



**AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY** OF BEIRUT

**SULIMAN S. OLAYAN SCHOOL
OF BUSINESS**
Executive MBA

EXECUTIVE MBA

**RESILIENCE AND LEADERSHIP GLOBALLY, HIGHLIGHTING
OSB/AUB INITIATIVES IN THE MIDDLE EAST CONTEXT**

Dr. Said Elfakhani - Executive MBA Academic Director

EMBAC Meeting – April 29, 2025

American University of Beirut

Suliman S. Olayan School of Business





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About AUB

Agricultural and Food Sciences, Arts and Sciences, Health Sciences, Medicine, the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, the Rafic Hariri School of Nursing, and the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business

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80,000

+

Alumni in more
than 115 countries

AUB (1866-2025) is Among the World's Top Universities in QS World Rankings 2025

#1

In Lebanon

2025 Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World
University Rankings (WUR)

#7

In Arab world

2025 Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World
University Rankings (WUR)

#8

In MENA

2025 Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World
University Rankings (WUR)





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About Suliman S. Olayan School of Business OSB

OSB's Executive MBA
RETHINK. RESHAPE. LEAD.



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Business education at
AUB started in 1900.

125

Years of Excellence in
Business Education

#1

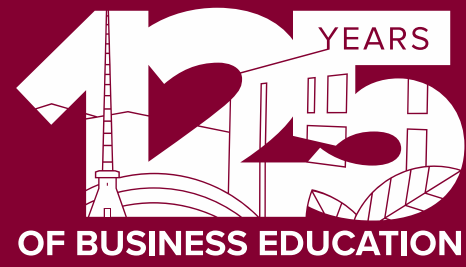
In MENA region

For research Quality and Impact

The **Suliman S. Olayan School of Business OSB** is highly regarded within the international community with rankings consistently placing it as a MENA leader and provider of international caliber vision and opportunity.

AUB established in September 2000 an independent school of business, later named the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business, “OSB”, as the seventh faculty of the university.

15000+ Graduates for OSB's graduate



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About OSB's Executive MBA Program EMBA

OSB's Executive MBA
RETHINK. RESHAPE. LEAD.



Meet the Executive MBA Team



Yusuf Sidani

Dean of the Suliman
S. Olayan School of
Business at AUB



Said Elfakhani

Executive MBA
Academic Director

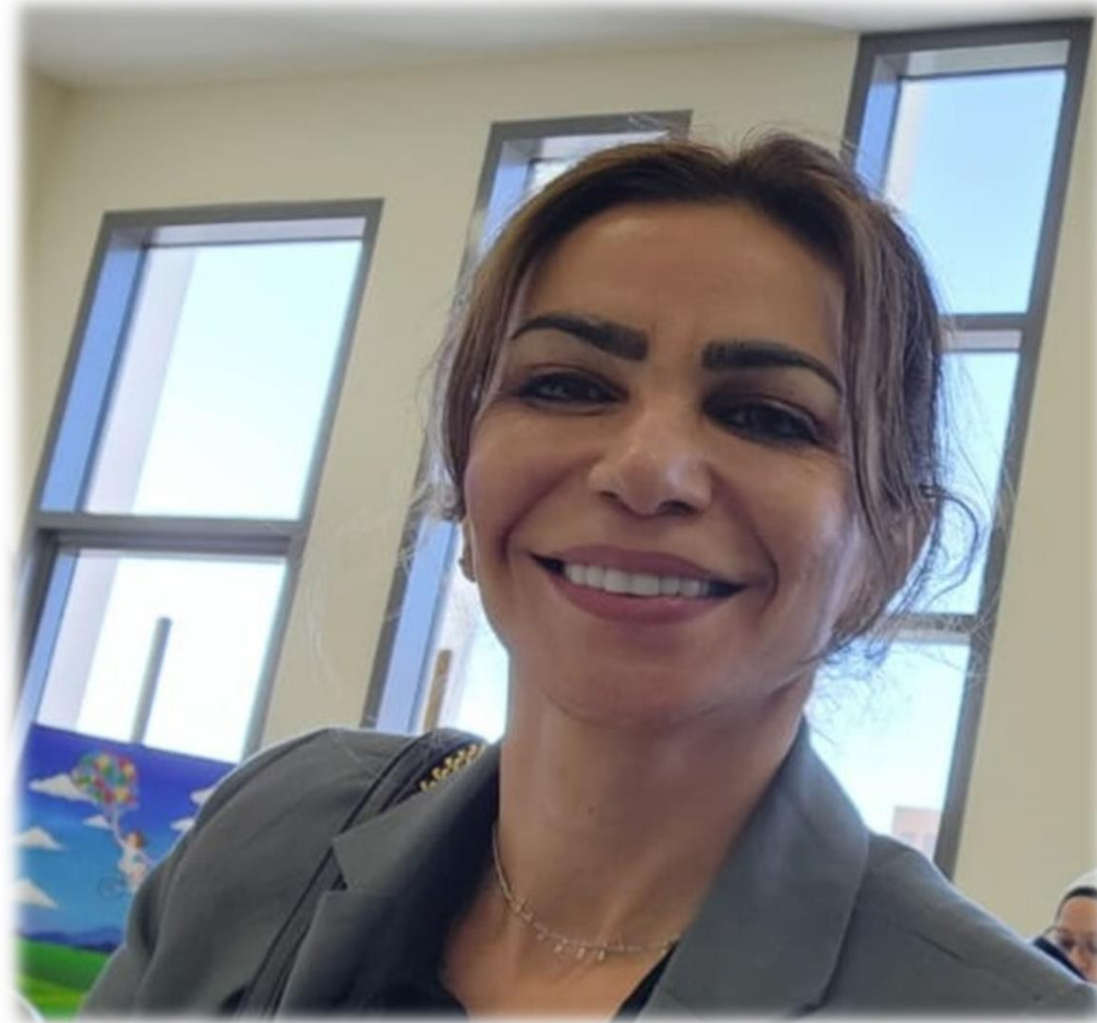


Patrick Fitzgerald

Executive MBA
Program Director



Meet the Executive MBA Team



Myriam Sultan El Ajami

Executive MBA
Academic Affairs
Manager



Akram Arakji

AUB Online
Recruitment &
Enrollment Manager



Jad Khiami

Executive MBA
Program Recruiter



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Executive MBA Program

#4

In the Middle East & Africa
*QS Executive MBA Rankings 2024

#5

In Eurasia and Middle East
*Eduniversal rankings 2023-2024

#1

**In Thought Leadership
& In Executive Profile**

#25

Global MBA Rankings
*CEO Magazine 2024

#18

In Executive Profile
*QS Global Executive MBA
Rankings 2024

Overall, In the Middle East & Africa
*QS Executive MBA Rankings 2024



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Challenges Faced by Executives in the MENA Region

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JOB SECURITY FOR MANAGERS



High Turnover and Job Insecurity During Political or Economic Downturns

.....

The MENA region has experienced **significant political and economic instability**, leading to organizational restructuring and downsizing. This volatility often results in heightened job insecurity for managers.

- In **Morocco**, the unemployment rate increased to **13.3% in 2024**, up from 13% the previous year, largely due to a persistent drought affecting the agricultural sector.
 - **Youth unemployment rose to 36.7%** during the same period. (Reuters)
- 



Limited Long-Term Contracts in the Private Sector

.....


The prevalence of **short-term contracts** in the private sector contributes to job insecurity among managers. Many **organizations prefer flexible employment arrangements** to adapt quickly to changing market conditions, which can undermine managers' sense of stability and long-term career planning.



Lack of Institutional Succession Planning

.....

Many organizations in the MENA region **do not have robust succession plans** in place. This absence can lead to abrupt changes in leadership, **causing uncertainty and instability** within management ranks. Effective succession planning is crucial for organizational resilience, especially in volatile environments.



DECISION MAKING

01.

Overreliance on Intuition or Hierarchical Pressure Over Data: **In some organizations, decision-making may be influenced more by intuition or deference to hierarchy rather than data-driven analysis, potentially leading to suboptimal outcomes.**

02.

High Anxiety and Over-Responsibility in Unstable Systems: Managers operating in unstable environments may experience **heightened stress and a sense of over-responsibility, which can impair judgment** and decision-making capabilities.

03.

Lack of Emotional Regulation Training for Senior Leaders: There is often a **lack of training in emotional intelligence and stress management for leaders**, which is crucial for maintaining effective decision-making under pressure.



DEALING WITH SOCIAL-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PRESSURE



01.

Managing Business Amidst Currency Devaluation or Economic Sanctions

Economic sanctions and **currency fluctuations** can severely impact business operations. Managers must navigate these challenges by developing strategies to mitigate financial risks and maintain operational stability.

02.

Navigating Between Government Regulations and Informal Systems

The coexistence of formal regulations and informal practices can create a complex operating environment. **Managers must ensure compliance with official laws while understanding and sometimes engaging with informal systems to achieve business objectives.**

03.

Increased Pressure to Align Politically

Managers may face pressures to align with certain political entities or movements, which can **complicate decision-making and affect business neutrality.** Navigating these pressures requires diplomatic skills and a deep understanding of the local political landscape.

SALARIES AND REWARD SYSTEM

01.

Informal or Delayed Payment Systems in Crisis-Affected Economies: Economic crises can lead to delays in salary payments or reliance on informal payment systems, affecting employee morale and financial stability.

02.

Misalignment Between Performance and Rewards Due to Favoritism: In some cases, reward systems may be influenced by favoritism rather than performance metrics, leading to employee dissatisfaction and decreased motivation.

03.

Lack of Transparency Around Bonuses and Benefits: Opaque policies regarding bonuses and benefits can erode trust between employees and management, underscoring the need for clear and transparent compensation frameworks.



EMPLOYMENT AND RECRUITMENT CONDITIONS



1



High Youth Unemployment

The MENA region has one of the highest youth unemployment rates globally.

- In 2023, the youth unemployment rate was recorded at 24.4%, nearly double the global average of 13.0%.
- In North Africa, the rate was slightly lower at 22.3%. ([Health & Safety International](#))

Such high levels of youth unemployment create pressures on managers to integrate young professionals into the workforce effectively.

2



Dependence on Wasta (Connections), Undermining Meritocracy

The reliance on personal connections, known as "wasta," in hiring practices can undermine merit-based recruitment. This cultural norm may lead to less qualified individuals securing positions, which can affect organizational performance and morale.

3



Over-Reliance on Expatriate Labor in the Gulf vs. Nationalization Policies

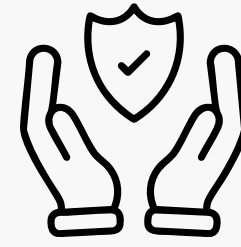
Gulf countries have historically depended on expatriate labor. However, initiatives like Saudization and Emiratization aim to increase local employment. Balancing the integration of national talent while managing existing expatriate workforces presents a complex challenge for managers.

WARS AND INSTABILITY



Threat of Sudden Loss of Infrastructure

Wars and instability can result in the **sudden loss of critical infrastructure, such as electricity, internet, and banking services, severely impacting business continuity.**



Humanitarian Considerations in Conflict Zones

Managers must address the safety and well-being of their staff in conflict areas, balancing business objectives with ethical and humanitarian responsibilities.



Disruption of Operations, Logistics, and Talent Mobility

Conflicts in the region **can disrupt supply chains, hinder mobility, and pose safety risks to employees.** For example, in Syria, the ongoing economic crisis, compounded by inflation and fuel price hikes, has severely impacted sectors like tourism, leading to decreased operations and workforce challenges.

DIGITAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION IN LOW-INFRASTRUCTURE SETTINGS

Resistance to Digital Adoption Due to Job Security Fears: **Employees may resist adopting new technologies due to fears of job displacement, hindering digital transformation efforts.**

Inconsistent **Digital Literacy Across Senior Leadership Teams**

Many organizations in the MENA region are still in the early stages of digital transformation and **lack the infrastructure, talent, and strategic alignment** to adopt AI technologies effectively.

According to the 2024 Government **AI Readiness Index**, **MENA countries like the UAE and Saudi Arabia ranked highly (UAE #13 globally, Saudi Arabia #22)**, but others lag (Lebanon ranked #82, Jordan #49, and Egypt #65) (Oxford Insights 2024)



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Distinguished Features of the Program

EXECUTIVE MBA PROGRAM

Mission & Purpose:

The OSB's Executive MBA aims to **equip experienced professionals with strategic leadership skills, a global business perspective, and the tools to tackle complex organizational challenges in senior roles.**

Philosophy:

The OSB Executive MBA Program is **designed for the experienced business leaders and motivated professionals that aspire for continuous growth and advancement.** The immersive, leadership and strategy experience aims to provide you with the tools to maximize your impact in complex business environments globally, while widening your perspective within your industry.

EXECUTIVE MBA PROGRAM

Program Highlights: The EMBA program provides practical knowledge in the areas of:

- Leadership Development
- Executive Coaching
- Global Business Environment
- Business Communication Proficiency
- Business Professional Knowledge and Competence
- Ethics
- Decision-Making

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- The program places a strong emphasis on leadership **development and communication**
- Leadership Development is embedded throughout the program. **Through case studies and group work**, these practices are applied, and a personal **development plan is created for ongoing growth.**
- Executive Communication course focuses on controlling tools that impact personal and professional image, **improving non-verbal communication in both local and international environments**

Executive MBA Program Twenty Six Core Curricular Topics

01. STRATEGY

Strategy
Strategic Analysis
Managing Risk and Uncertainty

02. MARKETING

Strategic Marketing
Digital Marketing

03. CORPORATE FINANCE

Applied Corporate Finance
Strategic Financial Management

04. OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

People Management
Operations Management
Sustainable Supply Chain
Corporate Information Technology
Innovation Management

05. ECONOMICS

Microeconomics
Macroeconomics

06. DECISION MAKING

Statistics and Data Analysis
Quantitative Models
Business and Data Analytics

07. MANAGERIAL ACCOUNTING

Financial Statements and Ratio Analysis
Managerial Accounting

08. MANAGEMENT & ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

Organizational Behavior
Executive Communication
Negotiation and Conflict
Resolution
Leading people and
organizations
Corporate Governance



Executive MBA Participants' Profile

Gender



Male 83%



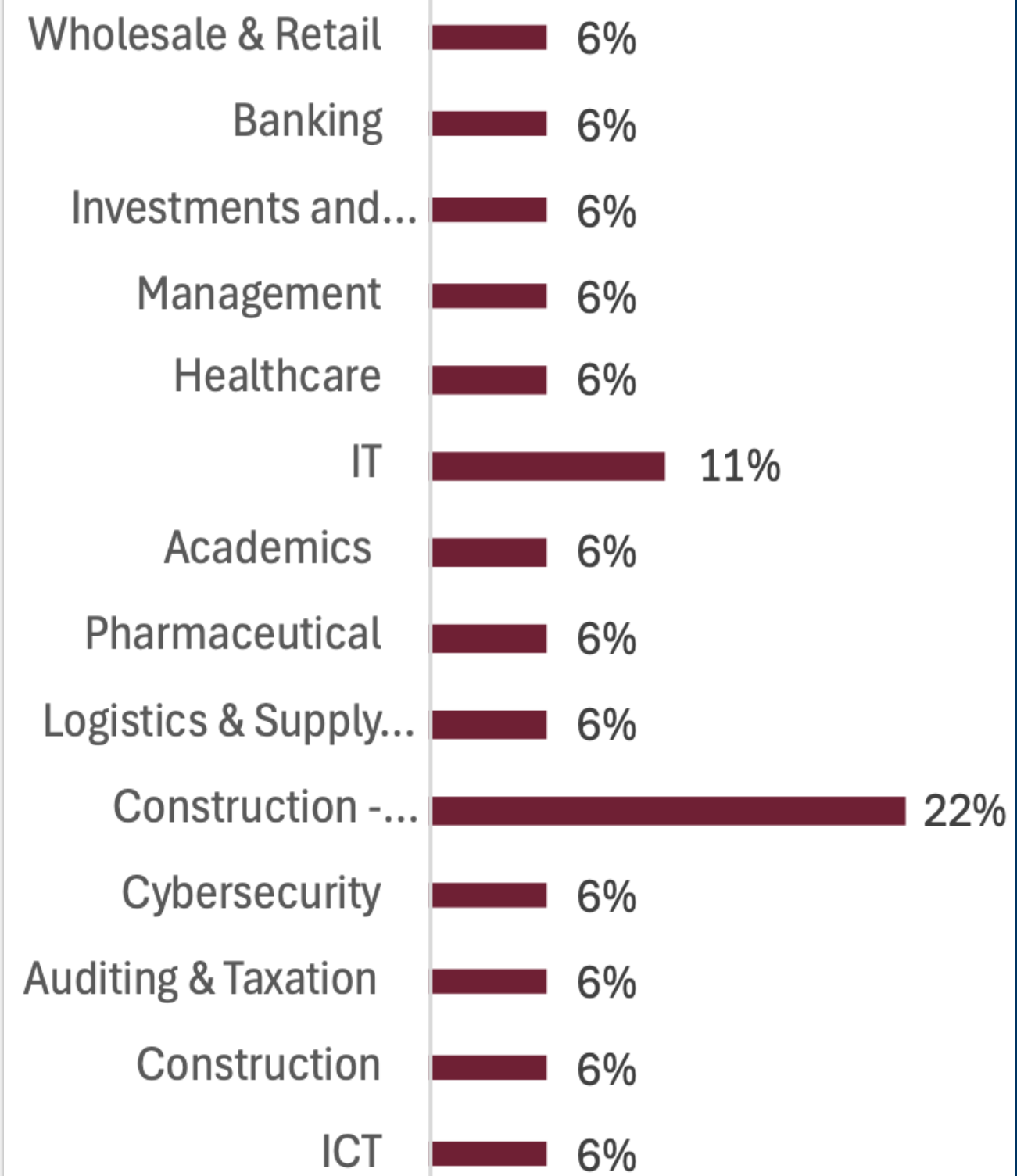
Female 17%

Age

Age Range 29 – 58

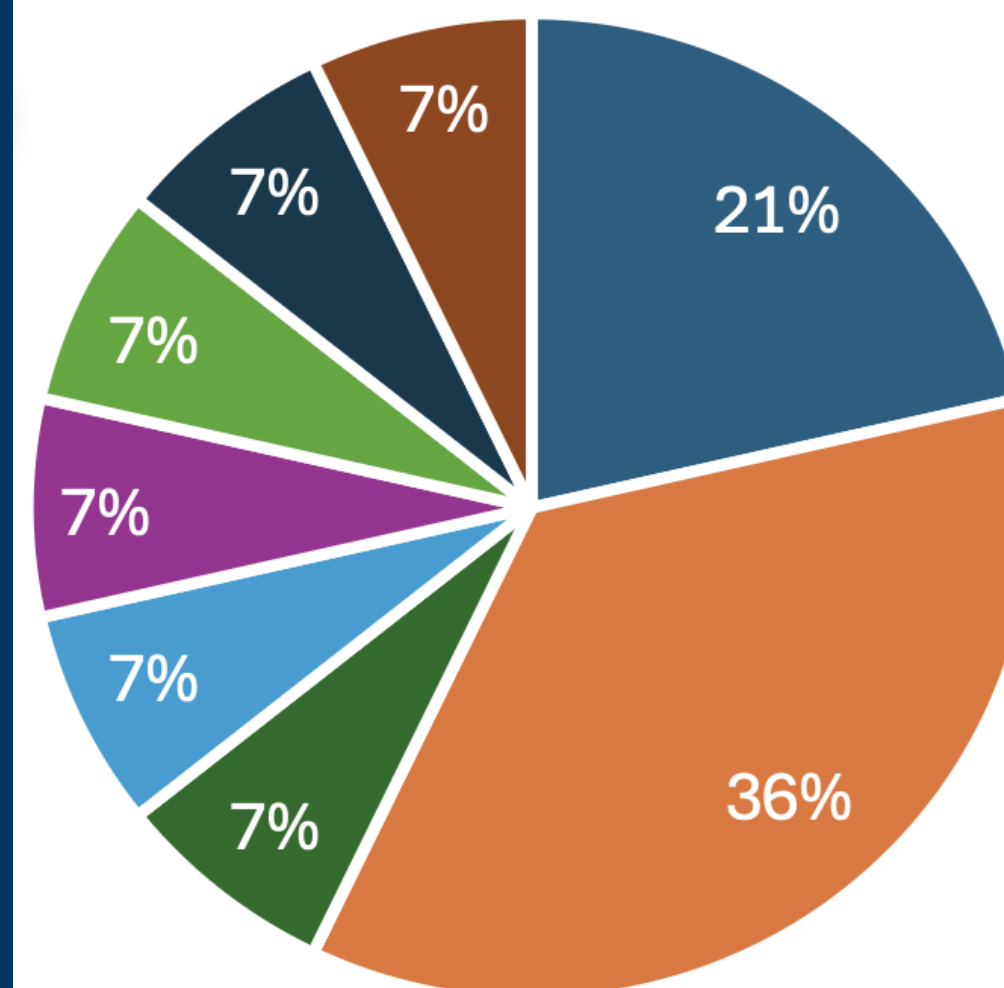
Average Age 43

Industries

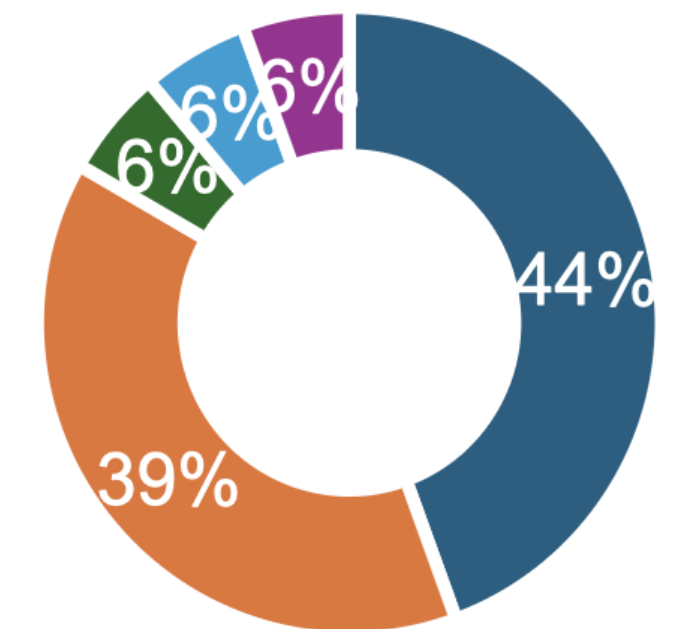


Functional

- Construction and Infrastructure
- Technology and Cybersecurity
- Logistics and Transportation
- Pharmaceuticals and Healthcare
- Telecommunications
- Education
- Finance
- Consulting



Countries of



- Saudi Arabia
- Lebanon
- Qatar
- Jordan
- UAE



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Executive MBA Testimonials



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**“THE EXECUTIVE MBA PROGRAM
ALLOWED ME TO GAIN A MORE
GLOBAL BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE AND
EXPAND MY PROFESSIONAL NETWORK.”**

— GRACE ZGHEIB | C22 —



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“

Joining the Executive MBA
has been a phenomenal,
personal and professional
leadership and development
experience.

Zeina Kiryakos
EMBA C20

”



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“IN A YEAR DURING
WHICH I HAVE ESTABLISHED
MY LAW FIRM, THE PROGRAM
HELPED ME TO CONSTRUCT
MY LIFETIME ENDEAVOR
WITHOUT COMMITTING
STRATEGIC APPROXIMATIONS
OR MISTAKES.”

Bachar Attieh
EMBA C21



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**“A VALUABLE EXPERIENCE.
THE PERSONAL AND
BUSINESSFRIENDSHIPS
I MADE DURING THIS
15 MONTH EXECUTIVE MBA
JOURNEY WILL STAY WITH
ME FOREVER.”**

Sami Kteily
EMBA C21





Executive MBA Testimonials



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Marcelino Badaoui
Network Operations Senior Director | Africell
EMBA C22

"One of the hallmarks of the Executive MBA program at AUB is the exceptional faculty. Some of the professors are not only experts in their respective fields but also highly dedicated educators. Their passion for teaching and commitment to our learning experience were truly inspiring."



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Salma Dannawi Oueida
Associate Vice President for Development, Alumni Relations & University Events, AUB
EMBA C22

"The Executive MBA program at AUB's Suliman S. Olayan School of Business was a very interesting, even transformational experience. It required great dedication and commitment, but the return made it very worthwhile. The program was well-designed and clearly intended for senior-level executives."



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Assaad A. Eid
Professor, Chairperson & Associate Dean | Faculty of Medicine, AUB
EMBA C20

"The Executive MBA program at OSB provided me with a comprehensive understanding of leadership and management, allowing me to make more informed decisions in my career. It was a transformative experience that has not only benefited me personally but has also positively impacted my career, thanks to the enhanced leadership and management skills I acquired during my studies."



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2019 | IE Business School
Madrid, Spain



October 2023 | Trinity Business School |
Leuven campus | Belgium



February 2021 | IESE Business
School | University of Navarra
| Barcelona, Spain



October 2022 | Trinity Business
School | (TBS) Trinity College
Dublin | Dublin, Ireland



December 2024 | EADA Business
School , Barcelona, Spain



THANK YOU

