AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT | Office of Research

NEWSLETTER
RESEARCH@AUB MATTERS

ISSUE NO 3 / MARCH 2026



Mariam El Hajj - Blue Tranquility

Artwork by Next Step Students at AUB



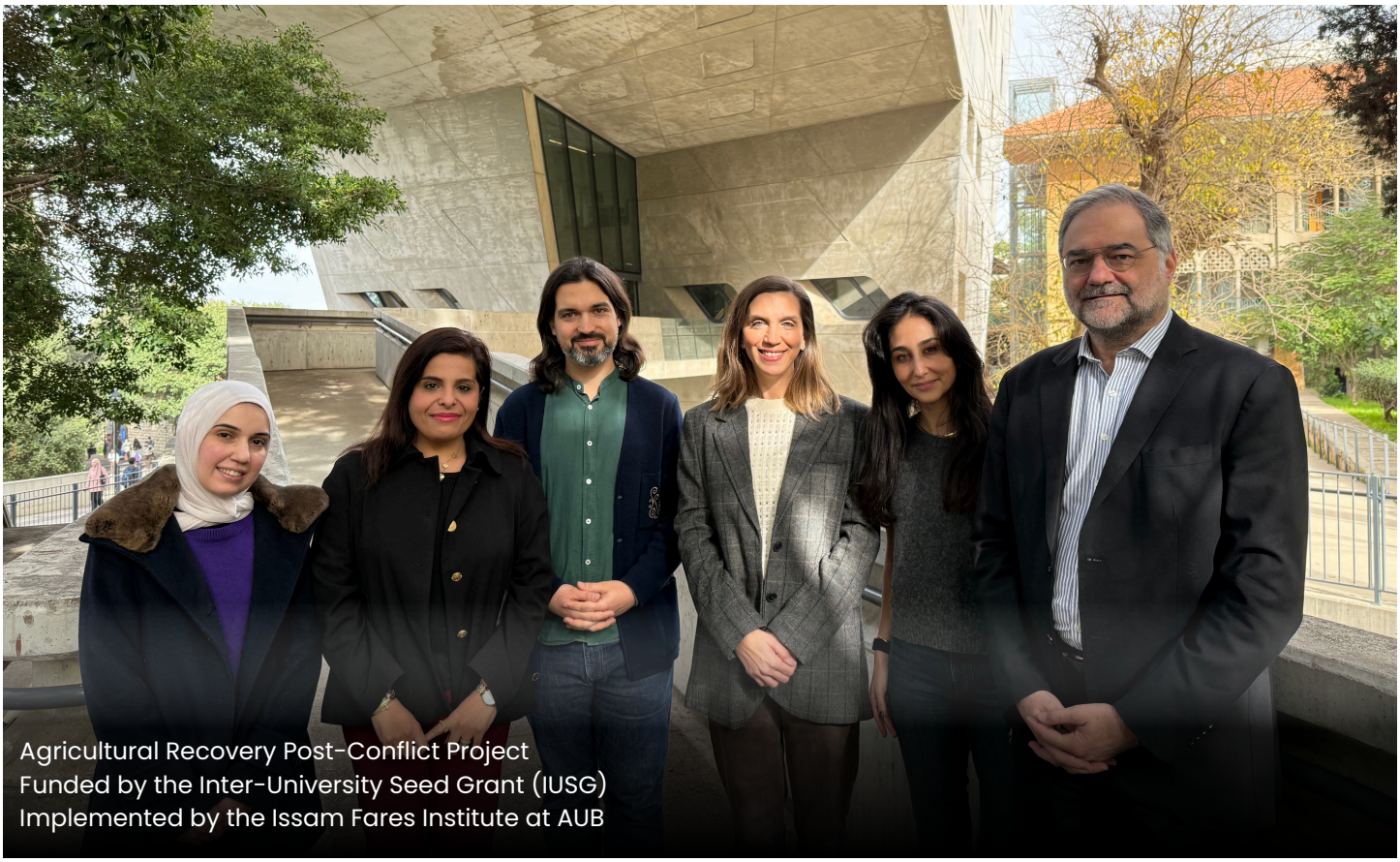
Welcome Message

The third edition of the Office of Research newsletter comes at a time when our country is once again facing the devastation of war.

While research may not be the foremost priority for many in our community, it remains a vital avenue through which some contribute to responding to the current crisis. For others, engaging in research provides a way to stay focused and maintain a sense of purpose amid exceptionally challenging circumstances.

In this issue, we highlight recent activities and ongoing initiatives, with particular emphasis on fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and advancing impactful research. The Office of Research remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting and empowering the AUB research community.

Research Updates



The Inter-University Seed Grant (IUSG) Update

Interdisciplinary teams supported by the Inter-University Seed Grant (IUSG) for Research on Post-Conflict Recovery shared preliminary findings during a virtual meeting on February 4, 2026. Projects span social cohesion, cultural heritage, agriculture, entrepreneurship, and mental health across Lebanon, Syria, and Gaza.



Leveraging Inter-campus Networks for Knowledge Advancement

AUB and AUB Mediterraneo launched the Leveraging Inter-campus Networks for Knowledge Advancement (LINK) Stimulus Funding to promote collaboration between the two campuses. The program offers up to $25,000 for interdisciplinary joint projects. Successful applications are expected to start their projects on 1 June 2026.



SmART Stimulus Funding Program

The Sciences meet Arts and Humanities (SmART) program has opened a call for interdisciplinary research proposals bridging the sciences with the arts and humanities. Selected projects will generate findings to be presented at the SmART international conference that is being planned and will be co-hosted by the Office of Research and the Center for Arts & Humanities.

Pivot-RP Platform Launch

The Office of Research transitioned to Pivot-RP, an AI-enhanced funding discovery platform that supports grant searches, collaboration building, and benchmarking. Training workshops were delivered to help faculty and researchers navigate the platform.

Pivot-RP

Research Events

Recent Highlights



Use of Generative AI in Health Research

The Clinical Research Institute at the American University of Beirut, in collaboration with the Office of Research, delivered a three-day workshop in January 2026. Designed for faculty members and research staff, the workshop explored the responsible integration of generative AI across the research lifecycle, including ideation and proposal development, data management and security, and effective research dissemination.

Enhancing Qualitative Interviews Workshops

The Office of Research hosted advanced, experiential workshops on enhancing depth in qualitative interviews and focus groups, led by Dr. Karen Daniels. Designed for faculty, post-graduate researchers, and graduate students, the workshop provided hands-on training in a field-tested interviewing technique, combining theory, practice, and peer feedback.





Strengthening Research: Resources for Grant Applications

On February 11, 2026, the Faculty Advancement Program (FAP) and the Clinical Research Institute (CRI) hosted a hybrid session to support AUB faculty in securing research funding. The session provided a practical overview of the grant lifecycle, covering pre-award, post-award, and clinical trial functions, with emphasis on requirements specific to clinical research. Speakers from the Office of Research, May Awar Ammar and Yara Haydar, led the session.



Widening Info Day/EU WIDERA Programme

AUB research community joined the Horizon Europe Widening Info Day to learn about upcoming funding opportunities and collaborative initiatives under the WIDERA Work Programme 2026–2027.

Experts from the European Commission presented new call topics, key programme updates, and opportunities for collaborative initiatives.



Postdoctoral Researchers Network Launch

The Office of Research launched the AUB Postdoctoral Researchers Network to support professional development and strengthen collaboration among postdoctoral researchers across the university. Led by Dr. Jason Amatoury (MSFEA) and coordinated by Dr. Zeina Harhous (Office of Research).



University Research Grants Administrators Community of Practice (UrCOP)

UrCOP launched its 2026 activities with sessions promoting collaboration and safe research practices. January's "It Takes Two to Tango," focused on cross-unit coordination in post-award management, followed by February's "PSHEA at the Heart of Safe Partnerships" on Title IX and PSHEA frameworks. On March 12, 2026, UrCOP held an online "Anchor Session Through Connection," where members shared updates on operations and engaged in brief well-being exercises.

Read more



Risk Assessment in Proposal Development (MARCH)

MARCH hosted a two-day Grant Writing Webinar Series on January 8–9, 2026, supporting applicants from its Climate Change & Health EOI call in developing competitive proposals. The sessions covered key aspects of proposal development, including research alignment, GESI integration, impact frameworks, dissemination, and core project management components such as budgeting, data management, and risk mitigation.

As part of the series, May Awar Ammar addressed the identification and mitigation of project risks, contributing to MARCH's ongoing efforts to strengthen research capacity in climate change and health.

Read more

Launch Event of Interreg NEXT MED Projects in Lebanon



The Managing Authority of the Interreg NEXT MED Programme, in partnership with the Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon and the Presidency of the Council of Ministers held on 10 February 2026 the launch event of Interreg NEXT MED projects funded in Lebanon. The event highlighted Lebanon's contribution to a smarter, greener, and more inclusive Mediterranean through thematic discussions on innovation, skills, green transition, health, and governance, and included a technical training seminar for project beneficiaries covering key aspects of project implementation. The Office of Research and three AUB awarded teams participated in the event, engaging with partners and beneficiaries.



Tips of Grant Proposal Writing Session

This session introduced participants to the fundamentals of proposal writing, including key components of a strong application, how to interpret funder guidelines, and practical tips for developing competitive proposals. It also covered AUB's internal submission procedures and alignment with institutional and funder requirements.

The session was delivered by Ms. Leen Haydar (Office of Research) as part of the Graduate Council GradEX "Expand Your Expertise" series.



Lebanon Innovate Soft-Landing Programme

The Technology Transfer Unit at the Office of Research joined the Lebanon Innovate Soft-Landing Programme through a service agreement with the European Business and Innovation Centre Network (EBN). The programme connects Lebanese innovation actors with the European ecosystem through knowledge exchange and peer learning.

As part of this initiative, May Awar Ammar and Dr. Jacques Abboud (AUB) will engage in a matchmaking process with Kaunas Science and Technology Park.

AUB Interreg NEXT MED Programme Awardees



MEDAIGENCY

MEDAIGENCY, a project co-funded by the European Union under the Interreg NEXT MED Programme, has launched its three-year initiative to make Mediterranean health systems better prepared for crises through the responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI).

Read more



STORM

The European Union-funded STORM (Integrating Seasonal Thermal Energy Storage in the Mediterranean Region) project has launched under the Interreg NEXT MED Programme, marking a major step toward cleaner, more efficient heating and cooling systems.

Read more

Interreg
Co-funded by the European Union
NEXT MED
MILenARI

MILenARI

This project funded by the European Union under the Interreg NEXT MED Programme, project focuses on making state-of-the-art CAR-T therapy accessible to more patients in the Mediterranean basin.

Read more

MEET THE PRE-AWARD TEAM

The pre-award team supports faculty in developing competitive research proposals and managing complex funding applications.



Leen Haydar **pre-award team leader**

CURRENT TEAM SPOTLIGHT

Leen brings over eleven years of experience in grant administration. She supports faculty in the development and submission of research proposals to U.S. federal agencies, European programs, and national and international funders, and has managed post-award grants funded by organizations such as UN Women, UNHCR, IDRC, and CNRS-L. Leen holds a B.S. from AUB and an MBA from LAU, and is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Business Administration at the University of Northampton (UK).



Alaa Mounzer **grant officer**

CURRENT TEAM SPOTLIGHT

Alaa supports grant agreement review, EU proposal development, and consortium-building activities. He works closely with faculty and partners to ensure proposals and agreements are compliant, institutionally aligned, and submitted on time. With a strong background in financial reporting and budget management, he contributes to sound financial planning, particularly for complex EU-funded projects. Outside of work, he enjoys reading, writing, and hiking.



Manal Kraidly **grant coordinator**

CURRENT TEAM SPOTLIGHT

Manal supports proposal revisions, funding eligibility reviews, and coordination with faculty and sponsors to ensure timely and compliant submissions. She applies her experience to facilitate smooth pre-award processes and support researchers throughout proposal development. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her family, cooking, singing, and traveling.

TEAM ACTIVITIES HIGHLIGHTS

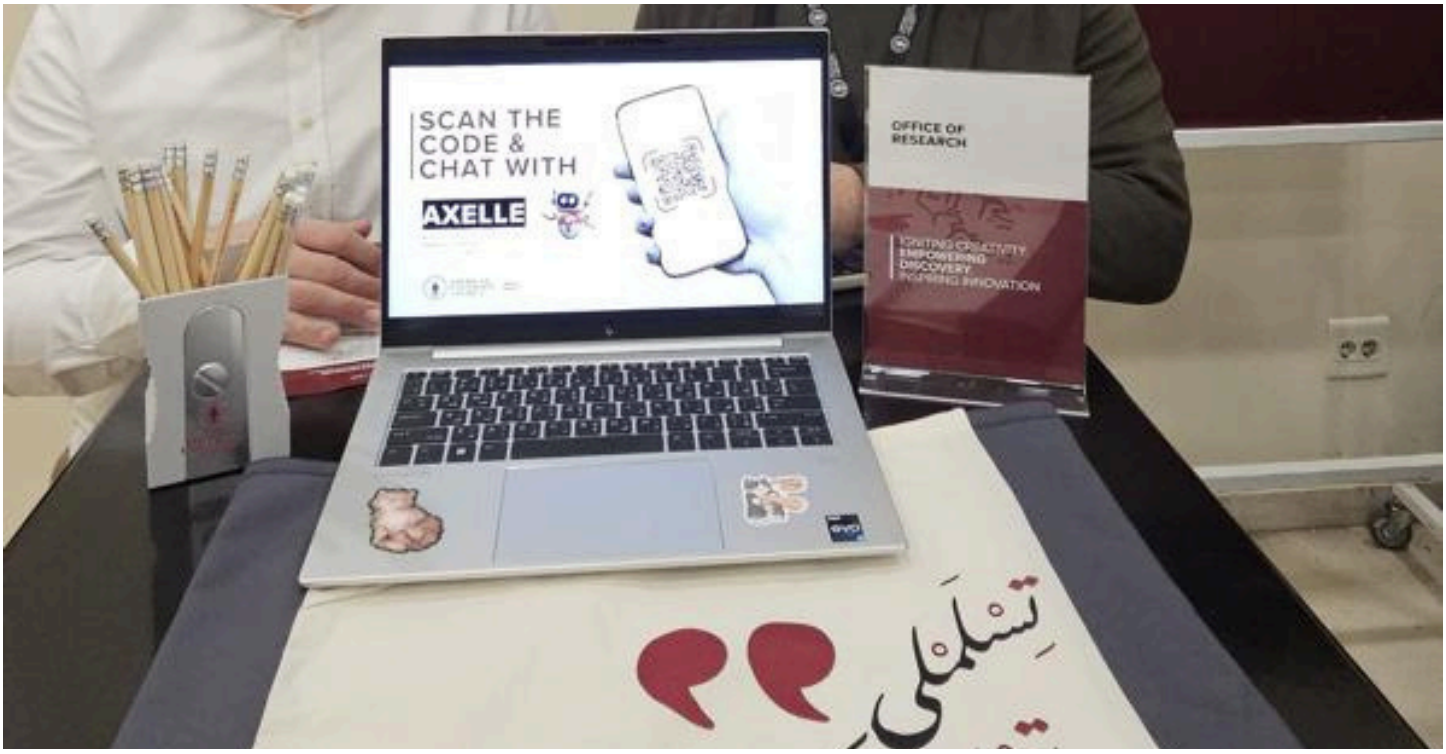


AI Starter Kit Professional Certificate

Team members are completing an eight-week certificate program on AI applications offered by the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (MSFEA) in partnership with Zaka AI.

Graduate Open House Participation

The Office of Research participated in the AUB Graduate Open House with a digital booth showcasing Axelle, its AI Research Support Advisor.



COMMUNITY EVENTS

On February 24, 2026, the team came together to celebrate Ramadan in a warm and convivial atmosphere, fostering a spirit of unity, appreciation, and shared reflection. The gathering provided an opportunity to connect beyond the workplace, strengthen team bonds, and embrace the values of togetherness and community that define the holy month.



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