

Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS)

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Historical Background

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences was established in 1866, the same year in which the Syrian Protestant College, now the American University of Beirut, was established. On December 13, 1866, the first class was held, attended by sixteen students, and in 1870 the first five students graduated. Arabic, which was the language of instruction since the inception of the college, was replaced by English in 1882. In 1900 the School of Commerce was established and was later incorporated into the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

AUB, in general, and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in particular, have survived many crises since 1866, including two world wars, regional and local wars, student strikes, and economic crises. In spite of all these hardships the faculty has continued to develop and to maintain its high academic standards.

In the mid-1970s the University undertook a major planning exercise, which was known as the Horizon 2000 Plan, aimed at reorganizing the University as a whole. Several changes were introduced in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences as a result: a number of departments and programs (Fine and Performing Arts, Religious Studies, European Language and Literature) were cancelled, and a few others were

either merged (e.g., Psychology and Sociology/Anthropology) or became independent from the faculty (e.g., Education and the University Orientation Program). In the past few years the faculty has attempted a major self-review, particularly in its academic programs, faculty composition, and graduation requirements. Several master's degree programs were introduced (e.g., Computer Science and Financial Economics) or re-introduced (e.g., Middle Eastern Studies) and a separate Department of Computer Sciences was created. Furthermore, the faculty is the major contributor to the Center for Advanced Mathematical Studies, a research center of the University, established in 1997. In 2000 the School of Business, which was part of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, became an independent school, and Education became once more a department in Arts and Sciences. In fall 2001 the Central Research Science Laboratory was established to promote scientific research in the faculty and at the University at large. In 2004–05 the Center for American Studies and Research (CASAR) was introduced as well as a new undergraduate program in Fine Arts and Art History. The Faculty of Arts and Sciences, in the Fall of 2007, reactivated some of the PhD programs that it previously had in the 1960s and 1970s, including Arabic, Islamic and Modern Middle East History, and Physics, and launched a PhD program in Cell and Molecular Biology at the Department of Biology.

Mission

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences represents the core of the University and is its main gateway for higher studies and professional education. It follows a liberal arts program that stresses freedom of academic choice, integrity, ethical conduct, equal opportunity and respect for diversity. The faculty offers undergraduate and graduate programs committed to excellence in research and teaching in the most fundamental disciplines of the arts, humanities, and social, natural and mathematical sciences.

Vision

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences strives to have a governance system that is transparent and based on peer participation and review. The faculty encourages and supports high quality research and teaching. The curriculum is built on a pivotal and formative freshman year. Excellence is achieved at the undergraduate and graduate levels through a continuous revision of curricula, assessment of needs for equipment and facilities, and recruitment and development of faculty profiles. The faculty is committed to academic growth through the establishment of successful and sustainable Bachelor, Master and Doctoral degrees.

Graduate Study

Master's Degree

All applicants to graduate study need the recommendation of the academic unit concerned. Admission to the masters program in FAS at AUB is competitive, based on the academic record, achievements and research interests of the applicant. The criteria for admission to graduate study are as follows:

Graduate

- Normally, a cumulative average of at least 80%, or standardized equivalent from other institutions of higher learning, in the major field of study
- Normally, a cumulative average of at least 75%, or standardized equivalent from other institutions of higher learning, in all work done in the sophomore, junior, and senior years
- A minimum grade of 70% in ENGL 203 or exemption from the course, and a minimum grade of 70 in ENGL 204
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score

Graduate on Probation

- Normally, a cumulative average of at least 77%, or standardized equivalent from other institutions of higher learning, in the major field of study
- Normally, a cumulative average of at least 75%, or standardized equivalent from other institutions of higher learning, in all work done in the sophomore, junior, and senior years
- A minimum grade of 70% in ENGL 203 or exemption from the course, and a minimum grade of 70% in ENGL 204
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score

Prospective Graduate

- A cumulative average of at least 75%, or standardized equivalent from other institutions of higher learning, in all work done in the sophomore, junior, and senior years
- Up to 15 credits of supplementary undergraduate courses in the intended field of study, to be specified by the academic unit
- A minimum grade of 70 in ENGL 203 or exemption from the course, and a minimum grade of 70 in ENGL 204
- In order to be admitted to the graduate program the applicant should take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and should have completed the supplementary courses with an average of at least 80, based on a minimum of 15 credits in the intended field of study or related areas as judged by the department or program. Prospective graduate students who have completed all undergraduate prerequisite courses except one, may begin taking 1 graduate course along with the last undergraduate course requirement, upon the approval of their department or program and the graduate committee.

Special Student not Working for a Degree

- A holder of a Bachelor's degree
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores are not required in this case

In certain special cases applicants who have not attained the required undergraduate average for admission (indicated above), but who have shown evidence of creativity or potential for academic work may be admitted to the Graduate Program. Such cases require the appropriate justification of the academic unit concerned and are reviewed by the FAS Graduate Committee on a case by case basis. Academic Units may add additional requirements that would assist in their admission recommendations such as a writing sample, GRE subject test scores, and/or interview. Full information and general requirements for graduate work are found in the Admissions section in this catalogue.

FAS Comprehensive Exam Courses

FAS Master level graduate student should register for a zero credit required course entitled "Comprehensive Exam" that carries the #395A and #395B preceded by the department or program prefix. A student who does not pass the comprehensive examination may take it a second time after a minimum three month period. The student should register for the course the first time as 395A. If the time lapse between the first and second examination falls within the same semester, the exam may be repeated another time, if not then the student needs to register for the course a second time as 395B. The grading of the course (395A and 395B) would be a pass or fail.

Project Committee

The Master's project committee should be composed of at least two faculty members of professorial rank recommended by the department/program. Lecturers may serve as members on exceptional basis as second readers. The chair and first reader shall always be of professorial rank. The project topic proposal and selection of the adviser, and selection of project committee members, should be approved by the faculty/school graduate committee at least four months before the project defense.

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences offers graduate programs of study leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) with majors in Arabic and Near Eastern Languages, Cell and Molecular Biology, Arab and Middle Eastern History, and Theoretical Physics.

These programs have been approved by the New York State Education Department and were reactivated in fall 2007–08.

For the requirements regarding the completion of a PhD program, refer to the relevant sections of this catalogue pp. 46–47 and the pertinent passages for individual departmental requirements.