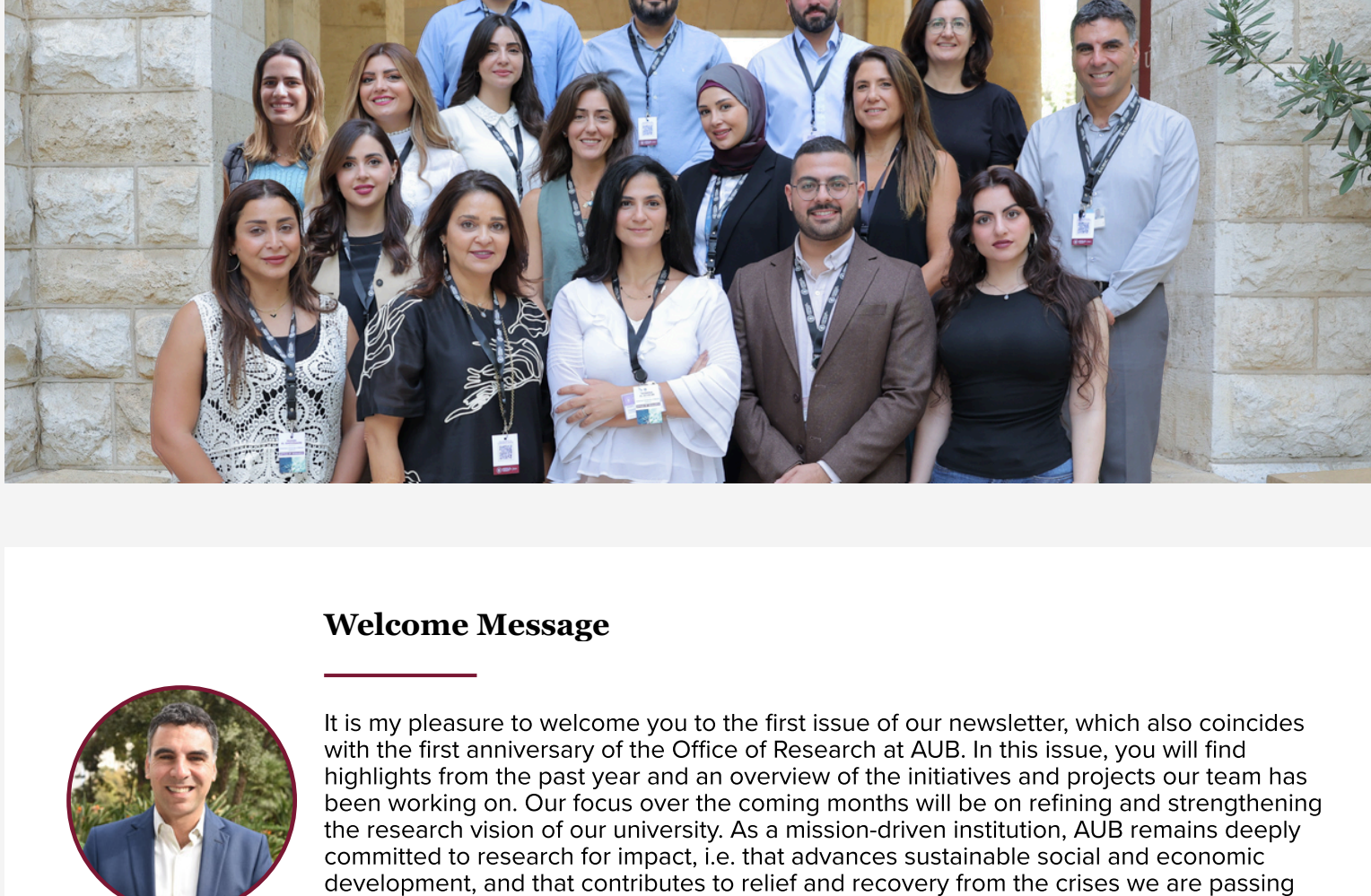




Welcome Message



It is my pleasure to welcome you to the first issue of our newsletter, which also coincides with the first anniversary of the Office of Research at AUB. In this issue, you will find highlights from the past year and an overview of the initiatives and projects our team has been working on. Our focus over the coming months will be on refining and strengthening the research vision of our university. As a mission-driven institution, AUB remains deeply committed to research for impact, i.e. that advances sustainable social and economic development, and that contributes to relief and recovery from the crises we are passing through. The dedicated team at the Office of Research remains committed to serve and support the research community at AUB.

-Dr. Elie Akl, vice provost for research



Responding to Crisis



Office of Research: Rising to the Challenge during Crisis

Between September and November 2024, Lebanon witnessed an unprecedented war. In response, the Office of Research shifted its priorities to remain functional during this challenging period. The office implemented a business continuity plan and announced a research stimulus funding opportunity to support AUB's research community.

Business Continuity Plan

To safeguard AUB's research mission during the crisis, we partnered with the Offices of Human Resources, Procurement, and Finance to support researcher wellbeing, adapt projects to new realities, secure critical funding and supplies, and maintain strong communication with our partners.

Research for Defiance, Hope, and Impact Initiative

This initiative aimed to foster impactful, interdisciplinary research and strengthen collaboration across AUB's faculty, particularly in response to the crisis. Building on the university's expertise and ongoing projects, six faculty-led working groups were formed, focusing on environment, urban studies, forced displacement, research in times of war, capacity building, and healthcare workers.

Stimulus Funding for Research on the War in Lebanon

On November 1, 2024, the Office of Research launched a stimulus funding opportunity to support high-quality, interdisciplinary, and impactful projects. Selected proposals received up to \$20,000 and officially commenced on March 1, 2025.

Inter-University Seed Grant (IUSG) for Research Related to Conflict

The Office of Research launched the Inter-University Seed Grant (IUSG) for Research Related to Conflict, in partnership with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). This initiative supported collaborations between AUB faculty and colleagues from conflict-affected universities in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, focusing on themes such as forced displacement, environment, healthcare workers, ethical challenges of research, and recovery from conflict. Funded projects were awarded up to \$36,000 and began in June 2025.

Research News

A. INTRODUCING DIASPORA FOR RESEARCH, D4R: LEBANON NETWORK

The Office of Research at AUB, in partnership with the Centre for Humanitarian Leadership at Deakin University, has launched D4R: Lebanon—the first in a series of research networks for crisis-affected settings. The initiative connects Lebanese researchers abroad with colleagues in Lebanon to foster collaboration and mutual support during and after the country's crises. Researchers at all levels are welcome to join.

www.aub.edu.lb/d4r



B. 2024 JOURNAL IMPACT METRICS

The 2024 Journal Citation Reports (JCR) have been released, celebrating their 50th anniversary and now covering over 22,000 journals across science and social science categories. This update introduces a key change: citations to and from retracted content are excluded from Journal Impact Factor (JIF) calculations. Scopus has also published its 2024 CiteScores, which use a 4-year citation window, offering a complementary perspective on journal impact.

Researchers are reminded that publishing in Q1 journals remains a key indicator of research quality and visibility, and is closely monitored by global university rankings.

C. RESEARCH FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Office of Research provides access to Research Professional, a comprehensive online database of global funding opportunities. Available to all AUB faculty, staff, and students, the platform helps users explore funding tailored to their interests. More details and access are available through AUB credentials. The office team is currently exploring Pivot-PP, an AI supported version of Research Professional.

[Learn more](#)

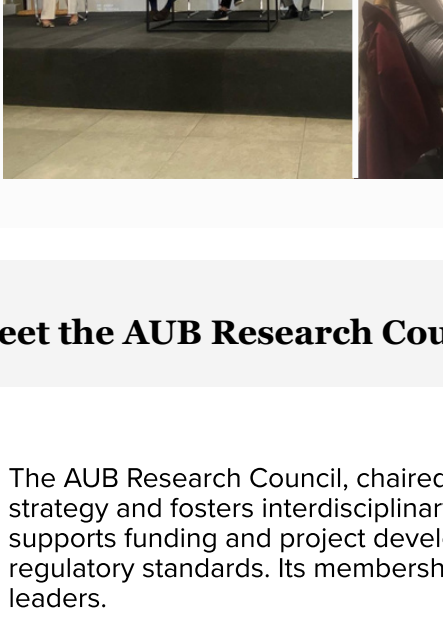
Events



Research in Crisis Settings : Challenges and Opportunities

The Office of Research at AUB, in collaboration with Birzeit University, and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), who is also funding the conference, hosted the international conference Research in Crisis Settings: Challenges and Opportunities from September 23-26, 2025, at the AUB Beirut campus. The 3.5-day event brought together scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to explore the role of research in crisis contexts, with a focus on the MENA region. The conference highlighted interdisciplinary collaboration, community impact, and actionable solutions. Check the event [webpage](#).

[Learn more](#)

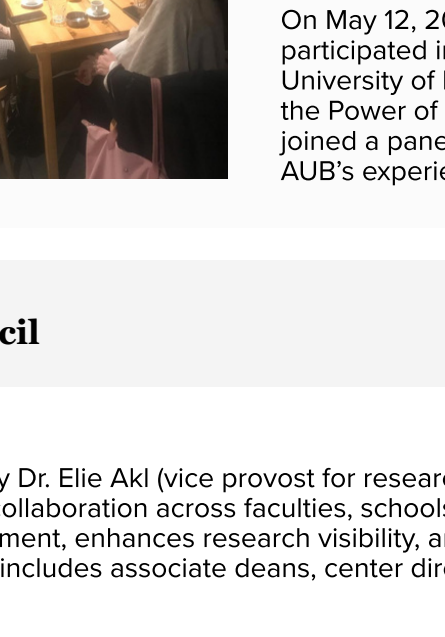


University Research Community of Practice (UrCOP)

The University Research Grants Administrators Community of Practice (UrCOP) was launched on February 18, 2025, bringing together more than 80 research administrators from across AUB. UrCOP serves as a platform for networking, knowledge exchange, and professional development, fostering collaboration across faculties, centers, and administrative units involved in research.

Since its launch, UrCOP has hosted a series of dynamic gatherings—including speed networking, creative workshops, storytelling, mindfulness, and wellbeing activities—that highlight the community's commitment to supporting research while also addressing workplace challenges and personal growth.

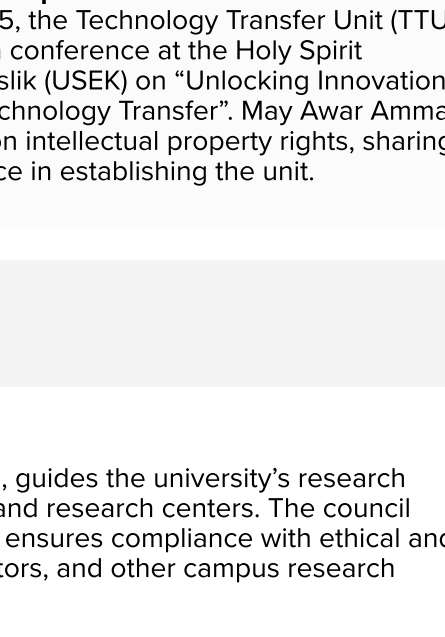
[Learn more](#)



Engagement with External Actors

In 2024–2025, AUB hosted key meetings with government and diplomatic leaders to explore collaboration and research-driven solutions.

- November 12, 2024: AUB delegation met with Minister of Environment Nasser Yassin to discuss the university's role in crisis response and sustainable recovery.
- April 3, 2025: AUB delegation met with Minister of Health Rakan Nassereldine to explore ways to strengthen Lebanon's health sector.
- February 21, 2025: AUB representatives met with Ambassador of Spain Jesús Ignacio Santos Aguado to discuss strategic partnerships and academic cooperation.



LIRA Signing Ceremony

The Lebanese Industrial Research Achievements (LIRA) program, under IRALEB, founded by the Ministry of Industry, the Association of Lebanese Industrialists, and the National Council for Scientific Research, continues to strengthen collaboration between academia and industry in Lebanon. Since its founding, LIRA has supported hundreds of projects, fostering applied research and innovation.

In the 2024 LIRA competition, five projects received \$10,000 grants each, with three of the winning projects coming from AUB faculty—highlighting the university's leadership in advancing research with real-world impact.



Community Events

Christmas Open House

The Office of Research hosted a Christmas Open House, bringing together colleagues from across campus and celebrating the season with President Fadi Khuri in attendance.

Annual Office Iftar

The Office of Research held its annual Iftar gathering fostering a sense of community and reflection. The event also marked the promotion of May Awar Ammar and Makram Halawani to directors.

Yoga at AUB

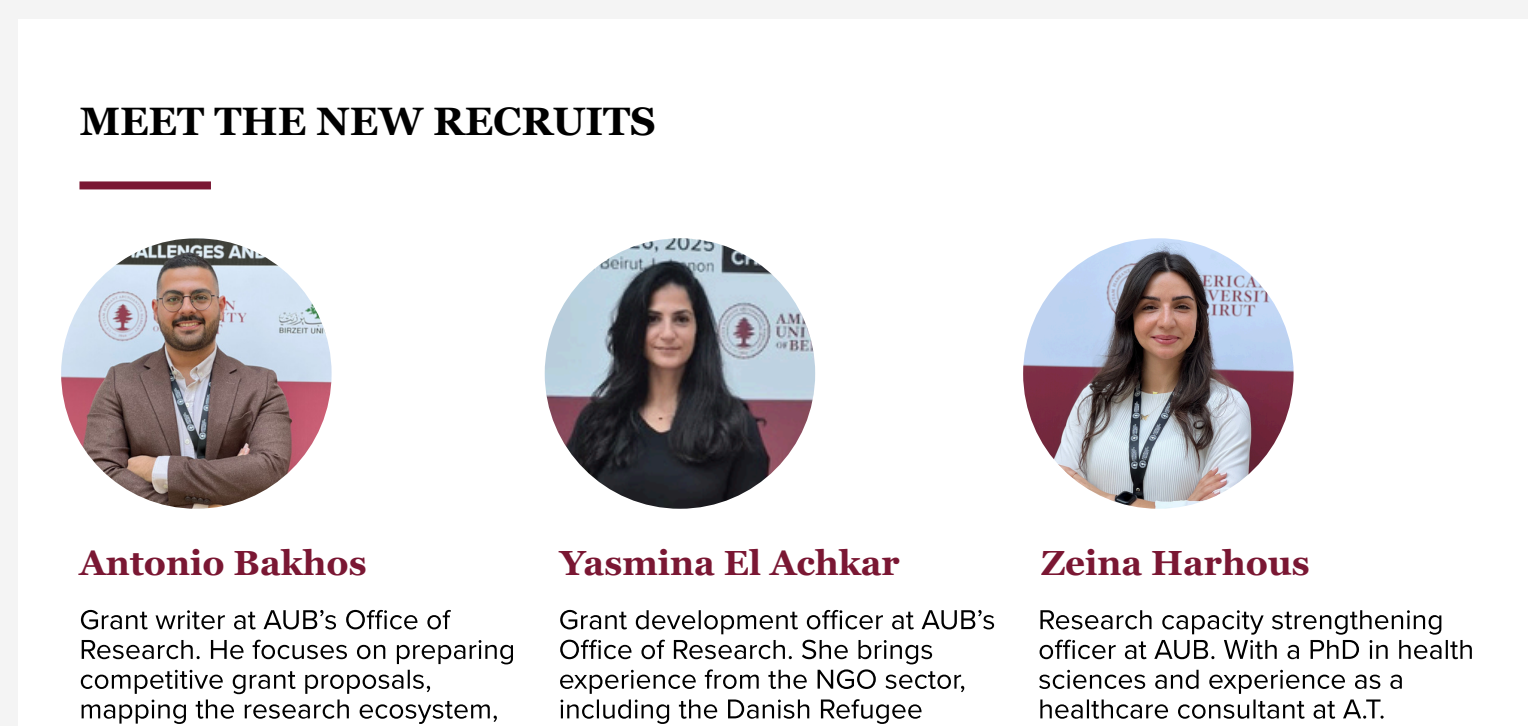
On November 19, 2024, Yumna Maalouf led a "Gentle Yoga for Relaxation" session for AUB faculty and staff, organized with the AUB Office of Events and Health and Wellness Center at AUBMC.

Conference Participation

On May 12, 2025, the Technology Transfer Unit (TTU) participated in a conference at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK) on "Unlocking Innovation: the Power of Technology Transfer". May Awar Ammar joined a panel on intellectual property rights, sharing AUB's experience in establishing the unit.

Meet the AUB Research Council

The AUB Research Council, chaired by Dr. Elie Akl (vice provost for research), guides the university's research strategy and fosters interdisciplinary collaboration across faculties, schools, and research centers. The council supports funding and project development, enhances research visibility, and ensures compliance with ethical and regulatory standards. Its membership includes associate deans, center directors, and other campus research leaders.



Office of Research Team News

MEET THE NEW RECRUITS



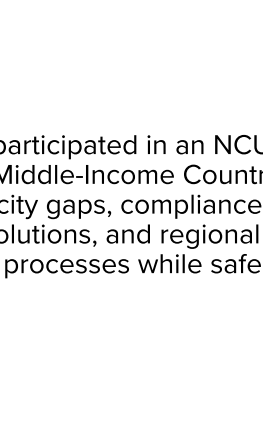
Antonio Bakhos

Grant writer at AUB's Office of Research. He focuses on preparing competitive grant proposals, mapping the research ecosystem, and identifying strategic collaboration opportunities. Previously, he worked on multi-million-dollar grants at the Lebanese American University.



Yasmina El Achkar

Grant development officer at AUB's Office of Research. She brings experience from the NGO sector, including the Danish Refugee Council, Oxfam GB, and SOS Children's Villages Lebanon. Yasmina supports faculty in developing competitive grant proposals and mapping AUB's research landscape.



Zeina Harhous

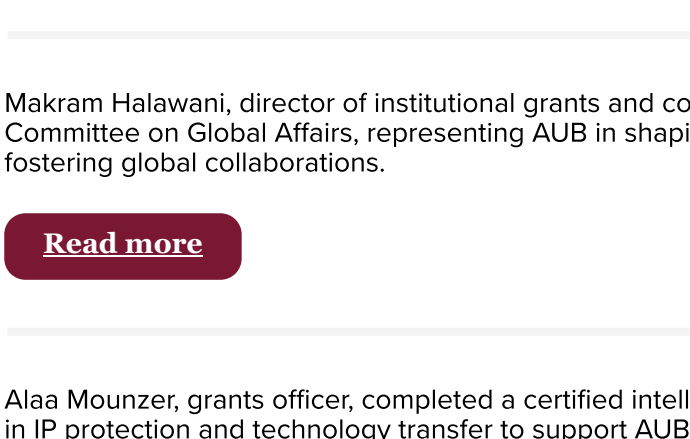
Research capacity strengthening officer at AUB. With a PhD in health sciences and experience as a healthcare consultant at A.T. Kearney, she leads programs to strengthen research capacity across the university. Zeina also supports updating research guidelines and policies.

TEAM MEMBERS' HIGHLIGHTS

May Awar Ammar, director of sponsored programs and technology transfer participated in an NCURA Region XIII webinar on "Navigating Challenges in Research Administration in Low- and Middle-Income Countries". On June 6, 2025, The session explored key hurdles such as funding limitations, capacity gaps, compliance complexities, and infrastructure constraints, while highlighting best practices, innovative solutions, and regional cooperation. "Exchanging tactics with peers facing similar constraints helps us streamline processes while safeguarding compliance and research quality," noted May Awar.

[Watch the recording](#)

The Office of Research was present in Day 2 of PowerX Summit - Lebanon's first national entrepreneurship and innovation summit, organized by Berytech on May 14, 2025. May Awar Ammar took part in the panel on "Universities as Engines of Innovation," session exploring how academic institutions are active drivers of entrepreneurship, research commercialization, and cross-sector collaboration, despite the many challenges in our local context



As part of the EU-funded Lebanon Innovate Program, Alaa Mounzer and May Awar Ammar participated in a three-day training organized by Anima Investment Network for five Lebanese universities, aimed at strengthening international cooperation capacities. The program featured expert-led workshops on designing effective cooperation systems, accessing EU funding, and developing strong project proposals. The final day included a visit to Aix-Marseille University to explore the Tethys Consortium and CIVIS Alliance, and opportunities for Lebanese institutions to engage in ongoing collaborations. By the end of the academic year, AUB's Office of Research became a partner of the Tethys Consortium (2024–2028), advancing its mission in student mobility, EU project partnerships, networking, and capacity-building initiatives.

May Awar Ammar, director of sponsored programs and technology transfer, was selected to join the ICT Knowledge & Innovation Communities (KICs) under Lebanon Innovate, an EU-funded program supporting innovation and knowledge transfer to strengthen Lebanon's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

[Read more](#)

Makram Halawani, director of institutional grants and compliance, was appointed to the NCURA Select Committee on Global Affairs, representing AUB in shaping international research administration initiatives and fostering global collaborations.

[Read more](#)

Alaa Mounzer, grants officer, completed a certified intellectual property course by WIPO, enhancing his expertise in IP protection and technology transfer to support AUB's research and patent processes.

Saada Dakroub received the FM Dean's Excellence Award (2024–2025) for Administrative and Research Staff, recognizing her outstanding contributions to the Faculty of Medicine and AUBMC community.

Editorial Team

Dr. Elie Akl, vice provost for research
Yumna Maalouf, executive administrator
Antonio Bakhos, grant writer
Yasmina El Achkar, grant development officer
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