presented. In compiling this study we have tried not to compare or put value-judgments on any number or statistic and we hope the findings speak for themselves. Note that data in the charts is not ranked and the universities values (in most of charts and tables) reflect the extent of the data gathered on them, regardless of values. This hopes to ask further questions concerning the unpacking and contextualization of these numbers: Can a “best practice” be established in Lebanon if one assumes that those are the “main” universities in the country? How they can lead to a benchmarking exercise?

C. Profiling of universities in this report

Those eight universities mentioned in the study are not entirely similar institutions. Table 2 presents a snapshot of basic differences which begins to make these differences visible:

- Year of establishment is an indication of historical development, and much of the present-day conceptions of these institutions return to their historical trajectories. It is important to note that LAU, NDU, Balamand, and USEK’s main expansion was in the late 1990s when they opened new faculties especially in professional programs.
- Haigazian cannot be compared, for instance to USEK, though they share a similar period of establishment: Haigazian operates on a much smaller scale, in terms of student body (10% that of USEK), and likewise in the number of academic offerings and programs.
- Differences exist in terms of undergraduate and graduate students on part time status, as well as the share of graduate students (headcount and FTE) to total students (Figures 13, 14, and 15).
- The organization of degree-granting academic units is very different: programs which AUB and LAU house under departments within “Arts and Sciences” faculty/school, BAU, Balamand, and NDU have them categorized into 3 or 4 separate faculties. USEK and USJ have an even wider decentralized approach. This streamlining (or lack of) have considerable effects on resource allocation, internal efficiencies, and existing synergies.
- Not all universities have medical programs. Still for those who have, differences exist: while LAU admitted its first class in 2009, USEK and Balamand have run programs for nearly a decade, and such programs at AUB and USJ have existed since their establishment. All this plays a role on resources, staff and students. For the purposes of this study, we extracted hospital budgets from overall university operations, as well as faculty affiliated with faculty of medicine, and students from graduate student body separately.



	Establish-ment	# of degree-granting academic units	Student Headcount	Part time undergrads	% of graduate students to total	Medical School
AUB	1866	7	7446	3%	8%	YES
LAU	1924	7	7229	11%	10%	YES
BALAMAND	1988	10	3706	6%	30%	YES
BAU	1960	10	17513	n/a	9%	YES
HAIGAZIAN	1955	4	763	8%	6%	NO
NDU	1987	7	6061	20%	10%	NO
USEK	1961	15	7136	n/a	n/a	YES
USJ	1875	31	9800	n/a	n/a	YES

Table 2: Characteristics of universities in the study

% of Part Time Students of Total Undergraduate Students

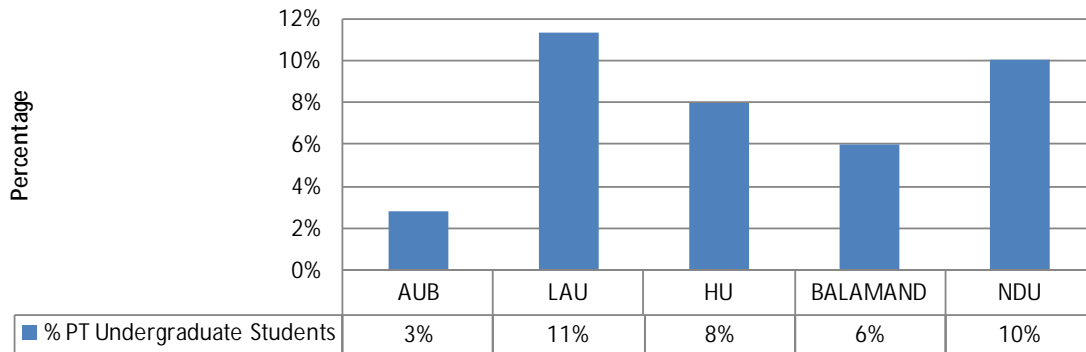


Figure 13: Universities have different percentage of part time undergraduate students



% of Part Time Students of Total Graduate Students

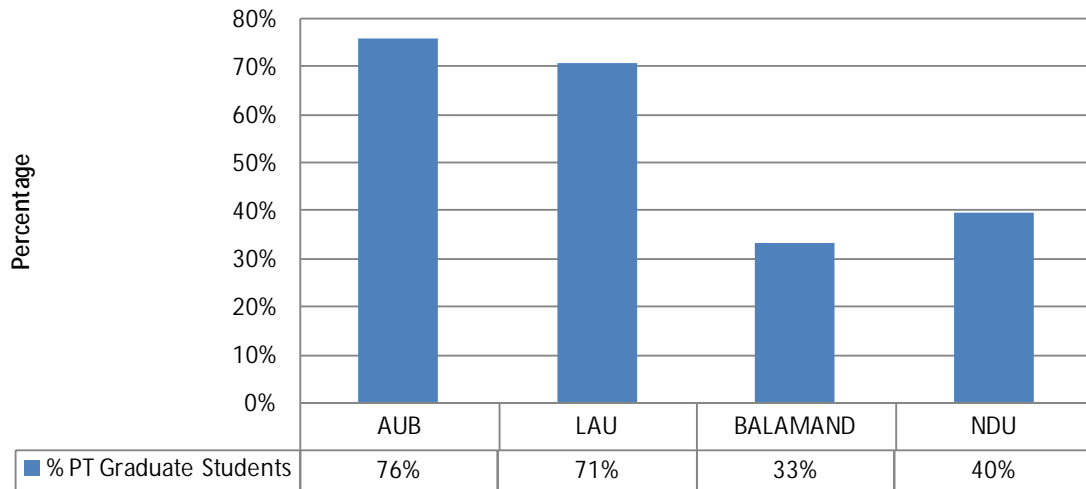


Figure 14: Universities have different percentage of part time graduate students

Share of Graduate Students

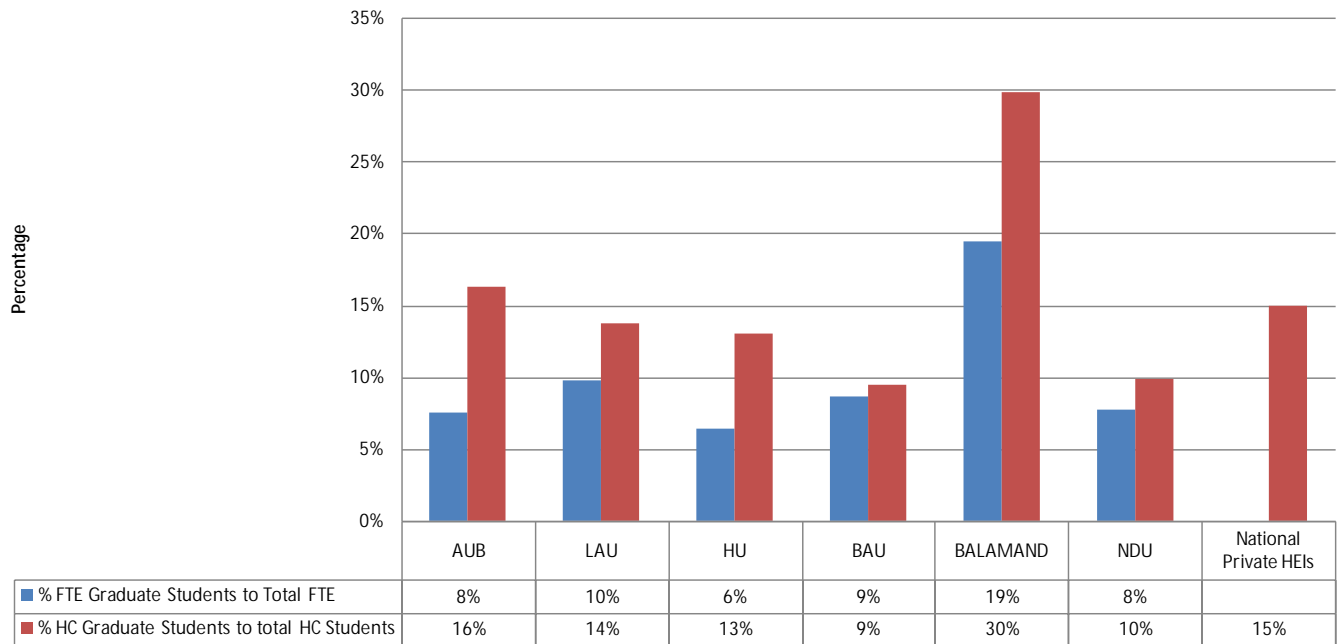


Figure 15: Percentage of graduate students of total student body varies



IV. Mapping Higher Education in Lebanon

A. Demand and Supply: Figures and Analysis

A basic demand and supply analysis of higher education in Lebanon during the past decade is essential to capture general trends in the sector. On the demand side, an analysis of the data is presented with variations on public vs. private enrollment, trends, and changes. On the supply side, the increase in licensing of new institutions, new programs at existing institutions, as well as the changing nature of the license from mostly “university colleges” into full “university” is mapped.⁷

1. Demand:

Increase in enrollment figures is evident across all universities. Some comparisons and reclassifications can make this data more nuanced. Between AY2000-01 and AY2008-09, total enrollment increased by 47%, with a 4.34% increase at LU, while private institutions witnessed an exponential increase of 109%. However, yearly changes did not follow the same trend as some fluctuations appeared in both sectors (Fig. 16). When comparing public (LU) versus private HEIs, it is clear that the share of total enrollment has been altered almost to the opposite direction: the share of the LU has shrunk from 60% to 43% between AY2000-01 and AY2008-09. It is clear that while new institutions were being licensed, the LU was unable to accommodate for the increased demand, so these new institutions helped fill the void. (Fig. 17).

Percentage Change in Enrollment (2001-2009)

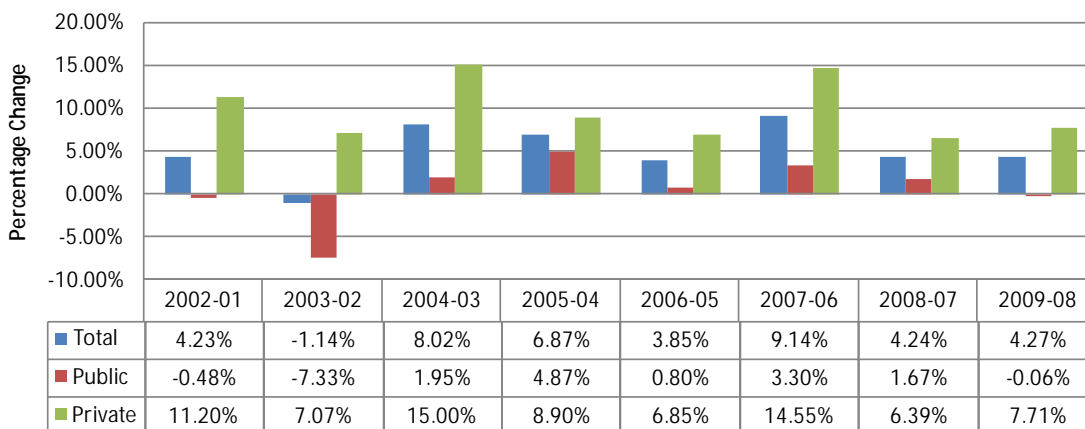


Figure 16: Percentage change in enrollment in the public, private, and total sector from 2001 to 2009

⁷ All information in this section is based on data provided by CERD.



Public vs. Private Share in Enrollment (2000-2009)

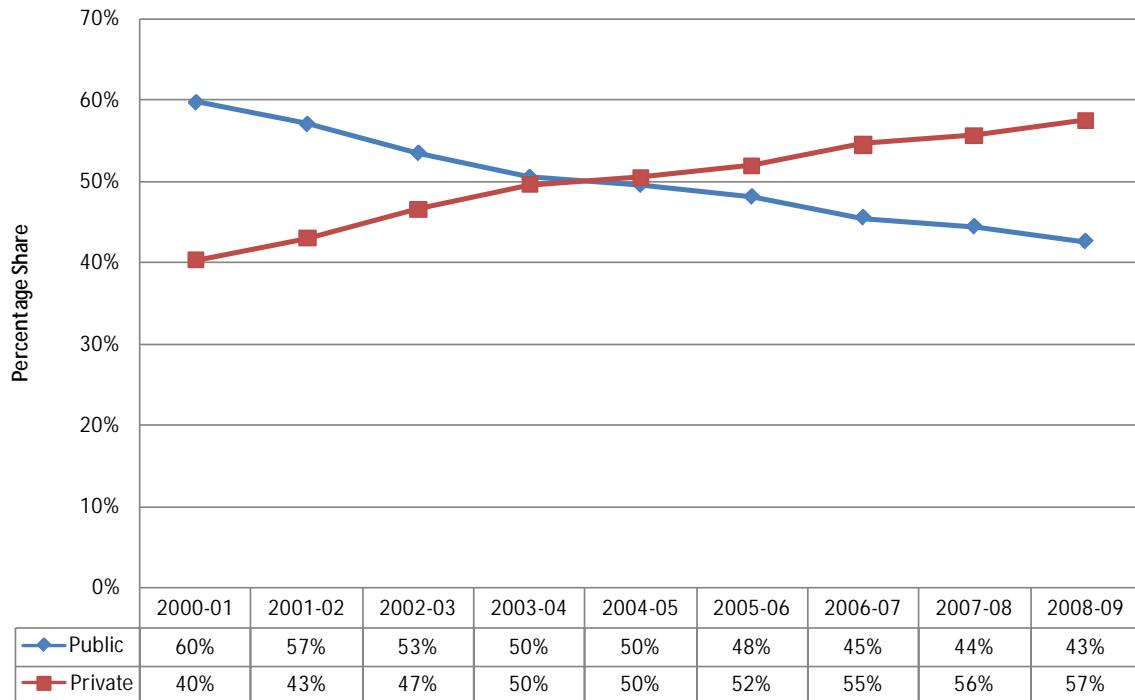


Figure 17: Changes in market share between the Lebanese University and private higher education institutions between 2000 and 2009

2. Supply:

On the supply side, the last 15 years have witnessed an increase in licensing of new institutions. One can distinguish the following:

- The older institutions that were officially granted license when the 1961 law on higher education was enacted (AUB, BAU, LAU, Sagesse, USEK, and USJ) have undertaken expansionary measures during this period. Haigazian and MEU kept small operations.
- The years 1996, 1999, and 2000 have witnessed an unprecedented increase of licensing of new institutions. Some of them were licensed as “university colleges”, or “institutes”, while few others were licensed as “universities”.
- Nine of fourteen ‘university colleges or institutes’ established in 1999 and 2000⁸, expanded their programs, and had their licensing status changed to full university. This was done in a relatively short period, on average 5 years after initial

⁸ 20 institutions were licensed in 1999, 2000, and 2001: 3 universities, 2 relicensed as universities from college or institute, 1 religious university college, and 14 university colleges or technology institute.



establishment, which makes this rapid expansion seem unplanned. When adding new ‘faculty’, the main condition to change title, many of them established new liberal arts, humanities, social sciences, or even literature faculties, something offered for free and open at the LU.

- It is worth mentioning that most of these institutions started operating before getting full licenses from the government. Others have established programs in a similar manner without prior approval from MEHE.
- As of September 2010, there are: 1 Public University; 38 private higher education institutions: 31 universities, 3 religious institutions, 4 university institutes or colleges. It is important to note that among the 31 universities, Al-Makassed University has effectively one non-religious school operating, and Islamic University of Beirut has only Shari’a faculty operating.⁹

To view in focus the 109% increase in private enrollment in the past decade, a comparison of enrollment trends between two groups of private institutions: those licensed in pre-1999 period, and those in post-1999 period. The first group witnessed a 60% increase, while the second a 481% increase. In AY 2000-01, the latter group had a 14% market share in private higher education, in AY 2008-09 it increased to 33%.

It is clear that the environment of higher education has become much more competitive given that many colleges changed their status to full university. It would seem that students would prefer going to the latter (mostly for prestige reasons, but as well there is little awareness of the difference), especially when competing with similar institutions licensed as “university” status.

Such enrollments figures are aggregate of all students on all levels and years. This prevents us from making more informed commentary on trends and directions of incoming students. Furthermore, with no data on eligible applicants, acceptance, and yield rates, one cannot make a judgment on how intense this competition is. Section on [Admissions to Universities](#) will further elaborate on this issue.

Observing individual institutional trends may give the impression that there should be a cap on enrollment (subject to other available resources, the provision of adequate human and physical resources). Since the current legislative and administrative processes do not allow for a proper audit, and in the absence of quality assurance mechanisms, such uncontrollable increase in enrollment becomes questionable.

⁹ One religious institute (Tripoli University Institute of Islamic Studies) was re-licensed as full university in 2009 adding two other faculties.



3. Non-Lebanese Students:

Data from CERD allows only for comparisons of enrollment figures by Lebanese vs. non-Lebanese categories. It is clear that since AY2000-01, non-Lebanese enrollment has increased by 128% while Lebanese students' enrollment increase was 105%. Again the share of private sector of non-Lebanese students has increased to 67% of total non-Lebanese. (Figures 18 and 19).

Percentage Change in Enrollment by Nationality (2001-2009)

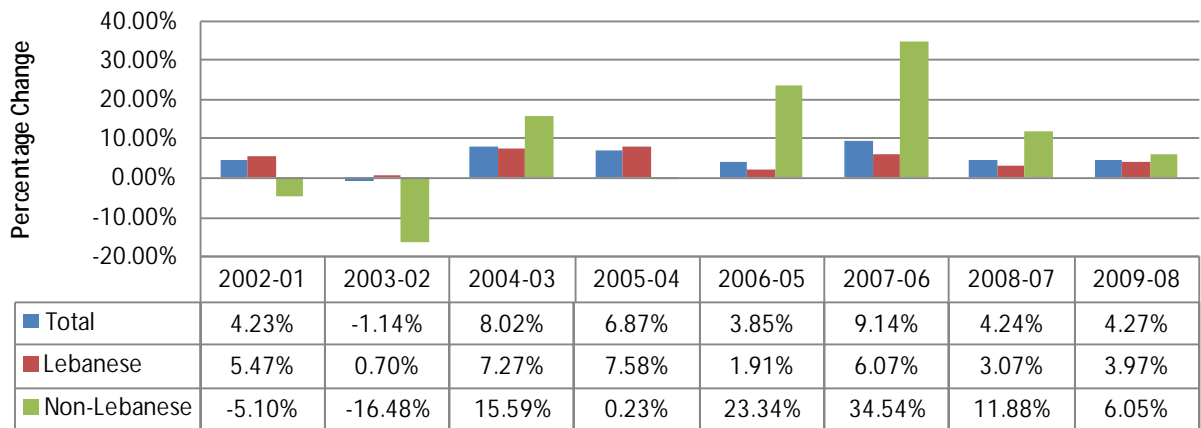


Figure 18: Percentage increase in enrollment by nationality from 2001 to 2009

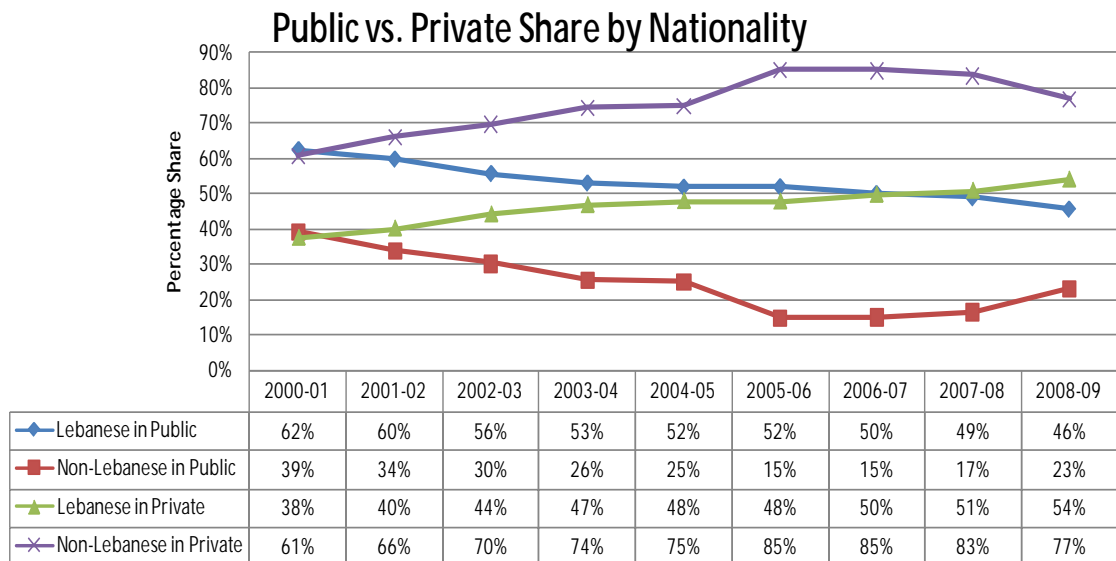


Figure 19: Distribution of students by nationality between public and private higher education institutions



It is noteworthy that the category of “non-Lebanese” is problematic and one should be cautious with interpreting such figures. There is no clear definition of “non-Lebanese” as it may contain several groups that don’t allow for a nuanced understanding of origins, and stays. For instance, many universities may consider Lebanese with dual citizenships, as non-Lebanese, while they have never been outside Lebanon, or they did their secondary education in Lebanon. Other issues arise from exact distribution of non-Lebanese. At BAU, Palestinians form the bulk of non-Lebanese. Syrians, and recently Iraqis, constitute bulk of non-Lebanese at some other universities (although there is little data beyond anecdotal accounts to confirm this). Religious institutes show a high level of non-Lebanese enrollments as well.

According to this data, the years that witnessed the highest increase in non-Lebanese enrollments were AY 2005-06 and AY2006-07. This is curious given the political and security instability in the country during that period. The need to separate sub-groups of non-Lebanese stems from the need to understand the flow of students, their origins, backgrounds, and preferences. This may also serve as a way to better analyze the economic impact of international students. During data collection we tried to obtain more accurate figures from the General Security (as they issue student visas), but our request was not approved!

B. A Geographic Mapping

A geographic mapping of HEIs in Lebanon was undertaken in order to further understand their repartition. Not surprisingly, most HEIs are located in Greater Beirut region. Among the new ones, two are headquartered in Tripoli (Jinan, MUT), one in Koura (CUT). HCU has established its main campus in Meshrif, at the gate of the South. LIU (originally named Bekaa University), had its main campus in Khyara, Western Bekaa, before branching out to other regions. Only Balamand University, from the older universities chose to have its headquarters outside Greater Beirut/Mount Lebanon, in the Northern Koura qada’. Table 3 describes HEIs locations and branches. It is essential to note the “branching out” phenomenon, mostly done without proper licensing and essentially aiming to catch more shares in this increasingly competitive and lucrative market. When including the major and field of studies in to the analysis, it is very clear that Greater Beirut has the bulk of professional schools and the most diverse offerings. Indeed some branches offer parts of their programs on one campus and at other points students might have to move to alternative campus to finish their degrees.



Geographical Distribution of 26 Universities

Region		Main Campus	Branches/Study Centers
Beirut		AOU, AUB, AUCE, AUL, AUST,BAU, HU, IUL, LAU, LIU, USJ	Balamand/Health Sc., AUL/Hamra, MUBS/Hamra
Mount Lebanon	Keserwan	LCU, LGU, NDU, USEK	AUL/Kaslik
	Jbeil	AUT, LAU	
	Baabda	Antonines, Sagesse	AUCE/Hadath
	Maten	MEU	Balamand/ALBA, AUCE/Bauchriyeh SC, AUL/Sin-el-Fil SC, LIU Jdeide
	Shouf	HCU (Meshrif), MUBS (Damour)	NDU/Deir-el-Amar, AUCE/Baakline SC, BAU (Debbieh Campus)
	Aley		AUL SC
North Lebanon	Tripoli	Jinan, MUT	AUL/SC, AUT, BAU campus, HCU, LIU, ULF
	Batroun		USEK/Shekka
	Zogharta		Antonines
	Koura	Balamand, ULF	USJ/Ras Maska,NDU/Barsa, AUCE/SC
South Lebanon	Saida		AUST, Jinan, LIU, USJ
	Nabatiyeh		AUCE SC, LIU
	Bent Jbeil		USEK, AUCE SC
	Jezzine	AUL/Jadra	
	Tyre		IUL, AUCE SC
Bekaa	Zahle		AUST, Antonines, USJ, BAU (Env. Center), USEK, AUL, AUB (Agri. Center)
	West Bekaa	LIU	HCU
	Baalback		AUCE

Table 3: Geographical distribution of universities main campus and branches

Some observations can be drawn from this table:

- Some older institutions' expansions beyond their main campus can be seen vertically: different programs offering a sort of specialization. Examples of this are AUB's agriculture center in Bekaa, LAU's Byblos campus offers almost all programs, but exclusively its professional ones (engineering, pharmacy, medicine, and nursing are not offered in Beirut). Balamand has its health sciences campus in Ashrafiyeh. And recently BAU opened its environmental center in Bekaa, while moving its Beirut-based engineering programs further to the south to Debbieh.
- Some other old ones established university campuses or regional centers outside their main campus: USJ, USEK, and NDU.
- Most of those licensed in 1999 and 2000 have followed a rapid expansionary strategy. However not all of those new operations are licensed. They use the terms "campus", "branch", or "study center", the latter being a cover for not obtaining appropriate governmental approvals, since the law requires separate licenses for geographical branches. The difference remains vague since all offered teaching often takes place in one-building or one-story "campus".
- Jinan and MUT have their main campuses in Tripoli, recognizing the need of the region, and before all other universities opening "branches" there. The same



observation can be made for HCU and MUBS' main campus in lower Shouf area catering mostly for students from the South, but also from Beirut.

- Balamand is a unique example of a full-fledged main campus in North Lebanon (Koura). LIU in Khyara in Western Bekaa could have been a similar example, though the university chose later another model for expansion.

Looking at enrollment figures in study centers of USEK and NDU in the North, South and Bekaa, illustrates the point that 90-95% of student body at respective institutions are at their main campuses. The economic situation outside Beirut may refrain students from enrolling in more expensive universities (though both universities in this case offer more discounts in regional centers); hence the expansion in the new universities in the regions may have been serving the economically disadvantaged families.

The case of Tripoli and the North: Higher education institutions expanded remarkably in Tripoli in the last decade. In addition to the nearby Balamand campus, and the existence of USEK, USJ, and NDU branches, the city has experienced some “indigenous” growth through the establishment of Jinan University and Manar University of Tripoli. Though their enrollment is still limited (2400 students each), they show potential for further growth by having independent main campuses. In Fall 2010, BAU opened its new campus with five programs operating: Architecture, Engineering, Sciences, Business, and Health Sciences with an entering class of 500 students. LIU followed suit and is moving to a new campus after operating in a building during the last few years. AUL, CUT, and AUT have already their operations there. HCU has opened a branch just in Fall 2009. All of them may not have more than 5000 students. It is important to note that the Lebanese University is building its new campus as well in northern Tripoli, while Tripoli University Institute for Islamic Studies was transformed into University of Tripoli as of Fall 2010. This will pose some serious questions on priorities and planning issues for the city, and the North in general. Some administrators were more optimistic about the “Tripoli opportunity” by mentioning that they expect to attract more Syrian students when fully operating there. In any case, Tripoli is on the way to serve the Northern market of higher education in one way or another but the future of the market with this disorganization and overlap of institutions does not seem well planned. Note: Akkar has no institution of HE so far, while expecting Balamand to open its planned Technology Institute within next year or two there. LU branches are located in Tripoli.

Box 1: Regional expansion: the case of Tripoli

It is clear that the mushrooming of HEIs in the country has not emerged as a result of a designed policy or well-executed strategy. Furthermore, regional expansion is mostly a profit-seeking process, with proper redress for the needs of students and regions, and diversifications of programs largely absent. While likely making educational opportunities for local residents at affordable cost, one aspect of this regionalization of HEIs is that it might dilute the role of higher education in promoting national integration by making less room to foster students from different backgrounds to meet.



C. The “Qualifying Population” and Enrollment

Secondary education remains the backbone for higher education. Data on linking both levels is scant. There are essentially two ways to get into the higher education system:

- To be admitted to a higher education institution, a student must pass the third secondary class in the General Education track, that is the national qualifying examination (“Lebanese General Secondary Certificate” in one of its four sections.)
- Technical Baccalaureate (BT) received for students who chose to do the Technical and Vocational Education (VTE) track. This certificate is the only gateway from VTE to higher education.

Additionally,

- Some students may obtain special permission to join the freshman class at licensed institutions that offer such program,
- Or students coming from abroad may have an equivalent certificate to enroll in regular programs at HEIs in Lebanon.

Thus, the Lebanese secondary examination serves as main qualifier, a gateway to higher education, and in essence, a filtering mechanism. Unfortunately, there is no tracking mechanism between secondary and post-secondary education, concerning those who enter the higher education sector straight from national secondary education system. The yearly new cohorts are holders of Lebanese secondary education certificates, but also many come from abroad, and some enroll at freshman year. This section helps explain the increase in demand for higher education by looking at enrollment trends in general secondary education. We examined as well the results of the official exams starting 2001 session, the first year to be done with the new curriculum, up to the 2009 session. This in effect allows observation of trends in the “qualifying population” for HE.

Figure 20 shows the increase in demand on secondary education by looking at percentage change in enrollment in General Secondary Education in all 3 years from AY2001-02 to AY2007-08. Surprisingly, this slowed down in recent years, though the general trend was positive.



Annual % Change in General Secondary Education Enrollment (2001/02-2007/08)

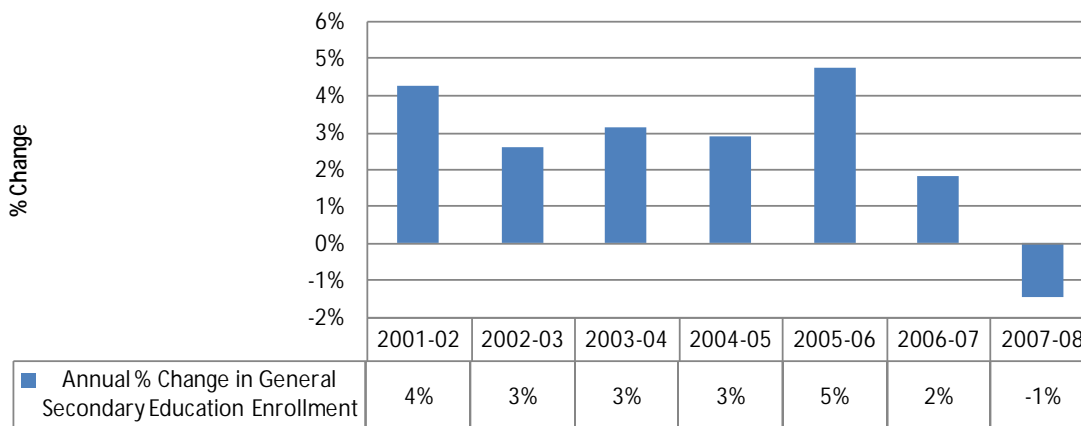


Figure 20: Annual Percentage Change in General Secondary Education Enrollment

Figure 21 shows that passing rate of official examination which ranged between 62% and 73% since 2002. Figure 22 further shows percentage change in qualifying population across all sections and Muhafazat in the 2001-2009 period. There was a 27.69% increase in the number of those who passed the national examination (from 21,571 to 27,544 students). When examining BT data (Figure 23), surprisingly it shows that while the number of candidates for official BT examination (and hence enrollment) has increased by 16% during the 2001-2009 period, annual passing rate decreased marking 36% in 2009, leading to a 23% decrease in the number of the qualifying population for upper-level education (higher or technical) during that same period (from 7,575 students in 2001 to 5,815 in 2009).

It is clear that an increase in the qualifying population from general secondary has played a role in the increased demand for higher education. However, national rate of transfer from secondary to higher education is not available, which would serve as a better measurement of relationality between the two sectors. Vocational and technical education, general education, and any post-secondary education must be linked and students tracked throughout the various levels of their education to measure accessibility and efficiency.



Passing Rate- General Secondary Examination 1996-2010

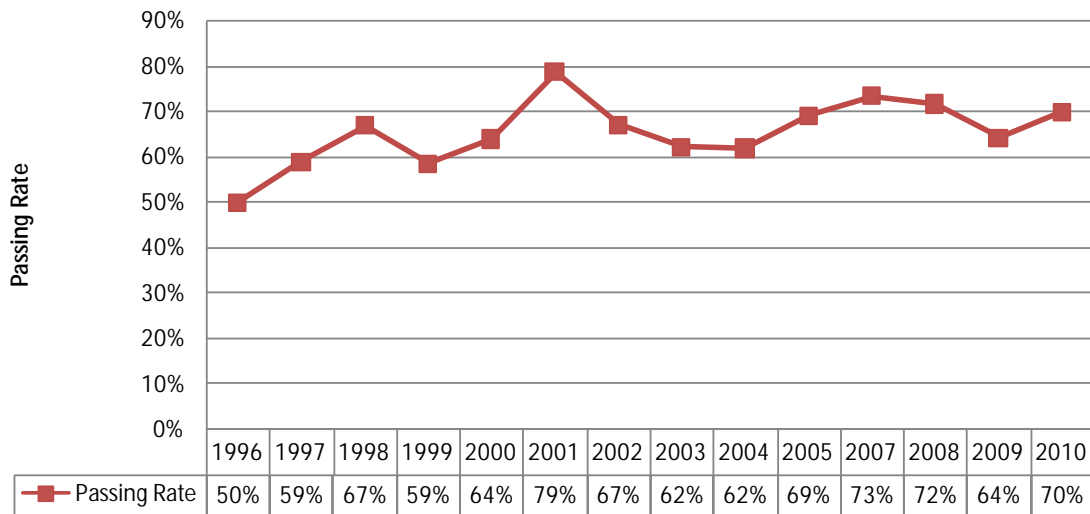


Figure 21: Passing Rate in General Secondary Examination

Percentage Change in Qualifying Population- Holders of General Secondary Certificate (2001-2009)

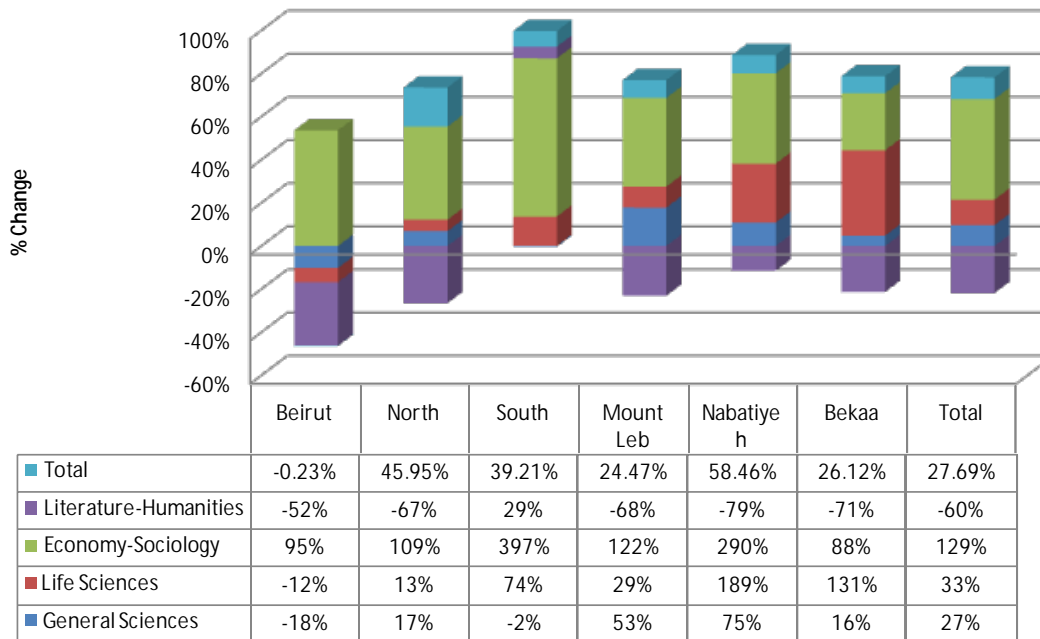


Figure 22: Percentage change in qualifying population by section and muhafaza, in 2001-2009 period



Baccalaureate Technique (BT) Qualifying Population

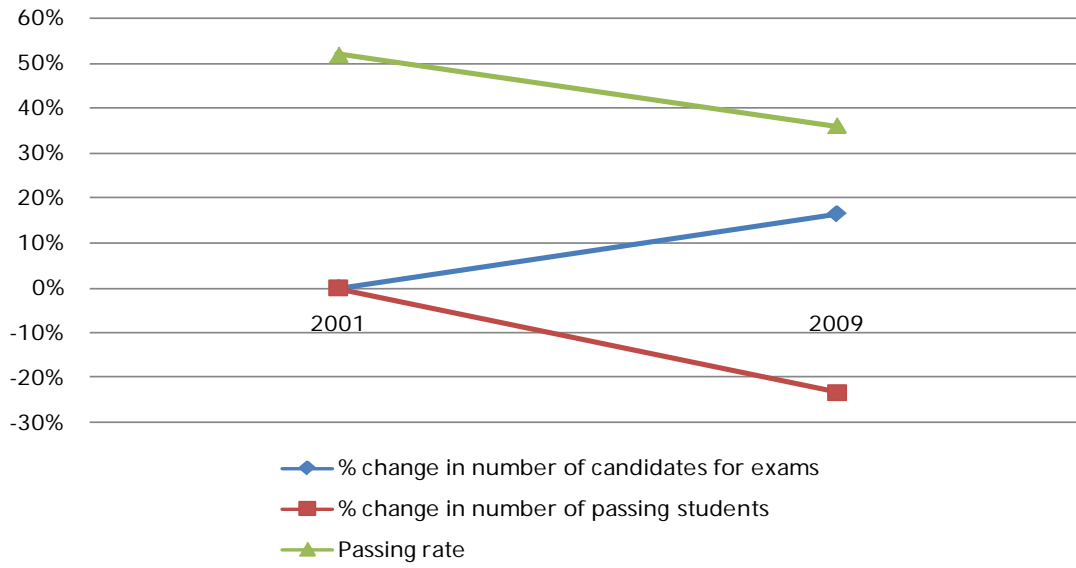


Figure 23: Baccalaureate Technique figures for the 2001-2009 period



V. Performance Indicators

A. Admissions to Universities

Admissions standards are thought of as an indicator of university performance in terms of quality of enrolling cohorts and how it may affect students' experience.

1. Legal/government requirements or eligibility:

A condition for Lebanese students' entrance to higher education institution is to hold the Lebanese official secondary certificate after twelve years of schooling from elementary. Anything beyond this certificate is an institutional exercise in selectivity and placement. Some other conditions apply to those who wish to join the freshman class.

2. Universities policies:

- a) **Language requirement:** All universities in Lebanon have a language proficiency requirement in their admissions conditions. Twenty six private universities were surveyed:
- Twelve of them use exclusively English as a language of instruction in all programs (except Arabic and religious studies programs sometimes);
 - Two universities use exclusively French,
 - Twelve universities either use French as main language of instruction, with some programs exclusively in English, or the other way around. Some of them offer same programs in both languages simultaneously.

All universities accept TOEFL, IELTS, or institution-administered English or French language exams. Some remarks:

- Only three universities fully describe online their language levels, tests results, and corresponding admissions status. Students may know if additional remedial courses are needed beforehand. Most other institutions fail to clearly mention exact scores and requirements. One disturbing observation is the wide differences in existing standards even among perceived comparable institutions. 4 below will further elaborate on this matter.
- Other issues are related to institution-administered language exams and their comparability to standardized ones.

b) Entrance Exams:

- Three universities require SAT scores as part of admissions requirements.
- All 23 institutions administer some form of entrance exams in math or sciences to see the fit for specific programs. However, information about those placement tests



varies in quality between institutions, and is not always clear about their purposes and required scores.

- c) **High School/Secondary Records:** Some universities ask for the three years of secondary education scores, while some only last two years. These scores are indication for students' performance and hence admissions decisions are often based on such scores. Again, the use of such scores and exactly what they mean across all high schools is highly debatable. Given that the results of official exams are often not available until early August, reliance on those records is eventual, even though presenting the official diploma will be required at entrance.

3. In Practice: Selectivity Ratio and Exams Scores

In Lebanon, SAT scores are not a measure used to assess admissions standards for universities. Only AUB and Balamand, and recently LAU, have SAT as a required test for admissions. Nonetheless, comparability can only be achieved when taking the Lebanese Secondary Official Examination Certificate as it was the required test for passage to higher education. Thus, it can be considered as the only available quantifiable medium to assess level of incoming students' achievements, as seen being the most impartial and standardized form of examination. No university provided such information. When asked about general averages for respective sections and specific subjects (math, sciences, and languages) averages on the national examination for incoming class, data was not available. Most universities resort to high school records for scores, and secondary exams is merely a compliance issue. Comparing averages of high school records is not a meaningful measure since grades at one school will not necessarily translate to being comparable at another schools.

The only remaining proxy indicator for incoming class level would be **acceptance rate**, or percentage of accepted applicants to total number of applications. Figure 24 shows acceptance rates ranging between 64% and 93%. It is frequently referred to as "selectivity ratio" and it is a clear indicator on how practices differ among institutions. The corresponding yield rates also varied from 65% to 94%, leading to conclusion that such institutions serve different segment of the market. However, analysis should be complemented by adding other factors such as tuition rates and average financial aid packages. It is believed that the higher the number of applicants rejected, the more selective, and therefore better "quality" of the student body that is admitted. This is largely used by institutions as an indicator of prestige, and to show quality standards of the accepted pool. However, many issues arise from such an approach: if universities have open admissions policy (i.e. admission is guaranteed once minimum requirements satisfied) then their ratios cannot be judged in such a manner. This remains an institutional decision with regard to its own position in the market and general mission. Selectivity may contradict the notion of "access" within a view that considers university



education as an opportunity to access skill sets and knowledge for low-achievers in secondary education. Likewise, the notion that what is more important for a university than accepting A students, is to transform B students into A students, and C students into B students, is overlooked or disregarded.

The question of academic standards potentially associated with such policy remains to be assessed. It is feared that an open policy may lower students achievements reflected through graduation and retention rates.

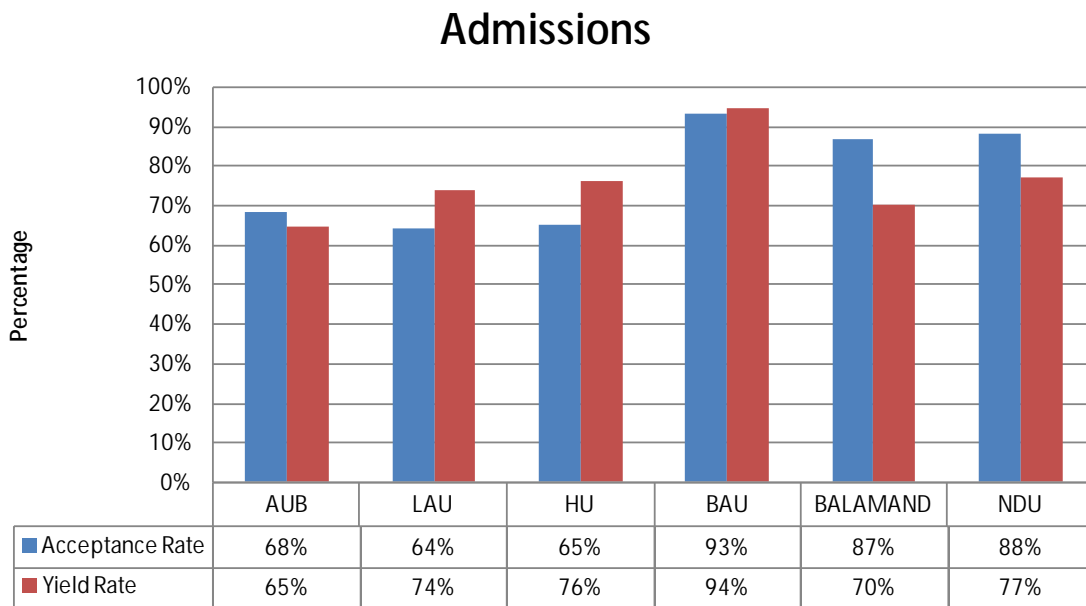


Figure 24: Acceptance rates and yield rates differ among universities

4. From Secondary to Higher Education: A Missing Link?

A main role of secondary education is to provide a good basis and prepare students for a more challenging higher education. We approached this question of educational foundation by looking at official exams scores and averages across all sections for those who passed the exams. We then looked at TOEFL standards to probe questions on achievements in exams and corresponding universities' standards.

Figure 25 illustrates language performance in official exams of those who passed the exams. Scores of those who have English or French as first foreign language are grouped together for the 2008-2009 session. It is clear that national averages on foreign languages do not reach even 9/20. It is substantially low for all sections. Though this may differ



between private/public sector secondary schools in addition to regional differences, with 54% of secondary students in the public system such national averages are alarming, and strike at the heart of the conventional perception of languages skills among the educated. It is important to note that those who have English as a first foreign language performed better than those where French is their first foreign language. Figures 26, 27, 28, and 29 show passing rates by section and subject for six consecutive years. This should be more alarming for universities who have French as main language of instruction. Not only did those who have English as first foreign language outperformed French ones, but those who have French as first foreign language had passing rates substantially lower. This led us to probe larger questions about language entrance exams, yet no data was readily available. When English was considered, TOEFL is acceptable by all institutions which have English as a language of instruction. We looked at iBT TOEFL scores and placement and figure 30 shows major differences found. If the minimum score for admission can be understood on the basis of an “open vs. selective” policy, it was hard to explain, especially from a student perspective, why remedial courses requirements differ. Whereas two institutions do not require remedial English courses for a score of 95/120 and up, one institution required 1.5 courses up until 110/120.

This is meant to show on the one hand poor general performance on languages in secondary education, and on the other, different universities practices concerning language testing and placement. This demonstrates a missing link between secondary and higher education and at same time an absence of communication and national standards across universities in Lebanon. This is not to say that all universities should have carbon copy standards and scores requirements, as clearly one key does not open ever door. Yet, a framework of cooperation can seriously begin to address these issues while striving for best practice, options, and related policies that will serve the best interests of the students and long term goals of the universities. This can further success across the board, as well as ease possibilities for mobility and transfer among institutions.



Performance of the Qualifying Population

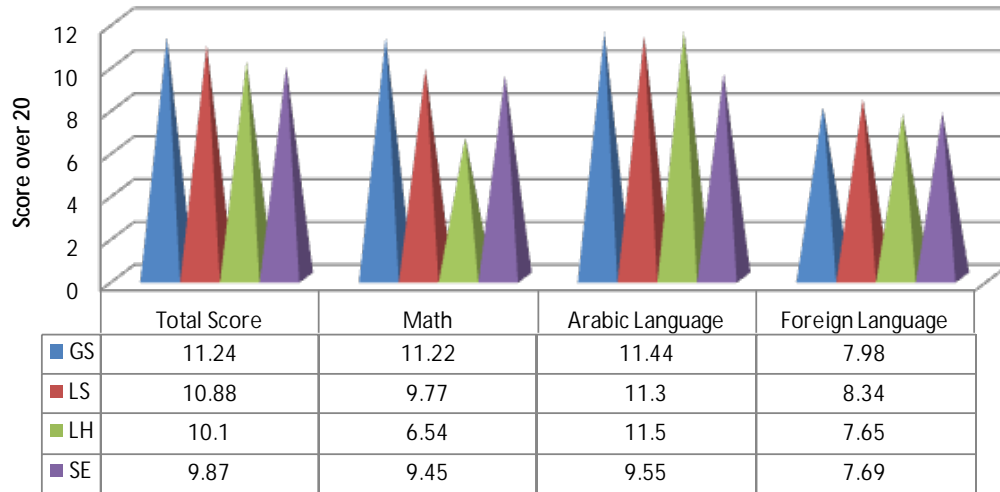


Figure 25: Qualifying population total and subject averages for 2008-09 secondary official exam session

GS Subject Passing Rate (for all candidates)

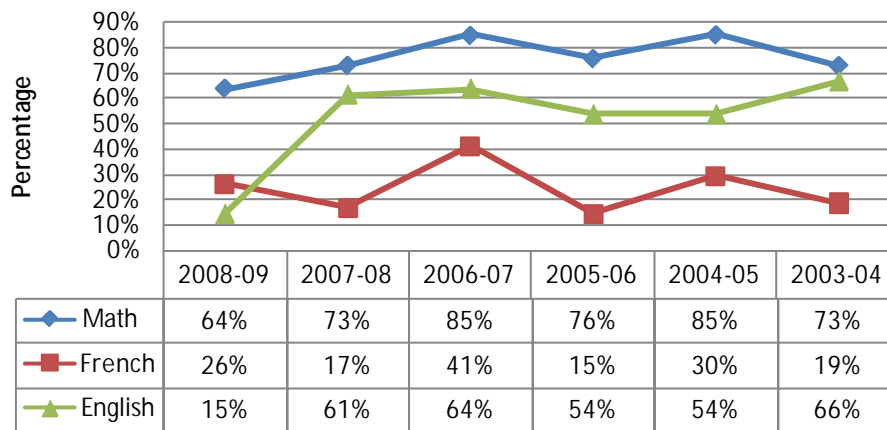


Figure 26: Passing rate of all candidates by subject: GS



LS Subject Passing Rate (for all candidates)

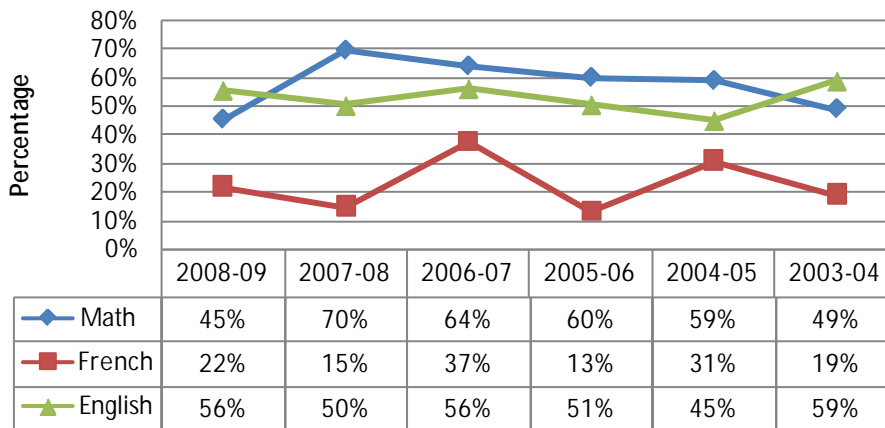


Figure 27: Passing rate of all candidates by subject: LS

LH Subject Passing Rate (for all candidates)

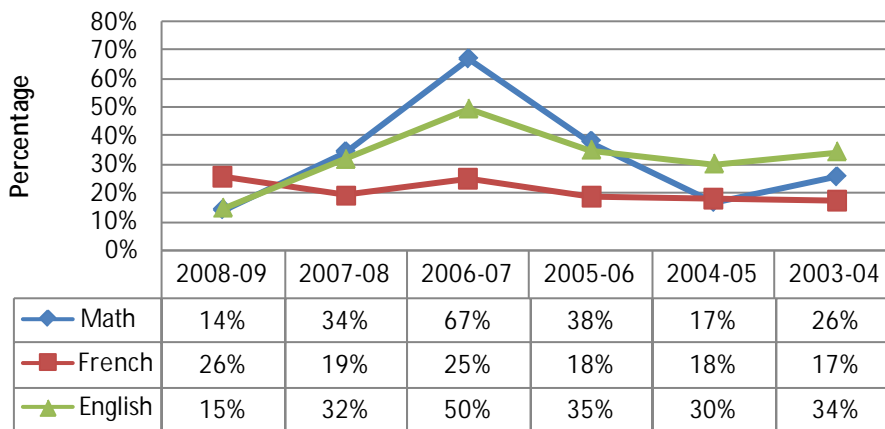


Figure 28: Passing rate of all candidates by subject: LH



SE Subject Passing Rate (for all candidates)

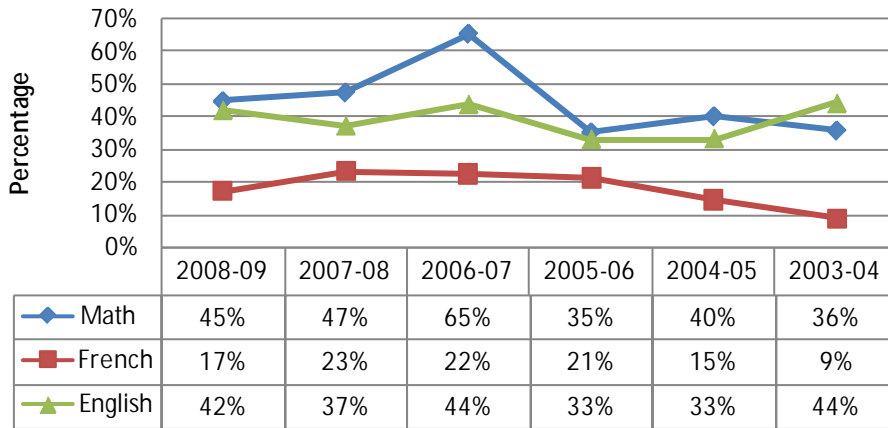


Figure 29: Passing rate of all candidates by subject: SE

TOEFL iBT™ Placement (0-120)

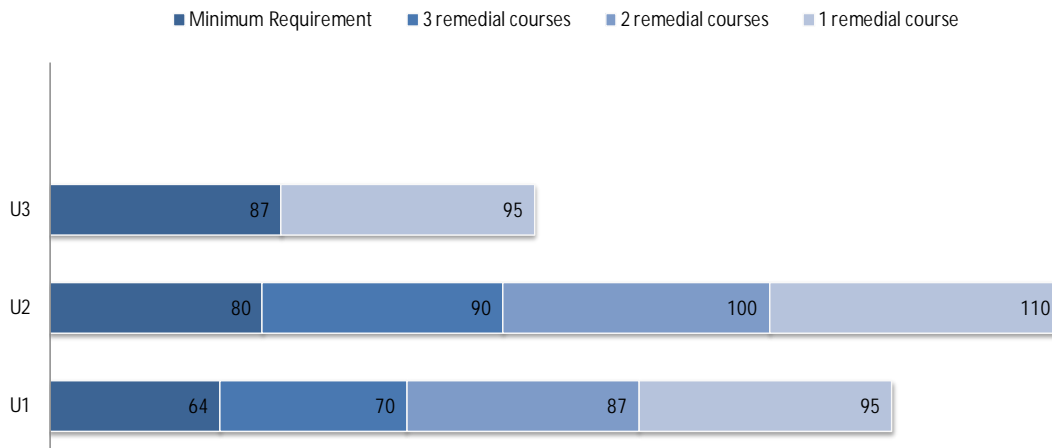


Figure 30: TOEFL Scores and Placement at three universities



5. Implications:

This section was meant to probe a frequently disregarded approach in Lebanon: namely, the relationship between secondary and higher education. Our basic data and research demonstrate some major deficiencies in the system and urge cooperation and debate on:

- How can official exams scores and results be used to better inform policy and action on institutional and national level? This will help gauge student's preparedness for college. Data generation and dissemination on a regular basis can form the cornerstone for trend analysis and policy intervention. What universities can do in cooperation with feeding schools is immense. Analyzing scores of incoming class with national averages and providing feedback to schools can enhance communication and learning - thus opening doors to address serious issues. Admissions policies can use secondary education performance to benchmark against national averages, but as well for the institution to link secondary education performance and higher education performance on a comprehensive way to universities while calculating added-value scores.
- Language requirements across universities ought to be more standardized in a more meaningful way, while maintaining diverse admission. Remedial courses can be better managed, since universities' main mission is not to make up for deficient secondary education system but to take students' education to another level.
- Further data about the demographics of students are largely absent: their feeding schools, public or private status, geographical distribution, family socio-economic background. Such layers of data would make lend to better understandings of trends and standards.

B. Internal Efficiency

In measuring universities internal efficiencies, a relationship between input and output ought to be discussed.

1. Graduate/Student ratio:

Table 4 shows graduates to total student enrollment ratio. This is used to measure the internal efficiency of institutions. However, this number reflects total graduates vis-à-vis enrollment in a specific year. When looking at yearly changes in both numbers in an effort to understand linkages, might lead one to surmise that larger enrollment may decrease the ratio. However, there were no consistent or major observations that can be made. This is mainly due to specific circumstances of institutions as they relate to the opening of new branches (which increases first-year enrollments) and length of programs. It is worth noting that LU shared the lowest ratio among its peers, reflecting on its large enrollment, and programs length (not all programs have yet transformed into the LMD system).



University	2007-8	2006-7	2005-6	2004-5	2003-4	2002-3	2001-2
UL	15%	12%	14%	15%	13%	14%	12%
BAU	19%	18%	21%	26%	25%	32%	24%
USJ	22%	25%	20%	23%	26%	27%	29%
AUB	26%	22%	27%	24%	21%	21%	27%
USEK	10%	19%	19%	17%	16%	21%	21%
LAU	26%	26%	27%	27%	30%	24%	23%
HU	22%	21%	16%	17%	16%	18%	18%
NDU	17%	19%	20%	18%	17%	19%	14%
ULS	14%	14%	14%	15%	19%	12%	12%
MEU	32%	25%	17%	18%	16%	25%	24%
Balamand	20%	25%	27%	24%	22%	22%	18%
Jinan	10%	11%	10%	14%	9%	7%	7%
IUL	11%	12%	11%	12%	17%	16%	9%
ESA	78%	27%	26%	46%	47%	84%	86%
UPA	15%	12%	25%	15%	9%	15%	19%
HCU	12%	12%	19%	21%	25%	25%	18%
ULF	20%	40%	34%	35%	39%	35%	24%
LGU	17%	0%	18%	23%	8%	0%	0%
AUT	33%	32%	44%	25%	16%	5%	11%
AUL	36%	29%	106%	24%	12%	12%	0%
AUCE	33%	112%	23%	75%	33%	29%	0%
AUST	28%	15%	32%	20%	5%	3%	10%
LCU	27%	34%	60%	62%	42%	0%	0%
MUBS	28%	20%	57%	14%	22%	16%	26%
AOU	17%	11%	11%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
LIU	12%	22%	16%	10%	n/a	n/a	n/a
MUT	60%	30%	2%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Table 4: Graduation Ratio based on yearly headcount figures for enrollment and graduates (Source: CERD).

Though this represents the best available official data on HEIs operating in Lebanon, making conclusions on internal efficiency of these institutions based on such ratio may lead to false conclusions. The problem with such data is not irrelevant when the purpose is to judge performance:



- a. The total number of students is a gross number that does not take into consideration the actual composition of the student body: undergraduate students separate from graduate ones (or cycle 1, 2 and 3 of HE). Data shows that the percentage of students enrolled in graduate studies differ among these institutions, and sometimes is almost absent at some others. This has implications on duration of study, student status (part-time versus full-time) as well as the fact that some students are repeating, changing majors, or double-majoring.
- b. These institutions differ in structure and operations. Being called a “university” according to current legislations, does not imply they belong to “one” pool. Some institutions have graduate schools and programs, others do not. Even at undergraduate level, universities with engineering, architecture, pharmacy, or even medicine, can’t be compared to institutions with mostly liberal arts and business programs. This affects the duration of cycle of studies.

This ratio does not reflect to any relational aspects between enrollment and graduates. Measuring the efficiency of institutions in leading an incoming cohort through years of study to the final stages of their program, leading to the (bachelor) degree, is what should be measured. This begets a deeper look at actual student attainment.

Hence the following rates and ratios hope to better measure institutional efficiency and system-wide deliverables. A first-attempt to investigate such indicators is made here and the findings and analysis are presented. The main goal is to highlight the importance of such indicators and the necessity to adopt them as a way of measuring institutional efficiency.

2. Graduation Rate (cohort-analysis method):

Graduation rate measures a cohort success rate in attaining degree status. It essentially tracks a cohort of full-time, first-time, degree-seeking students throughout their enrollment at an institution. It aims at demonstrating how many students in this cohort actually graduated in certain percent of normal time for program completion (150%, 200%). If 150% equals usually six years in the U.S., it can be four years and half in Lebanon, considering the normal program length of 3 years. (Variations can be tailored to specific schools, or programs, especially when it comes to engineering, pharmacy). Non-degree seeking and transfers students are excluded. Table 5 shows 6-year graduation rate for AUB and 4.5-year graduation rate LAU for 2001 cohort. This cohort includes 3-year, 4-year, and 5-year program students.



	University-wide	BA-BS	BE
AUB (6 yrs)	84%	81%	90%
LAU (4.5 yrs)	67%	62%	81%

Table 5: 150% graduation rate for fall 2001 cohort

On the institutional level, graduation rate can measure program and school efficiencies and their overall institutional effect. AUB showed 84% while LAU 67%. This was not available for BAU given that they are currently transforming programs into semester system versus an annual one. Nevertheless, our discussion with administrators suggested that this can be extracted in a couple of years, when all programs and levels would have shifted to the new system and the first cohort graduates. Again, this data should be interpreted cautiously, since some institutions have professional schools with longer durations than a typical 3-year program. That being the case, it is still believed that students in 4, 5, or 6-year programs tend to stick to the original duration of their programs. Hence the need to explore graduation rate by school/faculty, taking into consideration that many students do enroll on “undecided” basis for their first year. LAU and AUB have data in this regard, as presented in the table. We chose to present 3-year BA/BS programs (mainly schools of business, arts and science), and 4-year BE programs (schools of engineering and architecture).¹⁰ This shows that 3-year program students have less graduation rate than 4-year ones. It is clear that BA/BS at LAU affected their overall rate since 4-year program had higher graduation rate.

Haigazian provided a 4-year completion rate approach when calculating graduation rate (Table 6). HU has mostly 3-year undergraduate programs which mean completion rate is 133% of normal duration. The rate was 12.78% for AY 2006-07, meaning that those enrolled in that year actually graduated by June 2010. This rate was 10.98% for the AY 2003-04 cohort. However, when adding those who are still enrolled at HU, but not yet fully graduated, this rate goes up to 68%.

Haigazian University	4-year graduation rate (cohort of 2003)	Graduated + those still enrolled
	11%	68%

Table 6: Haigazian approach to graduation rate

¹⁰ LAU regrouped its architecture and design programs into separate school in Fall 2009.



To conclude, the graduation rate is a very important measuring tool for internal efficiency and as a first step in understanding overall institutional practices and programs performance (admissions, advising, teaching, resources...). Be that as it may, one should remember how many complex factors play a role in shaping such rates. For instance, looking at LAU part-time enrollment shows it is much higher than AUB, which will affect students' graduation. Recently LAU introduced a new tuition structure, term-based, where students pay for 12 credits only while being to take for same flat price up till 18 credits. For that reason, it is expected that this will encourage students to take fuller loaded semesters and likely graduate on time. This is but one example of how universities design intervention based on data-driven assessment.

3. Retention Rate:

To further reflect on academic success, universities should document and report retention rates. Though variations exist on a definition of retention, there is a common agreement that on an institutional level, it is the percentage of a cohort which were still registered a year after they first enrolled. Universities already spend lot of resources on recruitment and admissions efforts, so showing their ability to retain such cohorts is of utmost importance in demonstrating efficiency and desirability of the institution. Though some attrition is expected it is still a relevant indicator on institutional performance, and even individual school/faculty/program efficiency. It may appear that students remain in the same institution but change school affiliation. This requires some appropriate record-keeping about students' attendance.

	University-wide	School of Business	School of Eng. & Arch
AUB	94%	95%	98%
LAU	90%	91%	87%
Balamand	95%		

Table 7: Retention rate for fall 2008 cohort

All three universities (Table 7) seem to have retention rates above 90%, when taken on an institutional level, and even the school/faculty levels indicating a high satisfaction with the program and university.

This is an important measure relative to drop-outs levels. It is believed that students tend to drop out following their first year at university, or in other terms, those who come back the second year, are most likely to finish their studies at same institution and get a degree.

Institutions will low retention rate may consider some policies either on the institutional or program-specific level, or at the school level (such as teaching faculty to enhance students' experience) which may increase retention, and contribute to more efficient use of resources.



4. Persistence Rate:

Tracing the progress of students in the higher education system can be further calculated through the “**Persistence Rate**” or how many first-time degree seekers do actually earn a degree, however, this time on a system-wide level, rather than institutional level as reflected above by retention and graduation rates. This entails the establishment of a tracking system, which can capture the attrition, and identify the context behind their situations properly. For example, transfer students are usually overlooked in statistics. A transfer student may still earn a degree even though the student’s first institution does not keep a record. Therefore, it negatively affects its own measurement of retention and graduation, though if looked at as completion of studies, or persistence in the higher education system, then the data may change.

All of this data may shed light on other factors, not related to institutions as such, but to broader socio-economic conditions as they relate to students and institutions geographical distribution, and to students personal circumstances.

The effect of such measurements on institutional and national levels can’t be stressed enough. They can constitute main indicators for policy intervention and set benchmarks for future targets. Completion and drop-outs measurements help illustrate the economic benefits of an educated and skilled population which is directly affected. Access to higher education is more than simply enrollment figures. Completion rates are better suited to measure progress and output, and thus the system’s efficiency.

C. Faculty

Faculty is another crucial aspect when looking at universities’ performance. We investigated faculty status (full time, part time), as well as qualification (terminal degree holders, professorial ranks...). It is important to note that differences do exist concerning faculty hiring, promotion, and retention among these institutions and without a general framework for comparability it is difficult to make larger generalizations. Indeed there is no law or framework organizing teaching at private universities in Lebanon. This has resulted in adopting different policies and practices. For instance, defining full-time faculty varies among institutions: is an adjunct or visiting faculty considered full time or part time?

1. Student/Faculty ratio (headcount approach):

Student/Faculty ratio has traditionally been considered as an indicator of an institution’s performance since it can demonstrate student-faculty interaction and the many academic opportunities this may provide for students.

Student: Faculty ratio is calculated from CERD data on students and faculty taken as such. Table 8 shows ratios across all 26 universities and the Lebanese University.



University	2008-9	2007-8	2006-7	2005-6	2004-5	2003-4	2002-3	2001-2	2000-1
UL	15	14	16	16	16	16	16	18	18
BAU	20	33	26	20	15	15	12	14	19
USJ	5	6	6	5	6	6	5	5	5
AUB	8	8	8	9	9	9	9	7	7
USEK	7	6	7	5	7	6	6	6	7
LAU	24	25	25	26	26	27	27	32	14
HU	7	7	8	8	9	8	7	6	6
NDU	10	11	9	9	12	9	10	11	32
ULS	8	8	9	7	8	8	9	6	11
MEU	6	5	7	5	14	5	4	5	5
Balamand	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5
Jinan	8	8	9	7	7	6	6	11	9
IUL	11	9	8	8	8	6	6	10	8
UPA	5	5	5	6	6	5	4	5	4
HCU	7	8	10	11	6	6	6	8	9
ULF	10	6	6	5	6	6	6	3	4
LGU	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1
AUT	6	4	8	5	9	9	17	9	12
AUL	8	12	14	6	14	34	16	10	16
AUCE	8	10	5	10	4	11	12	16	6
AUST	11	10	11	11	15	15	10	11	22
LCU	11	9	13	12	10	16	19	19	n/a
MUBS	12	16	10	10	16	7	17	9	n/a
AOU	20	20	26	25	21	21	26	n/a	n/a
LIU	15	17	23	9	11	6	13	n/a	n/a
MUT	3	3	4	4	4	3	n/a	n/a	n/a

Table 8: Student: Faculty ratio (headcount approach)

Results indicate some surprisingly low ratios to most institutions. One main problem with the basic figures on faculty in this dataset is that it is a mere headcount, regardless of status. Even here, when doing checks for faculty numbers from other sources, numbers were different. For example, the number of faculty for LAU reported turned out to be only full time faculty headcount, while other institutions figures included both full-time and part-time faculty.

When looking at both sides of the formula, one needs to make fundamental distinctions: on one side, student headcounts are a combination of many items: Full time students, part time students, across all levels of HE: undergraduate (or cycle one), graduate and professional levels. Universities do include special program, non-degree seeking students. On the other side, the problem is more acute. Faculty in this set may include many things: Full time, part-time faculty, adjunct, visiting faculty. Moreover, the qualifications of this



faculty cannot be understood. A faculty may hold terminal degrees in their field, being PhD or its equivalent, completed master-level studies, or even just a bachelor degree. All these factors, if made available, contribute to better understanding of employment and qualifications of faculty. The combination of both items, students and faculty, may shed light on the existing differences related to institutional circumstances and characteristics. The following will try to look at those from collected data, and present an idea on how things differ, and why. It is important to note that under current legislation, a university is required to have: Student: Faculty ratio= 20, Student: Full time faculty ratio= 30, 50% of all faculty hold terminal degree; 50% of full time faculty hold terminal degree.

2. Student/Faculty ratio:

In this section, information on institutional level is gathered. For faculty: status (full time vs. part time), and qualification (terminal degree holders); for students: level (undergraduate, graduate) and status (full time vs. part time) were considered. We calculated FTE whenever possible.

These calculations are made to show more accurate and relevant representations of students, faculty ratios, and how mere headcount calculations can be misleading. FTE for faculty and undergraduate students is the best measure since it shows the value of interaction to undergraduate students in a more accurate way, as well as showing university performance in terms of available faculty resources. Student: faculty ratio ranged between 7 and 18 for universities as table 9 shows. Usually anything below 20 is preferable.

	<u>Headcount</u> Students: Faculty*	<u>HC Students:</u> <u>FTE Faculty</u>	<u>FTE</u> Undergraduate Students: Faculty	<u>FTE</u> Total Students: Faculty
AUB (08-09)	8	15	12	13
LAU (08-09)	24	22	17	19
HU (08-09)	7	13	12	13
BALAMAND (08-09)	4	11	7	9
BAU (08-09)	20	48	N/A	N/A
USJ (06-07)	5	11	N/A	N/A
USEK (07-08)	7	17	N/A	N/A
NDU (09-10)	10	23	18	19

Table 9: Student: Faculty Ratio using Full Time Equivalent method

*Source: as provided by CERD data, whereas all other columns are based on this study collected data; numbers of medical students and faculty are excluded.



Further analysis was created by calculating these ratios as they pertain to faculty (status and qualification on FTE basis) then students/FTE terminal degree holders' ratio was recalculated accordingly.

Full time faculty to total faculty headcount is shown in Figure 31. Reliance on part time instructors is clearly observed. The percentage ranged between 60% at AUB and 15% at BAU (excluding medical faculty). Within full time faculty, figure 32 shows percentage of those full time faculty holding terminal degrees (being a PhD or any other depending on the field). This percentage was above 50% for all universities, reaching up to 85% at BAU. Universities usually tend to give details about origin of the PhD to demonstrate superior prestige (especially when being earned from North American universities).

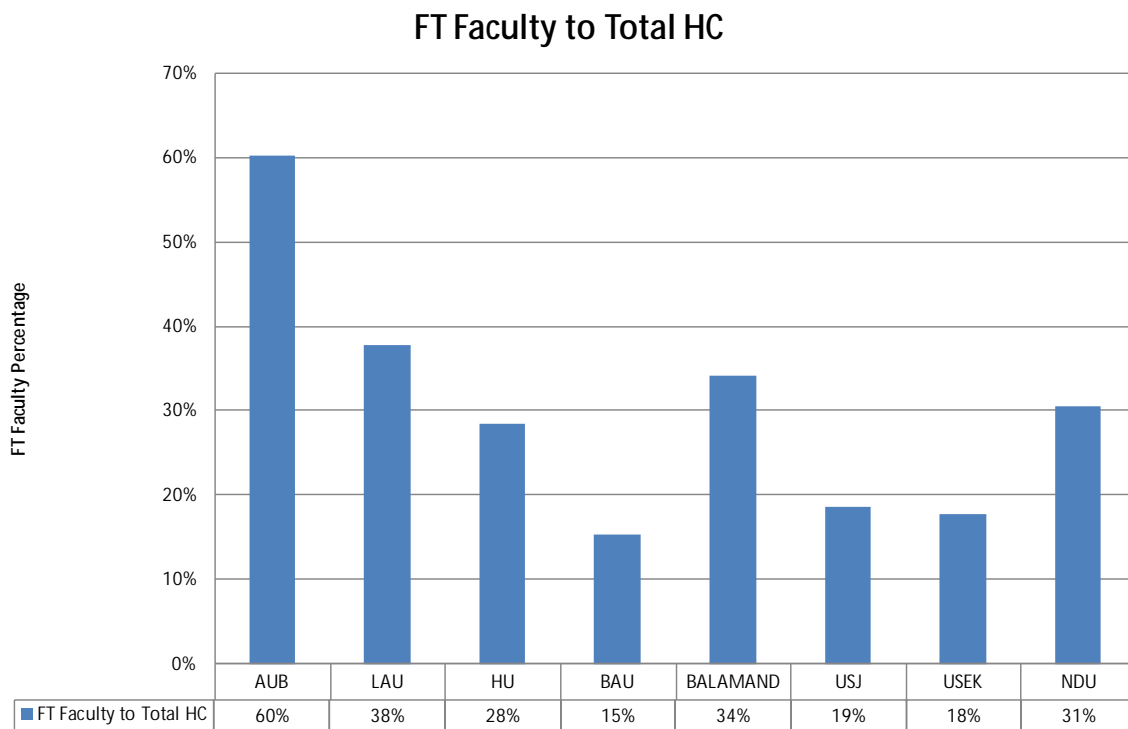


Figure 31: Percentage of FT faculty to total faculty headcount



% FT Faculty with Terminal Degrees to total FT Faculty

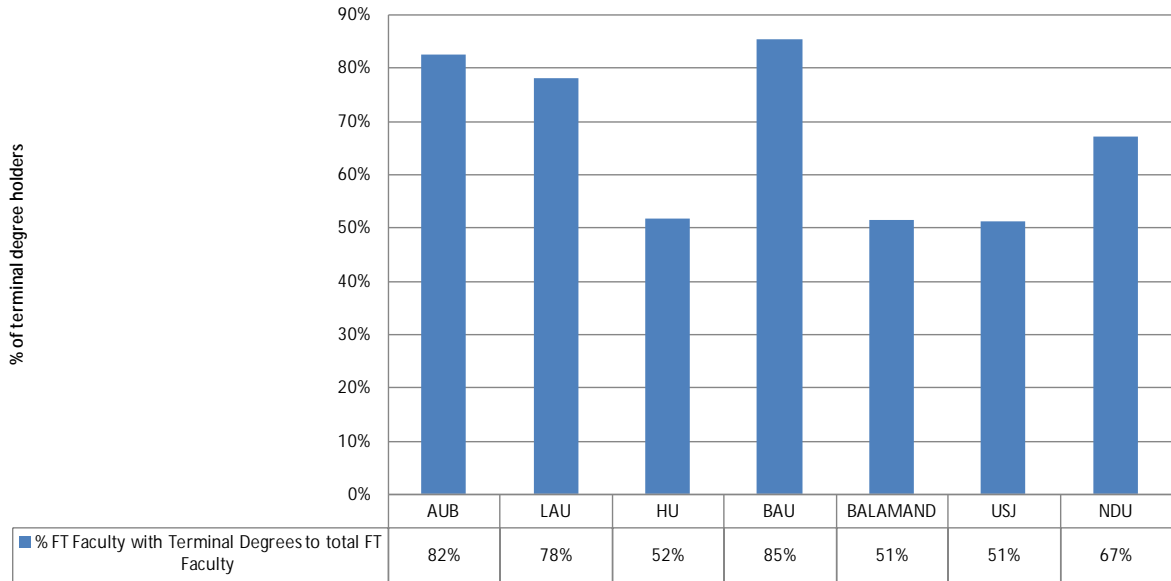


Figure 32: Percentage of full time faculty with terminal degrees

Figure 33 attempts to look at faculty characteristics from different approaches. From the data presented above, we extracted percentage of full time faculty with terminal degrees to total faculty headcount. This is an important indicator since it might tell how many faculty are potentially involved in research on campus given that many grants stipulate terminal degrees, and/or full time faculty status. This indicator ranged between 10% and 50% at these institutions. This can be complemented with data on research output at universities and hence some research efficiency indicators can be extracted. Finally, a FTE faculty with terminal degree to total FTE faculty is calculated. This is an important faculty qualification indicator, and it varied between 34% and 76% at universities where this information was extracted.



Faculty Composition

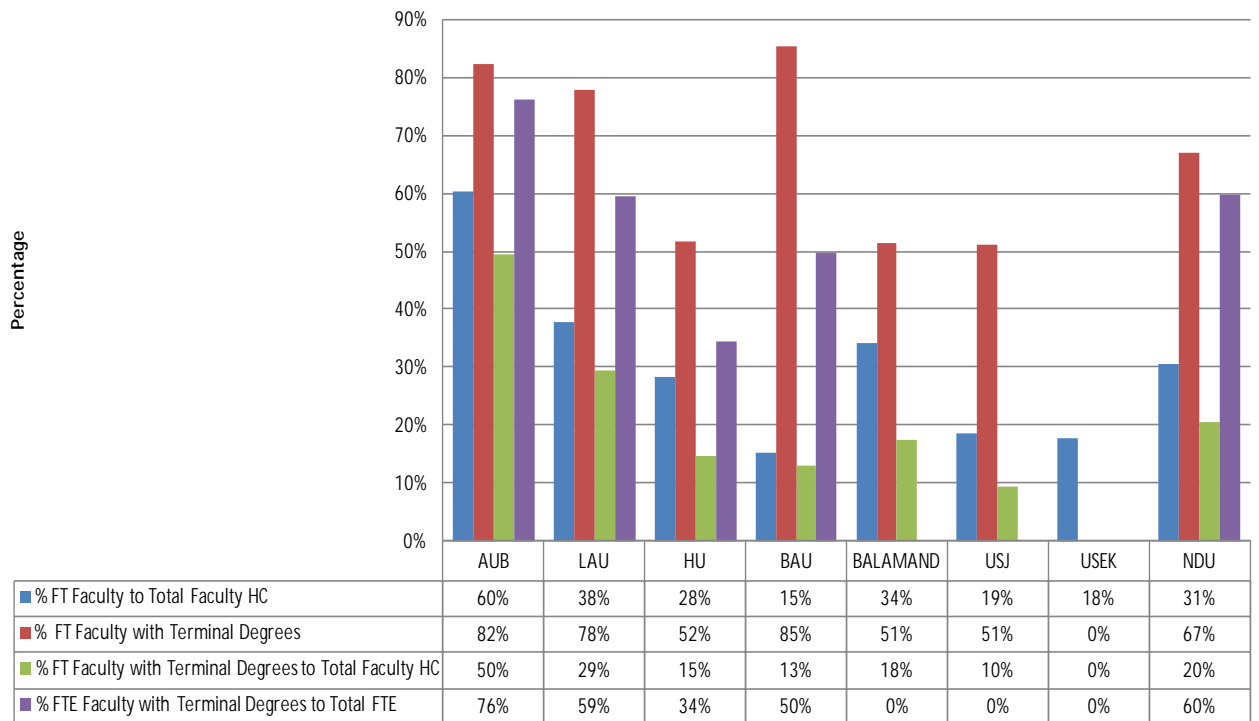


Figure 33: Faculty composition and characteristics can be measured differently for different purposes

A different quality student: faculty interaction perspective needs more attention: how does faculty status and qualification affect student experiences? In figure 34, a FTE undergraduate student to FTE faculty with terminal degrees ratio is calculated. The range is between 15 for AUB and 35 at HU. BAU had a larger ratio reaching 82. Figure 35 takes this to the core point, by asking about the percentage of undergraduate credits in a given academic year which are taught by full time faculty. (A percentage of 50% has been observed elsewhere as an acceptable one). However it is important to mention that this percentage may differ as various programs have diverse needs. Some schools may rely more heavily on part timers than others as this relates to demand on programs, and less ability to keep up with hiring and associated costs. Another perspective is to look at percentage of undergraduate credits taught by terminal degree holders instead of full time faculty, something the draft law on higher education currently in parliament proposes a percentage of 60%.



FTE Undergraduate students to FTE Faculty with Terminal Degrees ratio

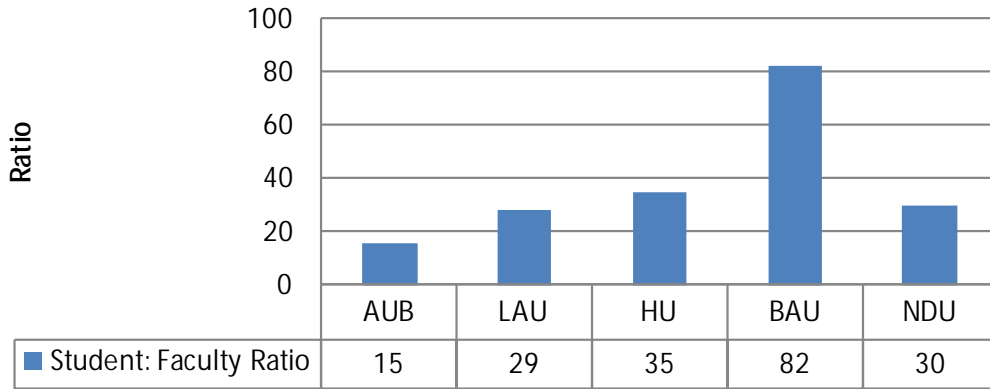


Figure 34: FTE undergraduate students and faculty with terminal degrees ratio

% undergraduate credits taught by FT Faculty

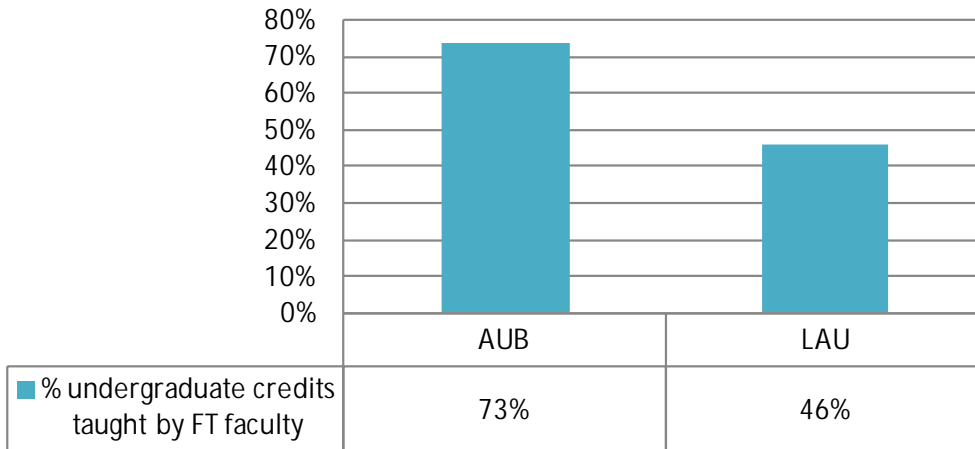


Figure 35: Percentage of undergraduate credits taught by full time faculty

3. Implications:

The overall picture is diverse. One main observation is the wide differences among universities on all indicators calculated above with regard to faculty status and qualifications. What does this imply?



- With the absence of clear requirements in legislation, and related auditing mechanisms, it remains unclear what is the responsibility of universities to put some minimum standards with regard to faculty.
- These numbers allow making a judgment that universities with the best indicators have a best practice or can be a benchmark in the market. While this might be true, it remains hard to assess what is a minimum requirement and what is a best practice as well as how these both translate to student's experiences at these institutions. Competition is high and institutions, reflecting different missions, may set different standards. Hence, AUB's indicators can be best practice for their market and students, serving as a benchmark for the market, yet their practices are not something that all institutions should follow.
- Hiring more full time faculty clearly comes with a price tag. Are these private universities in Lebanon capable of allocating needed resources in this manner? In the absence of national framework on private HEIs teaching profession in terms of rights, contracts, appointments, it remains hard to imagine what minimum is adequate of the academic staff of these intuitions. Financial considerations are the main reason for such different practices.
- In other instances, it appears that finding terminal degree holders in some fields may be quite challenging. For example, anecdotal evidence, through our discussions with administrators, suggests that recruiting qualified full time PhD holders in business-related discipline is sometimes challenging. Indeed, when all universities, without exception, have a separate business school, and when high enrollments in those schools indicate increasing demand, then this is understood in such context (massification of higher education). It is important to note that this is a global phenomenon, with a shortage in PhD holders in business. It is worth mentioning that LAU has taken a step towards dealing with this shortage, by establishing a program to support some of its own students accepted to accredited PhD programs in business in North American institutions, on condition to return back to serve at LAU for some time.
- The market for PhD holders in academic professions need to be further understood so that administrators and public policy makers on the supply/demand side of the market can make more informed plans and goals on a national level. Current data available fails to give more than a headcount number with no related characteristics or context. Another reason to believe that data is distorted is that potentially large numbers of part timers teach at multiple institutions, hence the double counting when calculated on national level.



D. Resources and Student Services

Resources available at any institution will have an impact on education quality and student experience. Resources can be financial, physical, or human, which directly and indirectly affect the services an institution is able to offer. We looked at financial information, as a way to understand and measure spending patterns and institution accessibility for students. Library, information technology, and other related services can allow for a quantification of what students are actually getting in a more measurable way. This can be complemented by other student satisfaction surveys so, it is hoped, a relationship can be extracted from the data in the future that will allow for making a trend and relationship analysis. This section looks at operating budgets, financial aid, and spending patterns, then a quick review of library and IT resources as well as built area.

1. Universities Finances

a) Operating Budget and Financial Aid

(1) Operating Budgets and Revenues:

The fact that there are no clear guidelines on reporting and auditing HEIs leaves operations of those institutions subject to different models and systems, especially when it comes to budgeting and financial reporting. What is mostly disturbing are claims justifying secrecy on financial matters, such as, “*these are internal confidential issues that we do not discuss with outsiders*”, or “*we are non-profit entity, which makes it unnecessary to publish our financial statements*”. Clearly, making distinct separation between what constitutes for-profit and non-profit private HEI is main builder for clear financial reporting guidelines. This can be shown in AUB and LAU which make publicly available their financial statements. AUB is the only university that publishes its annual audited financial statements online. LAU does not do so, but provides some of the main financial aspects of operations to the public. Other institutions in this study do not provide such information online, but were ready to give related figures. We surveyed some key aspects: total operating budget, revenues, expenses, financial aid, teaching expenses, research expenses, and then we normalized it, so that a better relative approach is identified.

Figure 36 tracks universities reliance on tuition fees as a main source of revenues. The results show some universities rely almost entirely on tuition fees, up to 95% like NDU, USEK, and USJ, while AUB and LAU have established other sources of income, such as private donations, endowments, and grants.



Reliance on Tuition Fees as main source of Revenues

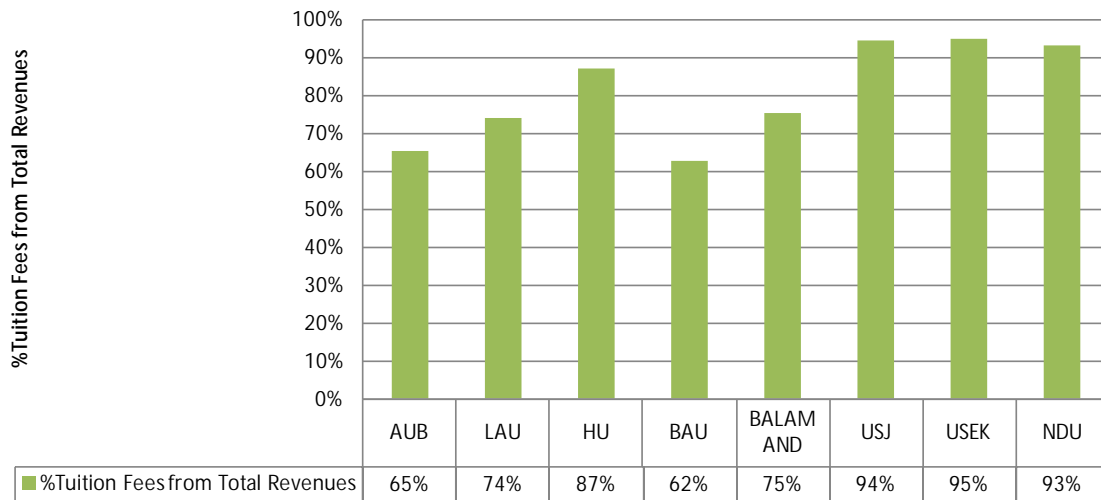


Figure 36: Percentage of tuition fees of total revenues

(2) OB and Expenses: Financial Aid

Financial aid is a key factor in granting students access to private higher education. It can take several forms: need-based or merit-based; and in various packages such as grants, loans, or various scholarships.

Figure 37 shows the percentage of undergraduate students benefiting from financial aid packages. This varied between 6% and 50%. Reasons for such differences are varied. BAU's tuition is low, by any standards, when compared to others in the table, which may explain this limited percentage of students on FA. In addition, many students at BAU receive external aid, which is not accounted for in this figure. While AUB and LAU's tuition at nearly the same level, percentages are considerably different, explained mainly by the more diverse socio-economic background of students at both institutions.

Figure 38 shows percentage of financial aid from total tuition fees which varied between 5% and 27%. When thinking about FA as a form of redistribution, this means that a higher share of FA is allocated from tuition fees, especially when the latter are main source of revenues. As for percentages of FA from operating budget, it ranged between 3% and 24%, much in line with previous percentages.

Figures 39 and 40 put some dollar value to FA, and some averages and percentages. This gives a better understanding of FA patterns at those institutions. For instance, although LAU has a lower percentage of undergraduates benefiting from FA than AUB, FA average percentage to tuition fees is almost 60% while it is 33% AUB. Meaning, more FA packages to a fewer number of students.



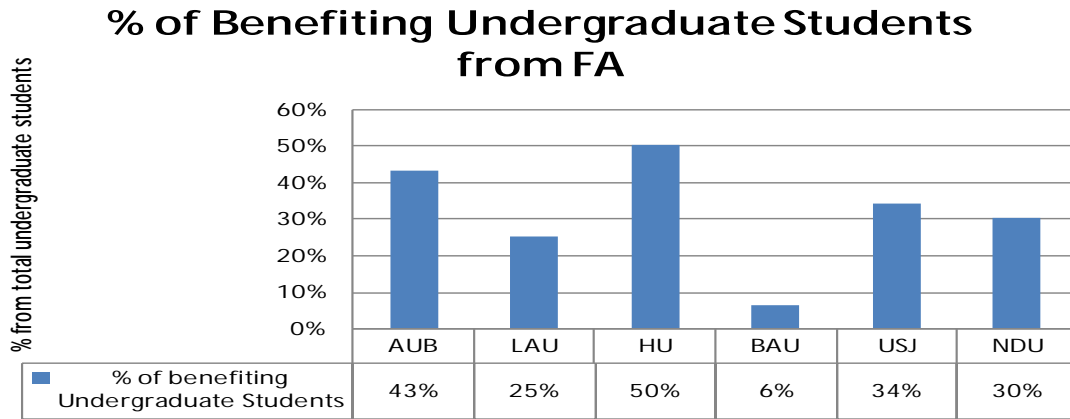


Figure 37: Percentage of undergraduate students benefiting from financial aid

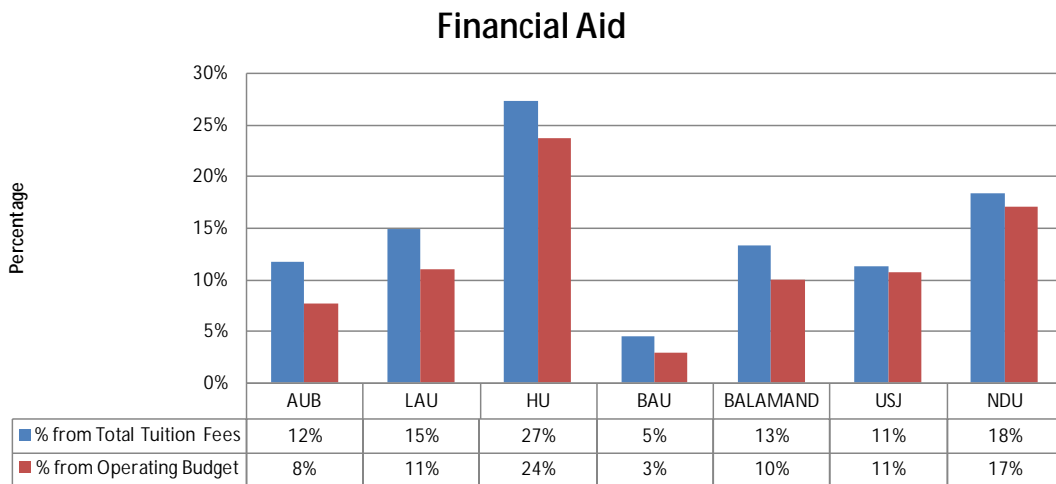


Figure 38: Percentage of FA from operating budget and tuition fees

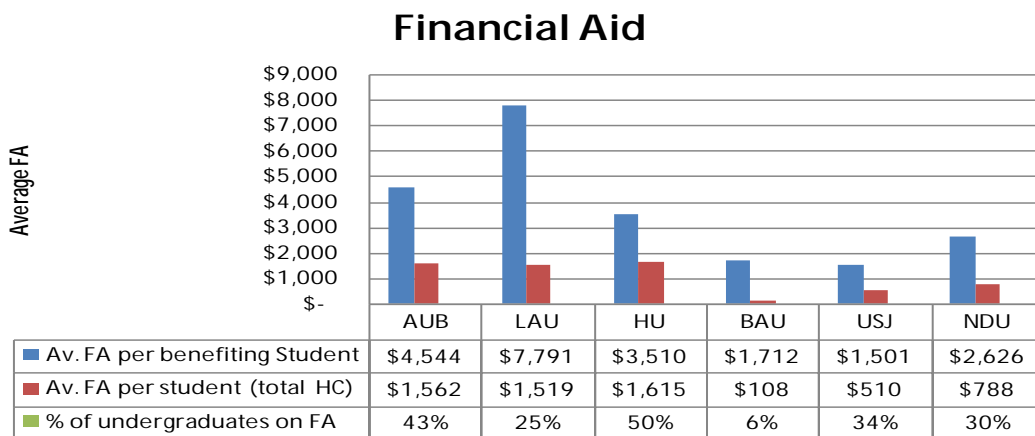


Figure 39: Dollar value of financial aid



Financial Aid Patterns

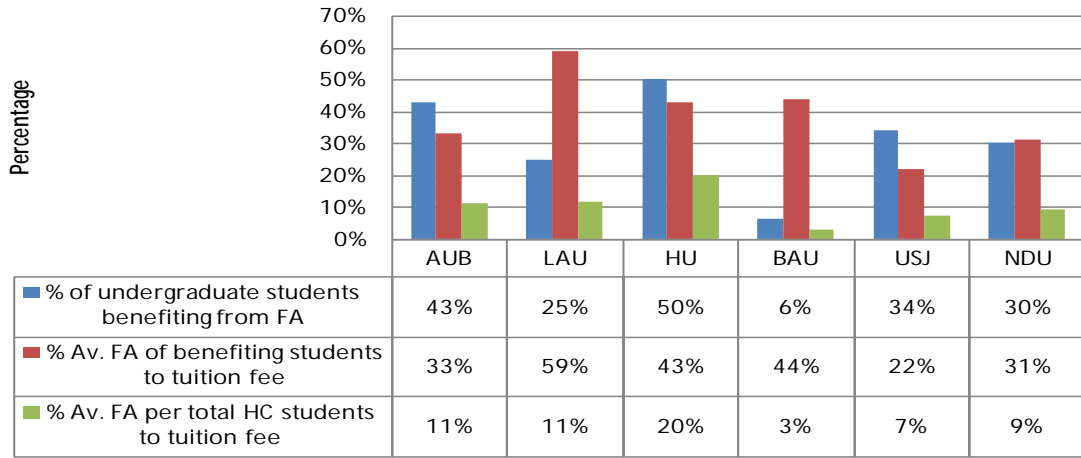


Figure 40: Percentage of dollar value of FA from tuition fee for benefiting students and total HC students



(3) Expenses Patterns and Tuition Fees:

Expenses items can be widely different and classified in various ways. Figure 41 shows expenses per student, dividing operating budget by total number of students regardless of status and level. Large differences exist in this regard, with averages ranging between \$21,000 to less than \$4,000. Comparisons were established with Lebanese University, OECD countries, and the United States. Clearly AUB converges with US standards, however, the OECD average is well below US average. When compared to the Lebanese University, being the only public university in Lebanon, LU's average is well below any other private institution, which clearly indicates not only gaps among private universities, but between the private and public sectors as well.

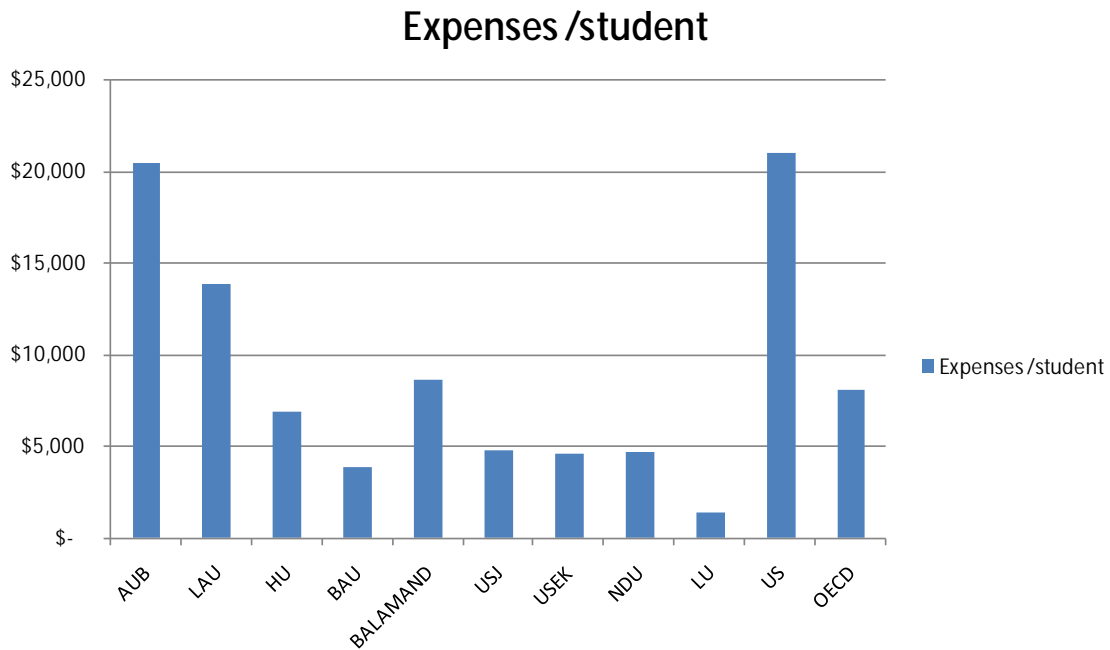


Figure 41: Expenses per student

Figure 42 shows expenses per FTE faculty. AUB and LAU have considerably higher averages than any other institution. This is used sometimes by universities as an indicator of wealth, a way to attract qualified faculty, which may give an idea beyond direct compensation packages.



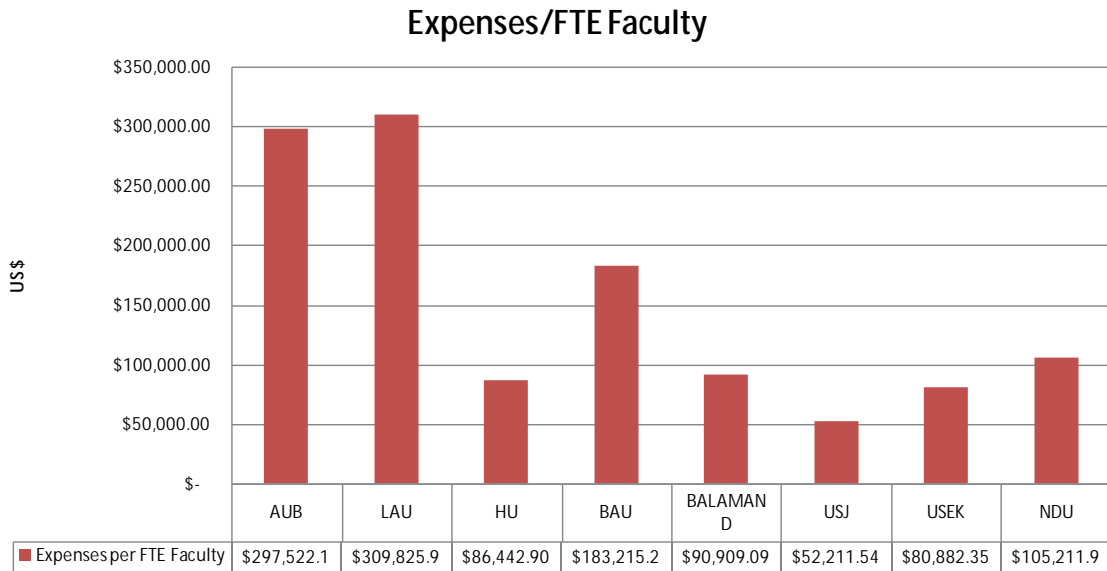


Figure 42: Expenses per FTE faculty

In figure 43, the percentage of compensation on instruction from operating budget was shown for AUB, LAU and NDU, at 44%, 28%, and 37% respectively. Students are interested in knowing how much is actually being spent on teaching. In figure 44, this percentage was converted into dollar value per student, and compared to yearly business tuition. In percentage terms, this makes 66% for AUB, 29% for LAU and 20% for NDU being spent on instruction out of tuition fee. This figure needs to be complemented with figures on academic expenses to give a more full picture.



% of Compensation on Instruction in OB

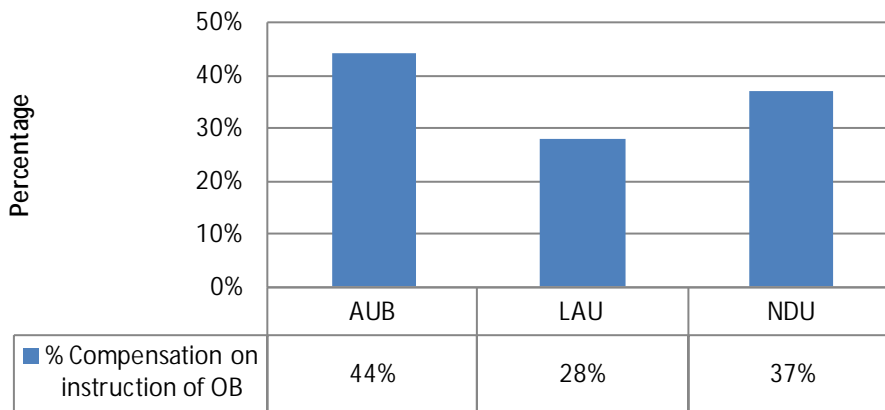


Figure 43: Percentage of compensation on instruction in operating budget

Expenses on Instruction per Student vs. Yearly Business Tuition

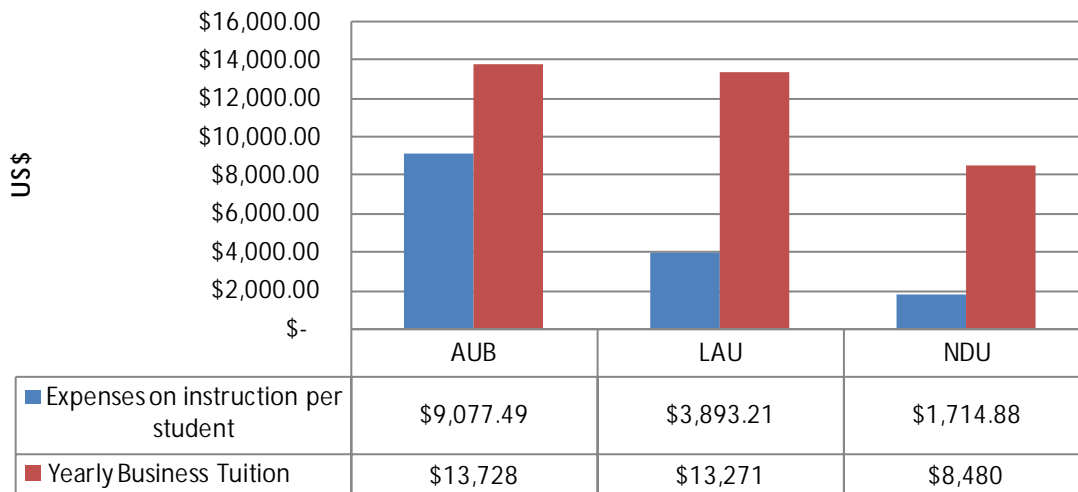


Figure 44: Dollar expenses on instruction per student vs. yearly business tuition



Finally figure 45 averages endowment of AUB and LAU per student. This is an indicator of wealth and forms a cushion in case of emergency as well as fund to initiate projects and expansion in line with the university’s goals. But these funds are related to these two institutions historical evolvement, circumstances, and origins. Such form of endowment is not in existence at other institutions.

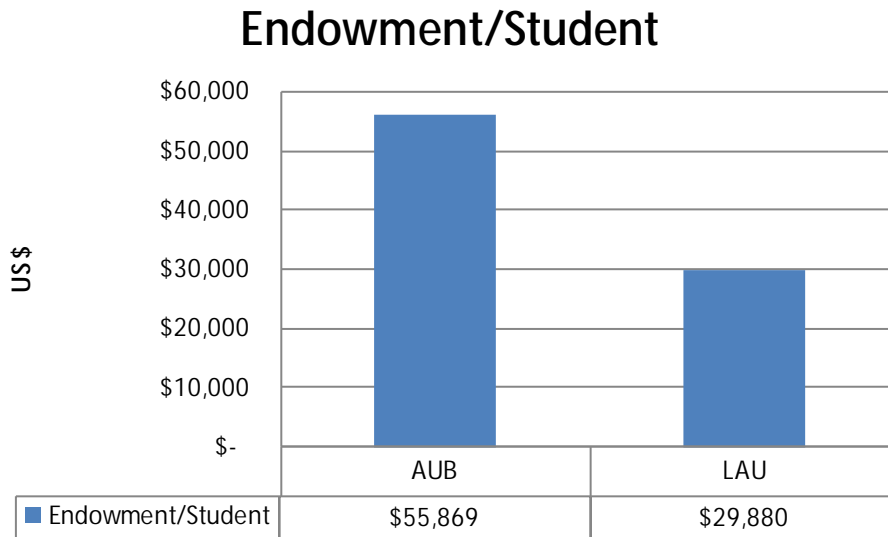


Figure 45: Dollar value of endowment per student

b) Implications

Clearly this is the hardest part of which to obtain reliable figures. Generally, many issues arise:

- Relying almost exclusively on tuition fees as a main source of revenue puts more pressure on universities to spend their limited resources in a more efficient, but often overstretched, way. At the same time it gives students the right to ask about how their tuition is being spent in order to produce the ideal educational environment for them. It is only recorded at AUB and recently at LAU that there has been some organized form of fundraising. Balamand has been accelerating efforts on this front as well judging from its recently published 2010-2020 plan. Knowing the challenges to tap local private wealth in addition to the changing landscape of international donors priorities, universities are invited to better communicate their lessons learned, as well as tell their stories to the broader public.



- Financial aid packages need to be better defined and classified. Some institutions offer FA under loan forms, while others pure grants. Those are not the same. Additionally, the basis for giving FA need to be better promoted and transparent. Some other forms of aid need to be recorded. For instance, many universities mentioned that their students receive FA from foundations, political parties, and religious organizations. Since this money comes directly to institutions on behalf of students it is feasible to record it and assess it, regardless of its motivation or source. For example, an estimated \$1.5 m was given at BAU for such external aid programs. Furthermore, governmental employees allowance for higher education should be calculated and classified in a more meaningful way to better assess and measure accessibility to HE and relationship to FA.
- How can one judge on gaps existing among these institutions, specifically on educational outcome and quality with such wide expenses patterns? Is there some form of overspending, rendering education more expensive? Some universities, especially new ones, were able to keep their tuition low by having low operational cost, mainly with limited campus space and facilities, along with more reliance on part time faculty. What is the trade-off here between affordability and quality? Finally, what is the balance of spending patterns and structure versus tuition?

2. Library Resources and Information Technology

Traditionally, library resources are considered to be a cornerstone for academic excellence, as they provide access to a breadth of materials and research resources for faculty and students alike. This is even more important for universities with graduate programs which require more in-depth and wide reaching resources for research. Information technology has been at the forefront of changing HE landscape in all aspects related to services, teaching, and research although it often comes at a cost.

Figure 46 shows some averages related to library resources and computers. Universities libraries' holdings vary greatly with an average between 8 and 120 volumes per student. This is definitely related to historical accumulation for institutions and it is also an indication of wealth. One may then expect universities to rely more heavily on online resources moving forward. The average of online/print full text journals per student varied widely, as well from 7 to almost non-existent at others. Finally for each computer with internet access, the number of students varied between 8 and 35 at those universities.

When looking at expenses concerning libraries and IT, it becomes harder to make conclusions since different items were included in calculation. Mixing capital projects (new library, new computer center) with annual renewal, updating, software acquisition,



personnel training expenses made our analysis limited. But library and IT expenses are considered as academic expenses. They will positively contribute, directly or indirectly, to students experience and satisfaction.

Library and IT Resources

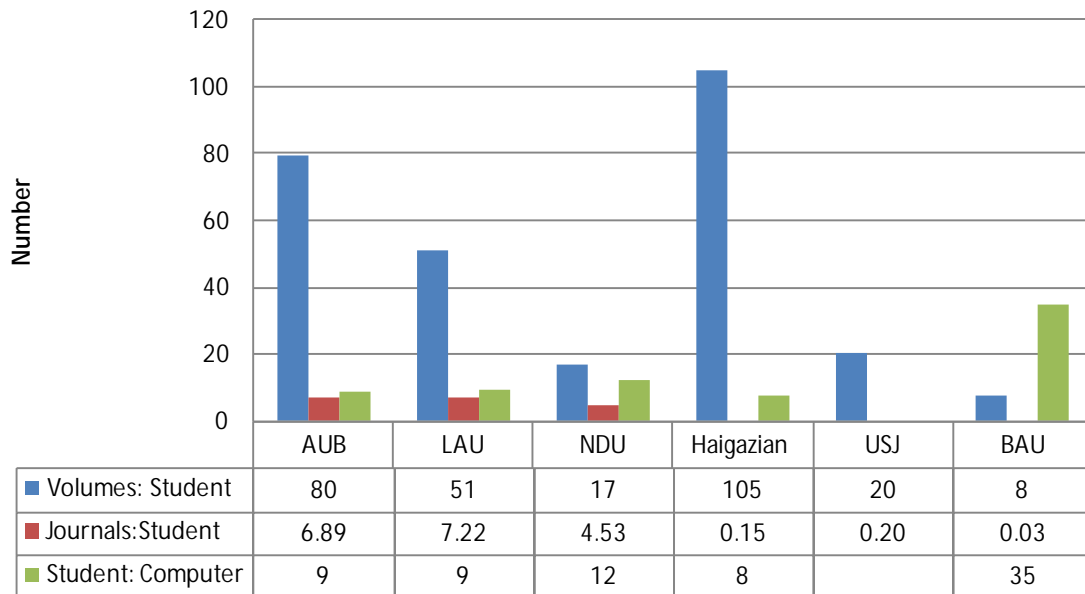


Figure 46: Library holdings and computers available at universities



3. Built Area

Current requirement of built area per student is 4m². Figure 47 reports some findings. It is true that all institutions in this study have a more integral campus, with full fledged operations and services. However, the question is more relevant for universities which are operating in small buildings (especially in regional branches), when other related services lack, such as sports facilities, student unions, and parking lots. Yet, like everything under scrutiny in this report, it comes with a price tag. New universities that emerged in the past decades were able to keep their cost at a minimum, hence their moderate tuition fees, due to small scale operations. Many universities are faced with increased operating costs after opening new facility, even if this facility is built from a private donation.

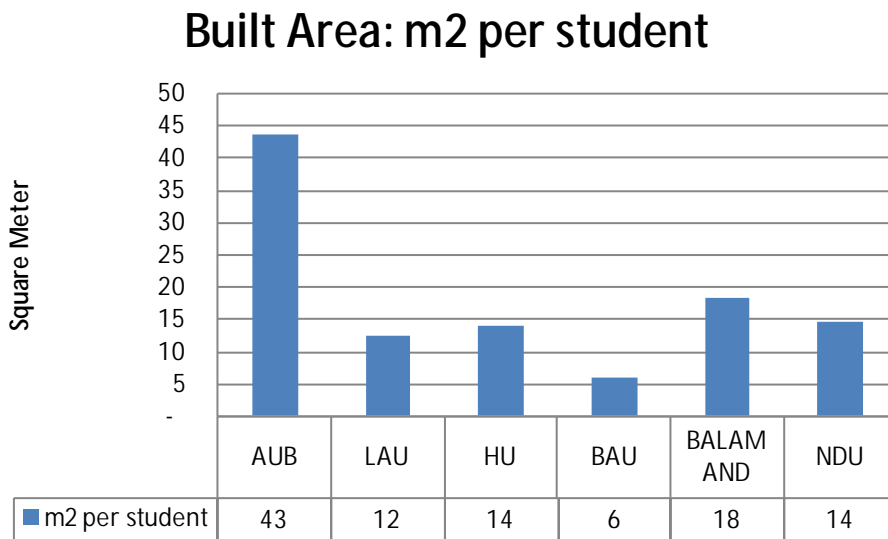


Figure 47: Built area (m²) per student

4. Student Support and Career Services

Student services vary across institutions, from financially supporting student activities and clubs, to advanced academic and career counseling/advising. Support for sports, arts, and travel is also considered. Career support at universities was surveyed, for its importance in guiding students through different services they may provide, from coaching and counseling to placement. One main observation is that the sophistication in services offered is almost absent across the board. A measurement of one full time career officer per 1000 students is thought to be adequate. AUB and Balamand reported there is one full time career service staff, while LAU reported two (one on each campus). Other institutions mentioned that there is no such service. Surveying websites of universities in Lebanon confirms that most universities have no career service whatsoever, or on a very limited scale, with no dedicated staff. This comes as surprise since all institutions



promise jobs after graduation, and such offices are expected to facilitate such claim. This can be explained by either lack of awareness of importance of such services, or unwillingness to invest in such service. On the other side, the job market is not well developed and little information is available, knowing the Lebanese job market channels and expectations. Another point is the general attitude that many graduates end up looking for jobs abroad, and hence the uselessness of such office anyways, since those universities do not only cater for local job market, but to the region's as well.



VI. Tuition and Value-for-Money

What is value-for-money in higher education? Judging on a university productivity and performance vis-à-vis how much it spends, and how much a student has to pay for education, is a complicated issue.

A. Tuition Levels and Policy

Figure 48 shows average yearly tuition for business programs. In the absence of institution-declared average tuition numbers, we chose business program tuition as an institutional average for two main reasons: one, all universities in Lebanon have business programs and even separate business school/faculty and large proportion of students are enrolled in business programs. Second, business credit cost at most institutions tend to be at medium-level rate between the least expensive social sciences/humanities credit cost and the most expensive engineering/biological sciences credit cost. Program cost was calculated based on unit credit cost multiplied by the number of credits needed to complete degree requirements. This number excludes other fees paid throughout the 3 years at university, such as remedial courses, registration, or cost of books and other supplies. We divided the cost of program by three (normal length of program).

It is clear that huge differences exist in tuition paid by students. It can be as low as \$2000 and as high as \$14,000. Figure 49 regroups those numbers into bands of \$1000 incrementally. AUB and LAU, having the highest tuition, and enrollments of 14% of students at private universities in Lebanon. Balamand is next but considerably less expensive than AUB/LAU. Sixteen universities have tuition between \$3,000 and \$6,000, having around 48% of students at private universities. It is important to note that two institutions (BAU and LIU) have the bulk of students and their tuition is between \$3000-4000.



Average Yearly Tuition for Business Program (2009-10)

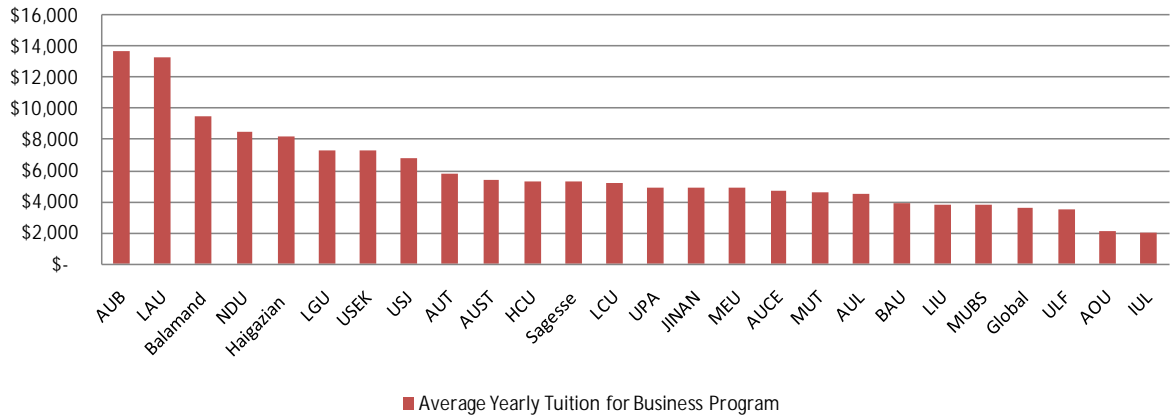


Figure 48: Average yearly tuition for business program at universities (2009-10)

Tuition Bands

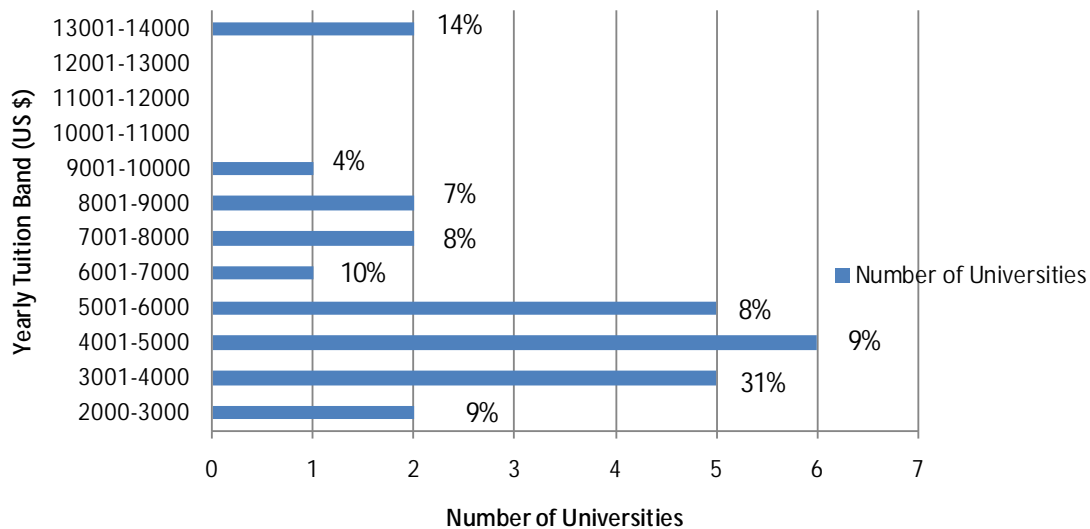


Figure 49: Grouping tuition levels into bands

There is no cap on tuition fees in Lebanon; hence universities have complete freedom in raising levels and structures of tuition. As the cost of higher education increases, which subsequently mostly falls on students and families, one must question who controls the ballooning of tuition? Unfortunately, there is no historical data to measure recent years' rising. It is true that most increases are mostly inflation-indexed, but some recent cases at AUB and LAU suggest otherwise. A tuition restructuring for a level increase of the same credits prompted outcry from students and universities have now found themselves compelled to better communicate their plans, and even alter/delay them.



In AY 2009-2010, the Central Bank of Lebanon introduced a subsidized scheme for educational loans through commercial banks. Given that this is a recent phenomenon little analysis can be provided. AUB has had such program in place with a limited number of banks. Just this year the university opened these loans to all programs and faculties. Some points remain to be made in this regard:

- Would this encourage universities to give less financial aid from their own budget allocation in favor of banks loans?
- If collateral is still needed, then mostly affluent students will benefit from those schemes, and students with disadvantaged socio-economic background will not.
- The logic is that students will find jobs after graduation and pay back their loans. However, since return on private higher education in Lebanon is negative, who guarantees pay back, or even a job. On another level, are all universities job outcome the same? A student with a business degree graduating with \$15,000 loan from university X may not be in same shoes as another student with same degree and loan from university Y.

B. Expenses and Tuition

Examining operating expenses versus yearly tuition is the only medium available to approach value for money. In the previous section an analysis of expenses on instruction was provided. Figure 50 gives a more comprehensive picture. Expenses per student was plotted against average tuition per student. AUB demonstrates a large difference to other universities, indicating a high level of “subsidies” between what students actually pay for education, and how much university spends. LAU has a slightly higher expenses/student than actual tuition. BAU, HU, and Balamand have slightly higher tuitions compared to expenses. As for NDU, USEK, and USJ, a wider difference exists between tuition paid and actual expenses by student (2 years of difference in data for USEK and USJ budgets), which makes one wonder about such gaps. One explanation is that these universities might be re-allocating funds into other priorities, mainly capital projects, and hence they are not calculated into operating budgets. However this needs to be verified.



Expenses/Student vs Business Yearly Tuition

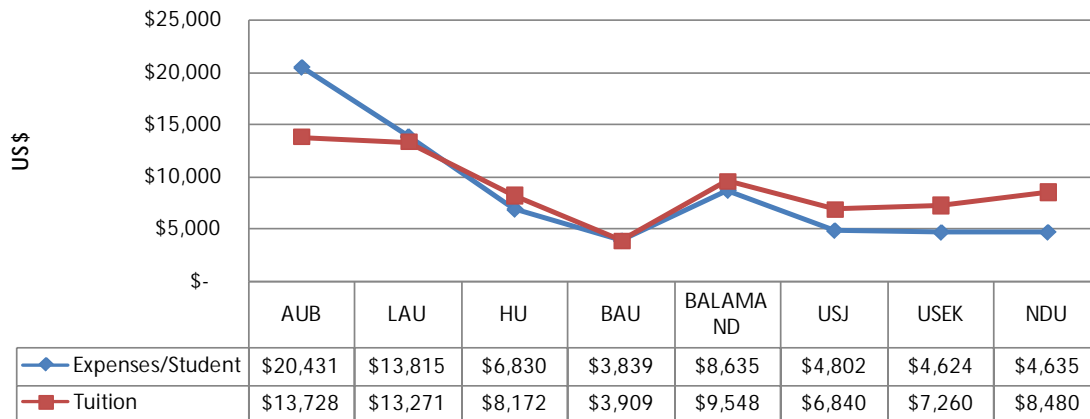


Figure 50: Expenses per student vs. average yearly tuition for business

C. Putting it all together?

How to judge on other indicators? These universities are mainly teaching centers, judging on the share of research expenses from their operating budget (less than 1% at AUB). Indicators used above can be plotted against tuition to show greater performance measurement perspective. Using the graduation rate can be a good start. However such information is only available for AUB and LAU, and it is hard to judge how good (or not) AUB and LAU ratios are. Another item that can be plotted is Student: Faculty ratios, especially terminal degree holders. This gives a general institutional idea student-faculty interaction. However, students' focus should be on program-level, with adequate knowledge of resources for specific programs, especially full time terminal degree holders' faculty. Academic-related expenses and its percentage to tuition can give a better idea on universities' priorities and how they relate to students' priorities. Indeed, this can be a puzzle and constructing it is not without its problems and challenges. Reiterating that this is a first-attempt, it is hoped that this becomes more feasible in the future, once basic prerequisites are in place.

D. Measuring Experience and Satisfaction

Other tools should be used as proxies for performance measurement, mainly satisfaction surveys. This span over a wide array of areas: student satisfaction, employees, alumni, teaching quality... Assessments and evaluation surveys can provide a measurement of quality and satisfaction, and allow institutions to track improvements, or not, and make pushes for further policy changes. AUB and LAU provide some sort of survey results on their websites, though not comparable since they use different tools. These research tools are complex to design and might be expensive, thus a national effort is needed to come up with some national versions of surveys, something that can considerably help at the same time local benchmarking achieved or facilitated.



VII. Alternative Approach to Transparency: Index of Online Presence

How do universities perform on public disclosure? Indeed tracking online presence can be taken as a main indicator of how much a university disclose to the public and its quality.

A. The Importance of Online Presence

A website's main function is to provide needed information on all academic and operational aspects of an institution. Thus, it is a main source of information for all stakeholders. It is important to have this user perspective in mind. Students are main users, but other stakeholders are looking for information as well. It is expected that a website must have updated information at any time on most matters. Hence, judging "online presence" can mainly serve as an alternative and a proxy to other quality measures that we outlined in previous sections of this report. It is believed that will encourage institutions to become more open, transparent, and accountable to the public and increase web presence and visibility for institutions.

B. Index of Online Presence

A survey of universities websites, and all related pages are considered as main source of information for the public. Noting that catalogues and other print material are still relevant, online materials can be considered more important since it is expected to be more updated, easily accessible from anywhere, and presented for a wider audience. We surveyed local and foreign universities websites and made informed analysis of what to expect from a website. Indeed websites content depth varied across all universities, not to mention design friendliness and aesthetics, (although the latter was not of concern to us). We looked at data/info as such, and then we added layers (in most cases) of other related data/info so that we get a quality aspect to main information.

C. The index looked at information related to:

- Faculty
- Governance
- Admissions
- Tuition and other fees
- Financial Aid
- Student Services
- Partnerships and International Agreements



D. Methodology

- For each of the 57 pieces of information in the above-mentioned categories, a rating was assigned on the following basis:
 - o For information that is available: +1
 - o For information that is not available: 0
 - o For information that is not available but deemed very important and should be available, universities were penalized: -1
 - o +0.5, -0.5 were assigned for incomplete information
- Ratings were added into one general score for each university.
- Universities scores were ranked.
- Scores were normalized following this formula:
$$\text{Score} = 10 * (\# \text{ of ranks below university} / \text{Total number of universities}).$$
- All 26 scores ranged between 0 and 10: 0 being university with least available information on website and 10, the most available information.
- Survey of websites was done in early September 2010. Hence it did not consider changes and updates that occurred afterwards.

E. Results

The following represents findings on two categories: Faculty and Governance.

It is clear that information about faculty (Figure 51) on universities websites is scarce. While some provided a headcount of faculty at their institutions, other information we sought were to give a qualitative aspect of this data by asking questions on faculty status, names, biographies, affiliation, and courses taught. It is clear that most universities chose not to share this information with the public. Some course offerings would present course title and instructor, but this is not enough information when more elaborate approach to faculty is needed, since they are one of most important elements in any institution.

As for governance (Figure 52, Table 10), it is equally important to learn about institution's governing bodies, mission, strategic planning, finances, and quality culture. Again a few things are mentioned, and mostly in some scattered or unprofessional manner.



Faculty Online Presence

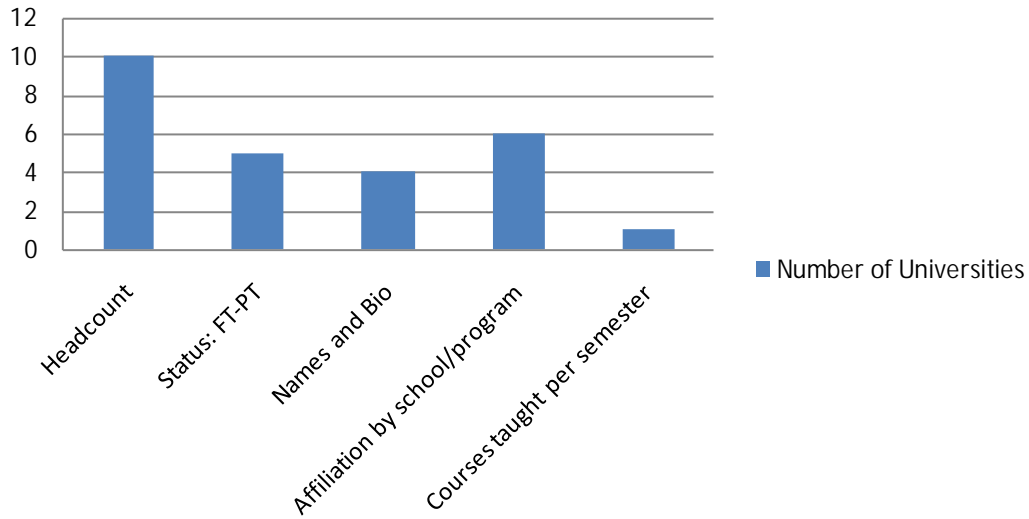


Figure 51: Information about faculty composition and characteristics available online

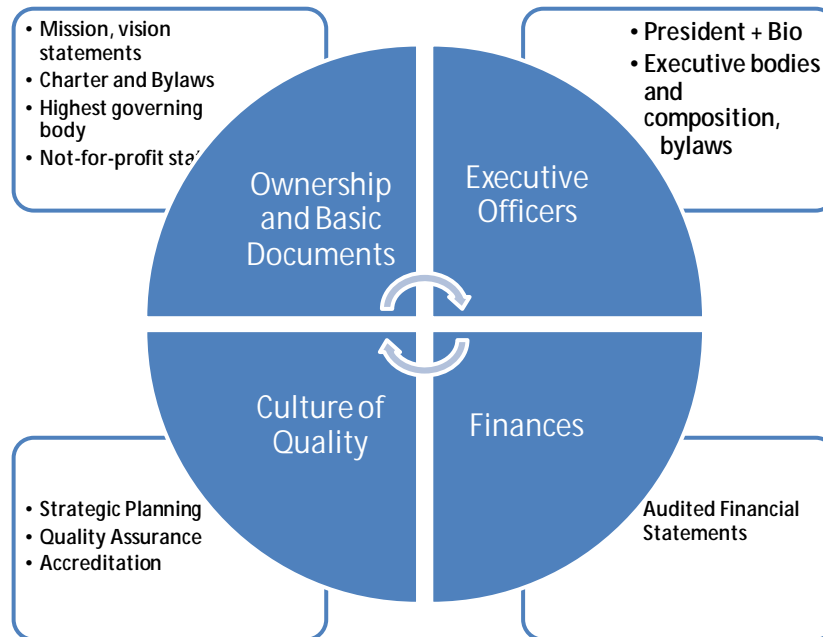


Figure 52: Governance Overview at universities



Governance	26 Universities
Establishing Entity	19
Mission/Vision of University	23
Not-for-profit status	15
Highest governing body (names +titles)	20
Bylaws	7
President Name	26
Bio of President	10
List of University Councils	15
Bylaws and composition	7
Strategic Planning (SP) document	4
SP cycle report	3
Operating Budget	3
Audited Financial Statement	1
Internal Quality Assurance	7
Institutional Accreditation	5
External Review Report	3

Table 10: Information about governance aspects at institutions available online.

As for overall index results, Figure 53 ranks the 26 universities surveyed. On a scale of 0 to 10, this radar puts all universities arranged by scores, from the highest to the lowest from right to left. Clearly web content, depth, and breadth differed widely among universities in Lebanon. Such striking results demonstrate the absence of some basic standards for web presence. Differentiation should happen, but still some basic aspects are required. Some websites are outdated; others recently launched still lack information. Figure 54 regroups those results into bands of scores, showing the number of universities in each band. Only half of those 26 universities scored more than 5 over 10. In essence those other websites serve as marketing tool for programs that those universities are offering, a description of majors and degrees mostly, with minimal information on other very important items.



Index of Online Presence (0-10)

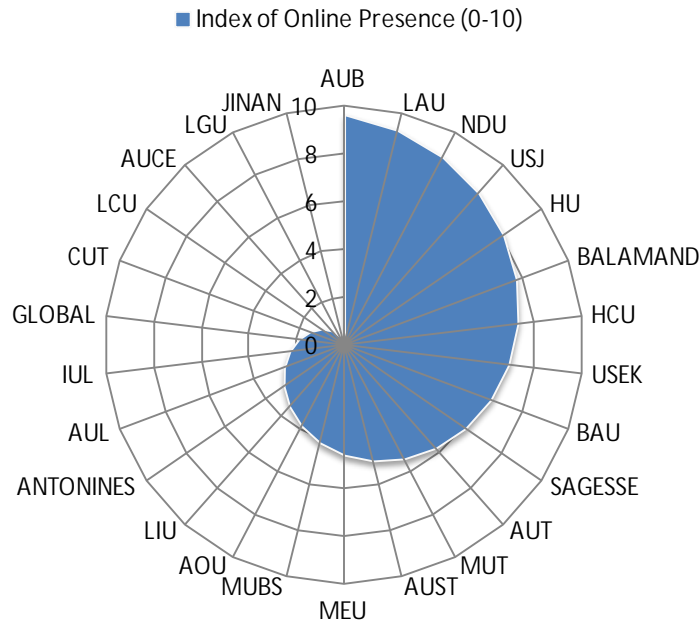


Figure 53: Index of Online Presence for 26 universities

Universities and Scores

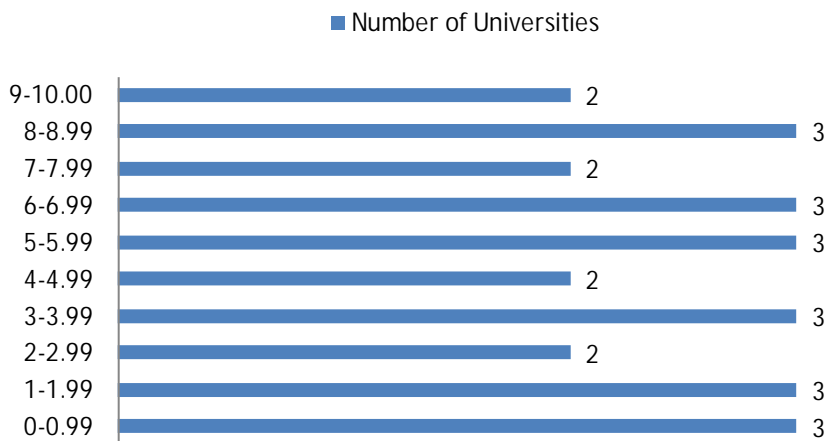


Figure 54: Index of Online Presence scores and 26 universities



VIII. Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

This study was a first attempt to quantitatively address HEIs and the sector in general. It explored a value-for-money approach to what private universities in Lebanon offer. It probed and asked questions for the first time across the board. Though limitations to this exercise were clearly outlined some major findings can constitute a strong base for a serious and purposeful debate about the state and future of higher education in Lebanon.

Legislative and administrative reform should be at the core of debate. Though a draft higher education law is currently under discussion in Parliament, a broader view of needed reforms should be presented. The current deficiencies in supervisory and auditing mechanisms have left institutions to operate in an unrestrained environment. Re-aligning the last decade expansion of the sector with national objectives and priorities is key.

Some major issues are still outstanding though they were on top agenda past decade, mainly quality assurance and accreditation. However the agenda should re-focused with broader perspective on:

- National higher education policy
- Strategic planning for higher education institutions
- Private-sector businesses and higher education dialogue and partnership
- General (mainly secondary) education and higher education dialogue and partnership

A. This study Showed:

1. There is a huge gap in data availability among institutions. It is clear that this is between “old” and “new” universities, but as well among “old” universities themselves. The capacity to internally generate institutional data is limited and sometimes quality control over data generation is lacking. Data should be available on program/departmental level, so that their specific contexts can be put more in perspective and not lost in broader institutional data.
2. If information is available, there is limited willingness to share it beyond a limited number of senior administrators internally. This information is most of the times denied even to faculty, staff, and students.
3. On a broader level, there is no agreed-upon framework in which institutional statistics are developed. Indeed, in the absence of national standards, understanding institutional data and establishing comparability among different institutions remain a difficult exercise.
4. From the performance indicators perspective, it is disturbing to see measurement of internal efficiency and faculty, students, and resources management absent or



- not publicly reported. Ratios presented gave a clear picture of existing differences among all institutions. The core question remains: how do such differences affect education quality and student experiences.
5. Though one *may* take data presented as a benchmark of the market one important aspect needs to be considered: although those institutions are mainly teaching centers findings suggest that what they offer is diverse. This study explores the need to find some evidence-based classifications rather than some generic names such as “university”. Institutions of higher education in Lebanon are inherently different, but this should be an incentive for the case of establishing common frameworks and definitions of major academic and operational aspects.

B. Recommendations:

1. For Universities:

- **Institutional data generation and dissemination:** all university functions and operations should be based on a centralized effort to generate and analyze data and information. Good decision making processes stem from quality, updated, and relevant data.
- **Strategic planning and quality assurance:** such undertakings are based on availability of institutional data. Likewise, strategic planning remains weak or almost inexistent at most institutions. A culture of quality at any institution can be assessed by looking if this institution makes plans for the future and how it measures its accomplishments and progress.
- **A new culture:** institutions are invited to make a paradigm shift on how they look at themselves and at the sector. A more open and transparent policy will bring immense benefits to all actors.
- **Working together:** universities should be able to come together in a more effective way. Currently the “Association of Universities” is not living up to expectations. This needs vision, willingness, and leadership. All these seem hard to find under the current circumstances. An action plan should be put in place; preferably with limited objectives as a testing phase, to see how much cooperative and common work can be effective – all the while allowing for its institutionalization by making the “association” a focal point for policy and decision-making. A permanent platform for sharing and exchanging experiences can take the industry into another level of excellence and quality.



2. For the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE):

- **Legal and administrative reforms:** restructuring the directorate of higher education at the ministry, with qualified staff and adequate budget, coupled with passing of law of higher education in parliament. Simply put, this will be a cornerstone in any substantial change. The Lebanese University should be reformed in same spirit approached to private sector institutions.
- **Establish a national higher education data and information center:** this can help collect, analyze and disseminate data and information on HEIs in Lebanon. This can become a feeder for any policy or action.
- **National higher education policy:** MEHE should formulate a HE strategy, the same as a general education strategy was formulated. Furthermore, a national dialogue among all levels of education should be facilitated, mainly secondary, and higher education.

3. For Students and Parents:

- **Know more:** students and parents are invited to familiarize themselves with universities operations and practices. Making a choice about an institution should involve many aspects. As important as tuition and programs are, students should look at how effective such institutions are in delivering graduates and their job prospects. Students should understand ratios and their implications on their experience.
- **Accountability:** students should make their institutions more accountable. They should ask about institutional studies and surveys and not rely on unsubstantiated marketing material. Students should make capacity to establish a permanent dialogue with their institutions, through different governance mechanism, so that they are aware of decisions and how they are affected by them.

4. For Employers:

- **Engage with HEIs and in sector-wide policy:** employers should be engaged through their different associations and representatives into national policy discussion, as well with institutions. Their voice should be heard when doing educational planning, a main objective for should be preparation for economic production, growth, and development. The private sector should be involved with universities in different capacities, especially giving feedback about their students-employees, engaging in shaping programs, and sitting on advisory and trustees boards.
- **Fundraising:** private sector businesses should be more open at financing HEIs programs and plans. They should take lead in promoting universities diversification of resources. However, this can give them more leverage in pushing universities to become more accountable to the public by showing results and performance.



IX. Annex: Index of Online Presence Indicators

Faculty
Faculty Headcount*
Faculty status: PT vs. FT
Faculty Names and bios: (Bios: education, year of graduation, university; professional exp., rank)
Faculty school/department affiliation
Faculty courses taught per semester

Governance
Founding Entity
Mission/Vision of University
Not-for-profit status
Highest governing body (names +titles)
Bylaws
President Name
Bio of President
List of University Councils
Bylaws and composition
Strategic Planning (SP) document
SP cycle report
Operating Budget
Audited Financial Statement
Internal Quality Assurance
Periodic Programme Reviews
Institutional Accreditation
External Institutional Review Report

Financial Aid
Financial Aid Policy
FA forms
Need-based vs. merit-based
Loans, grants, work-study
FA stats from previous years (recipients, budget)



Partnerships and International Agreements

Listing of local and international agreements

Outcome of those agreements (# of exchange students, faculty benefiting annually...)

Admission

Stating admissions requirements

For Freshman

For Sophomore/1st year

For Transfer Students

For Graduate Studies

Entrance Exams

Language Tests, Scores, and Placements

Subjects Tests, Scores, and Placements

Application deadline for any term

Application evaluation and selection process

Previous year admissions' stats

Tuition and other Fees

Tuition Structure by Program

Tuition Cost by Unit

Average tuition at institution

List of potential other fees (application, registration,..)

Tuition and fees policy (collection, deferred,..)

Student Services

Academic Counseling

Career Counseling

Health Services

Student Governance

Students Council

Participation in decision-making

Library

Services

Collection (books and e-resources)

IT (computers accessibility, connection...)

Athletics (facilities, teams...)

Clubs (formation, listing...)

*(red color indicates high importance).



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