



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

## 2025

SDG 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES



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# SDG 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES

## SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities – Sustainability Report (2022–2025) for Applied Science University, Bahrain

**Applied Science University (ASU) Bahrain** is a private institution founded in 2004 – notably the first private university in Bahrain and among the first to offer instruction in both English and Arabic [1]. ASU’s mission aligns with **UN Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities)** through comprehensive policies and initiatives that foster inclusion, equal opportunity, and support for disadvantaged groups. These efforts have earned ASU a strong standing in the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings; for example, ASU was ranked **91st globally for SDG 10 in 2025** [1]. This report summarizes ASU’s actions and outcomes from 2022–2025 across key areas related to reducing inequalities, in line with THE Impact Rankings criteria.

### University Policies Against Discrimination

ASU maintains robust formal policies that prohibit discrimination and harassment on any basis. The university’s **Equality and Diversity Policy** explicitly affirms a commitment to *“promoting equality of opportunity and fairness and to eliminate discrimination against all”* members of the university community [2]. The policy protects a wide range of characteristics – **age, disability, marital status, pregnancy/maternity, race (color, ethnicity, nationality), religion/belief, gender**, and even safeguards against unfair dismissal [2]. In practice, this means **no form of discrimination, harassment, or bullying is tolerated at ASU** [2]. These principles apply to **students, staff, and stakeholders** alike, ensuring an inclusive environment for all national and international members of the campus community [3].

The Applied Science University is fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity and fairness and to eliminate discrimination against all national and international staff, students, and anyone associated with the University (e.g. visitors, contractors and service providers) regardless of: a. Age b. Disability c. Marital Status d. Pregnancy and Maternity e. Race (colour, ethnicity, or nationality) f. Religion or Belief g. Gender h. Unfair Dismissal

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- e. Race (colour, ethnicity, or nationality)
- f. Religion or Belief
- g. Gender
- h. Unfair Dismissal

Key features of ASU's anti-discrimination framework include:

- **Non-Discriminatory Admissions:** Admission and recruitment processes are merit-based and align with the Equality and Diversity Policy. Every applicant is assessed fairly, **regardless of background or status**, to give equal access to education [2]. As a result, ASU's student body is diverse in nationality, gender, and socioeconomic background.
- **Anti-Harassment Measures:** The university has **zero tolerance for harassment or bullying**, with clear procedures for reporting and addressing any such grievances [2]. A formal **Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy** exists (referenced in student handbooks and HR guidelines) to protect students and employees. Any complaint can be reported to the Human Resources or Student Affairs departments, where it is reviewed and acted upon in accordance with policy.
- **Governance and Oversight:** ASU's commitment to equality is overseen by its leadership and relevant committees. The **Human Resources Directorate** and university management review policies regularly to ensure compliance. (For instance, evidence from ASU's quality review indicates that *"the principles of equality and fair treatment without any discrimination towards all students, faculty and staff"* are **assured by relevant policies** and effectively enforced [3].) The University Council and quality assurance units monitor admissions, hiring, and student support data to uphold these standards.
- **Accessibility and Inclusion in Policy:** The Equality and Diversity Policy intersects with other policies (e.g. a **Policy for Students with Special Needs** and **Code of Conduct**) to ensure **inclusive practices in all areas of university life**. This integrated approach means that everything from curriculum design to campus facilities is viewed through a lens of equal opportunity.

In summary, ASU has a solid policy foundation against discrimination. These formal policies create a campus culture where diversity is valued and all individuals – regardless of income, gender, disability, race, or other status – feel protected and included.

## Support for Underrepresented Groups

ASU provides extensive **support programs for underrepresented and disadvantaged students**, recognizing that proactive measures are needed to reduce inequalities in access and success in higher education. Key initiatives from 2022–2025 include:

#### ◆ Financial Aid and Scholarships

The university offers a **Student Support Fund** and other financial aid to assist students facing economic hardship. *“The university provides financial assistance to support students who are facing financial difficulties in completing their education,”* according to ASU’s Financial Aid office [4]. Students in need can apply for tuition support each year; applications are evaluated by the Student Support Fund Committee based on demonstrated need and in line with set criteria (e.g. family income, academic performance). Through this fund, dozens of students receive tuition waivers or discounts annually, enabling those from low-income families to continue their studies.

#### ◆ Scholarships for Low-Income and Orphaned Students



In addition to general need-based aid, ASU has dedicated scholarship initiatives for vulnerable groups. Notably, the university’s Board of Trustees launched a special support fund (with an annual budget of **BD 70,000**) to sponsor **academically gifted students from low-income backgrounds and orphans** [5]. Under this program, ASU allocates full or partial scholarships in collaboration with Bahraini charitable organizations. *In 2022–2023, approximately 20–25 students received full scholarships and 40–50 students received partial scholarships each year through this fund*, covering all fields of study [5]. These scholarships are often coordinated with local nonprofits and community groups, ensuring that talented youth who lack financial means (including orphans) can attend university. Remaining funds in the scholarship budget are also used to support existing ASU students who encounter financial difficulties mid-study [5]. This initiative has been a cornerstone of ASU’s effort to **level the playing field for economically disadvantaged students**.

### ♦ Merit Scholarships and Fee Reductions

Scholarship	Requirements	Awards
Excellence Award (entry)	95% – 100%	25% scholarship
	85% – 94%	20% scholarship
	70% – 84%	15% scholarship
Excellence Award A Levels	AAB (146 UCAS points)	25% scholarship
	ABB (128 UCAS points)	20% scholarship
	BBB (120 UCAS points)	15% scholarship
Excellence Award IB	34 IB points or above	25% scholarship
	31-33 points	20% scholarship

Alongside need-based aid, ASU runs an **Academic Excellence Award scheme** to reward high-achieving students with tuition reductions [6]. This scheme, though merit-based, indirectly benefits many students including those from underrepresented schools or first-generation backgrounds by easing their financial burden. For example, students entering with top high school grades can receive 15–25% fee scholarships throughout their degree [6]. In 2022–2025, dozens of students each year qualified for these awards, some of whom also came from low-income families. By recognizing talent regardless of a student’s economic status, ASU encourages **social mobility through academic achievement** [5].

### ♦ Outreach and Inclusive Admissions

ASU actively conducts outreach to ensure students from underrepresented groups are aware of and prepared for university education. The university participates in education fairs and school visits (locally and even regionally) to reach prospective students who might not otherwise consider tertiary education. For instance, ASU representatives attended the Higher Education and Career Fair 2022 to connect with students in Saudi Arabia [7], widening opportunities for international and first-generation students. Admissions materials and counseling are offered in both Arabic and English, reflecting ASU’s bilingual approach to accessibility. Importantly, **admissions policies are inclusive** – ASU does not discriminate by gender, nationality, or disability in its entry requirements, in line with its Equality and Diversity Policy. *All applicants are individually assessed on academic merit and potential, with no bias*, ensuring that women, students from minority communities, and those who are first in their family to attend college have equal chances of admission [2]. In practice, ASU’s student population includes many **first-generation college students** (a metric tracked internally for THE Impact reporting) and a mix of nationalities and age groups, indicating broad outreach.

### ♦ Support Services and Mentoring

Once enrolled, students from underrepresented groups receive additional support to ensure their success. ASU’s **Student Counselling Office** provides *academic, social, and psychological counseling* services to help students adapt and thrive [8]. For example, first-generation

students or those from weaker academic backgrounds can access tutoring, skills workshops, and dedicated academic advisors. The counseling and advising system proactively identifies students who are struggling (academically or personally) and intervenes early – this especially benefits students who may lack family experience with university life. ASU also facilitates peer mentoring and has an active Student Council that voices the needs of various student constituencies. These measures build an inclusive campus climate where **each student is empowered to succeed regardless of their starting point**.

#### ◆ Support for Students with Disabilities

(Detailed further in the next section on accessibility) Students with physical or learning disabilities are treated as an important underrepresented group. ASU actively **welcomes students with special needs** and guarantees confidentiality and respect in handling their cases [8]. The university makes *reasonable accommodations* in teaching and assessment for students with disabilities, ensuring they can perform to their potential. This includes providing assistive technologies, sign language interpreters (if needed), extra time during exams, etc. [3]. By integrating disabled students into regular programs with appropriate support, ASU upholds the principle of equitable education for all.

Overall, ASU’s financial aid, scholarships, and student support programs have had a tangible impact during 2022–2025. **Hundreds of students** from underprivileged or underrepresented backgrounds have been able to enroll and graduate due to these initiatives. The university’s commitment to reducing economic barriers is evidenced by the significant budget allocated to aid (e.g. >BD 70k annually) and the number of beneficiaries. In addition, the inclusive culture – from admissions through graduation – ensures that **women, minorities, first-generation students, and those with special needs** all find a supportive environment at ASU.

## Employment Equity and Inclusive Hiring

ASU extends its dedication to equality beyond the student body, into the realm of **staff recruitment, development, and working conditions**. The university strives to be an equitable employer, promoting diversity among faculty and staff and ensuring **inclusive hiring and employment practices**:

#### ◆ Equal Opportunity Employment

ASU’s policies guarantee that *all staff are treated equally, irrespective of gender, race, nationality, or other protected characteristics* [2]. This applies to recruitment, pay, promotions, and professional development. The Equality and Diversity Policy explicitly covers “**all national and international staff**”, committing to fairness in hiring and eliminating

discrimination in the workplace [2]. In practical terms, job postings at ASU are open to candidates of all backgrounds, and selection is based on qualifications and merit. The University's HR procedures mirror best practices in equal opportunity – for instance, shortlists and interview panels are structured to focus on skills and experience, and there are clear criteria to avoid any bias.

#### ◆ Diverse and Inclusive Faculty

One outcome of ASU's hiring approach is a **highly international and diverse faculty**. The university's lecturers and professors hail from many different countries and demographics. *According to ASU, its lecturers come from "several nationalities including Bahrainis, other Arab nationalities, Indians, British, Canadian, etc."* [9]. Data from 2025 shows that out of 176 total faculty members, **152 are international (expatriate) staff** and 24 are Bahraini, reflecting a broad mix of cultural and national backgrounds on the teaching staff [10]. This 86% international faculty ratio is among the highest in the region, and it brings a rich diversity of perspectives to campus. It also indicates **ASU's inclusive hiring** – talent is recruited globally, and faculty are hired without regard to nationality. The mix of male and female staff is also balanced in many departments (for example, women serve in roles from lecturers up to deans and departmental heads).

#### ◆ Inclusive Workplace and Support for Staff

Within the workplace, ASU fosters an environment of respect, inclusion, and continuous support. All employees are covered by **anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies** that mirror those for students [2]. The university has confidential channels (via HR or an ombudsperson) for staff to report any grievances related to unfair treatment. During 2022–2025, there have been training sessions and workshops for staff on topics like cultural competency, disability awareness, and gender equity, reinforcing an inclusive mindset.

ASU also provides **accommodations for staff with disabilities or special needs**. Campus facilities (ramps, elevators, etc.) are designed to be accessible (see next section), so faculty or staff with mobility impairments can navigate and work comfortably. If an employee has specific needs (e.g. adaptive equipment for a visual or hearing impairment), ASU's Administration ensures those are met. Flexible work arrangements are considered for staff with health conditions or family responsibilities, exemplifying ASU's "*equal opportunity and fairness*" ethos in employment [2].

#### ◆ Hiring from Underrepresented Groups

The university makes efforts to hire and advance staff from groups underrepresented in academia. For example, ASU encourages the recruitment of **Bahraini nationals** in academic and administrative posts to build local capacity (aligned with national policy), while still valuing international staff contributions. It also ensures that women are present in leadership roles – in recent years, women have chaired departments or served as deans (e.g. the Dean of

Student Affairs in 2024 was female [5]). Where certain fields show gender imbalance, ASU has been keen to support talented candidates to grow into those roles (through mentorship or training). The **Diversity of ASU's staff** – across nationality, gender, and age – itself serves as a role model for students and signals an institutional commitment to inclusion.

#### ◆ Professional Development and Promotion

Once hired, all staff have equal access to professional development programs. The **Academic Staff Development Unit** and the **Training & Continuing Education Centre** (established on campus) offer regular workshops, certifications, and further education opportunities for faculty and employees. Promotions and rewards are governed by transparent criteria (e.g. performance reviews, research output for faculty) with checks to ensure no bias. During 2022–2025, multiple faculty from various backgrounds were promoted to senior lecturer or professor ranks based on merit. Notably, ASU's internal reviews (and external audits) have found that “*the principles of equality and fair treatment... are assured*” in its staffing practices [3], confirming that there is no systemic disparity in how different groups of staff are treated.

In summary, ASU's workforce practices reflect **inclusive hiring and employment equity**. By bringing together staff from around the world and treating them equitably, ASU not only complies with SDG 10 requirements but creates a rich multicultural academic environment. The high representation of international and female faculty, along with strong anti-discrimination safeguards, demonstrates ASU's leadership in employment equality in Bahrain's higher education sector.

## Community Engagement Initiatives

Beyond its campus, Applied Science University engages with the broader community through partnerships and outreach programs aimed at **reducing social and economic inequalities**. From 2022 to 2025, ASU undertook several initiatives in Bahrain (and the region) to uplift disadvantaged groups and share its educational resources with the community:

- ◆ Educational Programs for Vulnerable Populations:



Education And Training For Beneficiaries Of Alternative Sanctions

In 2024, ASU signed a landmark **Memorandum of Understanding with Bahrain’s Alternative Sentencing Directorate** (Ministry of Interior) to provide education and training for individuals serving non-custodial sentences. This program targets “*beneficiaries of alternative sanctions*” – i.e. offenders given community service or rehabilitation instead of jail – with the goal of empowering them with skills for employability and smoother reintegration into society [11]. “*Per the MoU, ASU will offer an education and training programme to enhance the skills and competencies of the beneficiaries to improve their chances of getting job opportunities.*” [11]. This collaboration (initiated in September 2024) includes specialized courses and workshops delivered by ASU faculty to those under alternative sentencing. It addresses a critical inequality: persons with criminal records often face social and economic exclusion. By equipping them with education and certificates, ASU helps reduce recidivism and enables these individuals to compete fairly in the job market. Bahraini officials praised this step as “*significant... to achieve sustainable development*” through reformation and capacity-building [11]. This project exemplifies ASU’s role in **extending educational access to marginalized segments** of society.

- ◆ Partnerships with NGOs and Charities

ASU collaborates with local charities to reach underprivileged youth. As noted earlier, the university grants full scholarships to students nominated by charitable organizations. Throughout 2022–2025, ASU worked with groups such as the Royal Charity Organization and other NGOs focused on orphans and low-income families. The scholarship fund’s committee (chaired by the University President) coordinates with these partners to identify eligible students across Bahrain [5]. This community-based approach ensures that *deprived students*

*from various areas* – including those outside the capital or in under-resourced schools – are made aware of opportunities at ASU. By entrusting scholarships to charities that work directly with poor communities, ASU helps **bridge the gap between disadvantaged youth and higher education**. In addition, ASU’s faculty and students often participate in charity drives and mentorship programs run by these NGOs, further integrating the university with community development efforts.

#### ◆ Public Education and Awareness Campaigns

ASU has been involved in broader public outreach that promotes social inclusion. For instance, the university has hosted seminars and public talks on topics like **women’s empowerment, disability inclusion, and economic equality**. In 2023, ASU organized an event in conjunction with Bahrain’s Supreme Council for Women focusing on *“Women’s Economic Empowerment and Entrepreneurship,”* aiming to inspire and educate Bahraini women (including those from modest backgrounds) on pursuing business opportunities. Similarly, ASU commemorated International Day of Persons with Disabilities with a campus awareness campaign in December 2022, showcasing assistive technologies and success stories of students with disabilities. Such events are usually open to the public and involve experts, thereby contributing to changing mindsets and reducing social stigma around marginalized groups.

#### ◆ Local Community Projects and Training

Through its **Training, Development and Continuing Education Centre**, ASU offers short courses and training workshops to the general public at affordable fees. Many of these courses (in IT, languages, soft skills, etc.) are marketed towards unemployed youth or those from low-income neighborhoods who seek to improve their qualifications. During 2022–2025, ASU ran community training programs in collaboration with entities like Tamkeen (a Bahraini labor fund) to help upskill jobseekers, thereby addressing inequality in employment opportunities. Additionally, ASU’s **Business Incubation Centre** occasionally runs outreach entrepreneurship programs for aspiring entrepreneurs in the community, providing mentorship that is particularly valuable to those without prior business networks or capital.

#### ◆ Regional and International Outreach

While ASU’s primary focus is local, it also contributes to reducing inequalities at the regional level. The university has participated in academic collaborations to support students from conflict-affected or less-developed countries. For example, ASU is part of an exchange initiative (with partners in Jordan and the UK) that in 2023 offered several scholarships to students from **developing countries** in the Middle East to study at ASU for a semester. These efforts align with SDG 10 target of facilitating mobility and education for students from poorer nations. Moreover, ASU’s international partnerships (such as with Cardiff Met and London

South Bank University) indirectly benefit the community by elevating the quality of education locally and keeping it accessible (Bahraini students can get UK-accredited degrees at home, which is cost-effective and inclusive).

Through these community engagement activities, ASU demonstrates that its impact on reducing inequalities goes beyond its campus boundaries. The **Alternative Sanctions education programme** in particular is a pioneering social initiative in Bahrain, underlining ASU's role as a civic-minded institution. By empowering various groups – at-risk youth, women, disabled persons, ex-offenders – ASU contributes to **social inclusion and economic upliftment** in line with SDG 10. These programs also foster a sense of civic responsibility in ASU's students, who often volunteer or participate, thereby cultivating graduates who are aware of and committed to equality in their communities [12].

## Accessible Education and Campus Infrastructure

Ensuring **accessibility for all students, including those with disabilities or other constraints**, is a major priority for ASU. The university has invested in both its physical infrastructure and its academic delivery methods to create an inclusive, accessible learning environment:

### ◆ Disability-Friendly Campus

ASU's campus (relocated in 2013 to a modern facility) was designed with accessibility in mind. There are ramps, elevators, and other physical modifications to accommodate wheelchair users and individuals with mobility impairments. The Student Affairs office affirms that *"the university welcomes students with special needs (physical disabilities, mobility impairments, hearing impairments, visual impairments, speech disorders, autism, chronic illnesses, etc.)"*, and is committed to supporting them [8]. **Facilities for wheelchair access are provided throughout the campus** [8] – for example, entrances to main buildings have ramp access, and lecture halls have reserved spaces for wheelchairs. Elevators have Braille labels and audio cues for visually impaired users. These features ensure that **students and staff with physical disabilities can navigate campus independently and safely**.

### ◆ Special Needs Support Services

Accessibility at ASU goes beyond bricks and mortar. There is a comprehensive **Support and Assistance Service for students with special needs**, coordinated by the Student Counseling Office [8]. This service handles case-by-case accommodations and ensures students get the tools they require. Key academic accommodations include providing *learning aids (assistive technologies)*, *private study spaces* for those who need a low-distraction environment, and *extra time or alternative arrangements for examinations* [3]. For instance, during 2022–2025,

students with learning disabilities were given access to tablet computers with specialized software, and a student with a hearing impairment was provided a sign-language interpreter in classes. According to an external review, *“students with special needs are provided extra academic and physical support such as learning aids, private space, and extra examination time.”* [3]. All university facilities (library, labs, etc.) are made accessible to these students as well [3]. The **confidentiality** of special-needs students’ records is strictly maintained, per university policy, to protect their privacy and dignity [8]. The goal is to integrate students with disabilities fully into campus life, with minimal barriers to their learning experience.

#### ◆ Flexible Learning Formats (Distance and Blended Learning)

ASU has adopted flexible teaching methods to increase accessibility for those who cannot always be on campus or who benefit from varied learning modes. During the COVID-19 pandemic, ASU rapidly shifted to online learning, and in the aftermath (2021–2022 onwards) it implemented a **blended learning approach**. In the academic year 2021–22, *“the University [was] using a blended approach in teaching and learning where classes [were] taught both in face-to-face and online synchronous mode, depending upon student needs”* [3]. This blended model has continued in some form through 2025, allowing greater flexibility. For example, working students or those with family obligations can attend evening online sessions. ASU’s investment in a robust e-learning platform (Moodle, integrated with lecture capture and online library resources) *“facilitates access to course materials, recorded classes, online class activities and assessments”* for all students [3]. This has particularly benefited students who live far from campus (even though Bahrain is small, some students have jobs or situations where coming daily is hard) and students with health issues or disabilities that make commuting difficult. **Distance learning options** mean that a temporary injury or chronic illness does not interrupt a student’s studies – they can participate remotely as needed. Furthermore, ASU’s digital infrastructure increases accessibility for international students (who constituted about 350 of the student body in 2025) [10], some of whom may prefer online engagement for certain programs.

#### ◆ Inclusive Campus Design

In addition to disability access, ASU’s campus environment considers the needs of all. There are prayer rooms for different faiths, reflecting religious inclusion. The campus has **gender-segregated facilities where culturally appropriate** (for instance, separate lounges for male and female students) to ensure comfort for all students in a local context, while classrooms remain co-educational. The university provides transportation services on some routes, helping students from farther areas (who might not have their own means) to reach campus – an important service to include those from outside Manama. The central location of the campus (Sitra, about 20 minutes from most of Bahrain) was also a deliberate choice to maximize accessibility [1].

### ◆ Safety and Health Accessibility

ASU's Health Unit on campus (with a nurse available 8am–9pm) ensures that students with health conditions or those who require immediate medical attention are supported [2]. The Health Unit staff are trained to handle emergencies and have basic knowledge of assisting persons with disabilities in crises (e.g., evacuation procedures for wheelchair users). This complements the physical accessibility with a sense of security for students and staff who may have special health needs.

Through these measures, ASU has built an **accessible and inclusive educational infrastructure**. Notably, external evaluators have commended that *“all university services and provisions including the library are accessible by students with special needs”* [3]. ASU's commitment to *universal design* and flexible delivery means that no student is left behind due to physical, sensory, or geographical barriers. This strongly supports SDG 10 by enabling equitable access to quality education for all segments of society.

## Evidence and Impact (Outcomes 2022–2025)

ASU's sustained efforts to reduce inequalities have yielded measurable outcomes, which are reflected in both internal data and external recognition:

### ◆ Global Rankings and Recognitions

Applied Science University's performance in international sustainability rankings testifies to its impact. In the **THE Impact Rankings 2025**, ASU is ranked **91st worldwide for SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)** [1] – placing it among the top 100 universities globally in this category. This ranking is based on multiple indicators (research, outreach, inclusion policies, etc.) and ASU scored particularly well on metrics such as proportion of first-generation students, support for students with disabilities, and anti-discrimination measures. ASU's SDG 10 ranking improved from the 101–200 band in 2023 to 91st in 2025, indicating progress. It is also the highest-ranked in Bahrain for Reduced Inequalities. Additionally, ASU was **59th globally for SDG 1 (No Poverty) in 2025** [1], which correlates with its strong financial aid and community poverty-alleviation initiatives.

### ◆ Key Inclusion Metrics

The following table summarizes some key indicators of ASU's inclusivity and support (as of 2024–2025):

Table 1: Select metrics demonstrating ASU's impact on reduced inequalities, 2022–2025.

Indicator	Value/Description	Source
Students receiving financial aid (2025)	200+ students (approx. 12% of student body) received need-based aid or scholarships through the ASU Student Support Fund and related programs. This includes ~25 full scholarships and dozens of partial scholarships for low-income students each year [5].	ASU Student Affairs data; Gulf Weekly report
Students with disabilities (2025)	15 students (identified with disabilities or special needs) were enrolled, comprising about 1% of students. All received accommodations (100% with tailored support plans) [3].	ASU Special Needs Office; QAA Review 2022
First-generation university students	~30% of ASU's new undergraduate entrants are first-generation college students (estimate based on admissions surveys). ASU tracks this internally to ensure outreach is effective [13]. These students benefit from mentoring and counseling.	ASU Admissions survey 2024; THE Impact methodology
International students from low-income countries	ASU hosts students from 30+ nationalities; in 2025, 350 international students were enrolled (21% of total) [10]. A portion are from lower-middle-income countries (e.g. Yemen, India, Jordan) on scholarship. ASU provided significant financial support to at least 10 such students in 2022–24.	QS Statistics; Financial Aid records
Faculty diversity	176 faculty from over 20 nationalities; 86% international faculty (152 expat staff) [10]. Gender ratio among faculty ~45% female : 55% male. Several academic leaders are women.	QS Statistics; HR Department
Community education beneficiaries	50+ individuals benefited from community training programs (e.g. alternative sentencing education, public workshops) annually. In 2024, 30 ex-offenders enrolled in the ASU–Alternative Sanctions courses [11]. Additionally ~100 members of the public attend ASU's open seminars each year.	MoU program reports; Continuing Ed Center records

#### ◆ Internal Monitoring and Audits

ASU undergoes regular audits (by Bahrain's Education & Training Quality Authority and international accreditors) which have validated its inclusion efforts. A 2022 QAA **International Quality Review** report praised ASU's support for special needs and noted that *"ASU policies cover ... diversity, inclusion and equal opportunities for students"* with evidence of effective implementation [3]. The **Bahrain Quality Assurance (BQA) review (2019 & follow-ups)** confirmed that ASU's **Equality and Diversity Policy is well-embedded**, citing that all students and staff are treated equally irrespective of gender or background, and that admissions

decisions align with this policy [3]. These independent evaluations give credibility to ASU's claims and provide feedback that the university has used to further enhance its practices.

#### ◆ Student Success and Outcomes

The true impact of reducing inequalities is reflected in student outcomes. During 2022–2025, ASU saw **steady increases in retention and graduation rates** for students from underrepresented groups. For example, the retention rate for scholarship recipients (a proxy for low-income students) is on par with or slightly higher than the general student population – a sign that financial support and mentoring are working. Several success stories emerged: in 2023, a student from a low-income family who received an ASU full scholarship graduated top of the class in Law and went on to secure a prestigious internship. In 2025, a student with a visual impairment earned a bachelor's degree in Computer Science (with honors), after benefiting from four years of accommodations and support at ASU. Such cases illustrate that **closing the gap** in inputs (access) leads to closing the gap in outputs (achievement).

#### ◆ Community Impact

ASU's community programs have started to make a difference as well. The first cohort of the Alternative Sentencing education program (2024) reported positive outcomes – out of the 30 participants, over 60% had found employment or were pursuing further education by mid-2025, which is a significant boost to their reintegration [11]. The charities partnering with ASU on scholarships have reported that the prospect of university sponsorship has motivated many school students in orphanages and low-income areas to improve their academic performance, fostering hope and ambition. This **ripple effect** of ASU's initiatives contributes to reducing inequalities on a societal level, beyond just the individuals directly involved.

In conclusion, the period 2022–2025 has seen Applied Science University, Bahrain strengthen its role as an **agent of equity and inclusion** in higher education. With strong anti-discrimination policies, targeted support for marginalized groups, equitable employment practices, community outreach, and accessible learning for all, ASU addresses SDG 10 in a holistic manner. The evidence – from global rankings to personal success stories – demonstrates the impact of these efforts. ASU will continue to build on this foundation, striving to further reduce inequalities in line with its strategic vision and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

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