

African business schools improve global standing

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The American University in Cairo's School of Business has become the third African business school to gain the prestigious triple-crown accreditation.



The American University in Cairo's (AUC) School of Business has received accreditation from the European Foundation for Management Development, which awards the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) accreditation. This means that the AUC is now one of only three business schools in Africa to boast triple-crown accreditation.

The other schools are the University Of Cape Town Graduate School Of Business (UCT GSB) and the University Of Stellenbosch School Of Business - both in South Africa. Only 2% of MBA programmes worldwide are AMBA-accredited.

"This is a tremendous achievement for the American University of Cairo and good news for African business schools in general," says, Professor Walter Baets, Director of the UCT Graduate School of Business who also heads up the Association of African Business Schools. "This recognition is a stamp of quality and proof that African business schools can be taken seriously alongside the big players on the global stage."

The AUC was founded in 1919 by Americans devoted to education and community service in the Middle East. Its business school has one of the highest admission criteria regionally and is credited with producing some of Egypt's leading executives, CEOs and experts in different fields and sectors. It is committed to academic excellence and driven to be seen as a global leader of business education.

Ahmed Abdel-Meguid, AUC associate professor and chair of the Department of Accounting and director of the MBA programmes, commented, "With this accreditation, we join a very elite group of business schools worldwide. We have evolved from a regional leader to an international contender. The AMBA accreditation will be used as the primary framework for the continuous improvement of our MBA programmes."

Professor Baets echoes the words of Prof Abdel Meguid, "These accreditations are extremely valuable for a business school. Although many dismiss them as mere marketing collateral, they are an important investment in the quality of a business school."

Baets says that accreditations serve the important function of quality control and isolate areas for a business school that could be improved upon. "The official purpose of accreditations is to be a tool to help improve the quality of business school education and the research we deliver, and they are an important investment in the quality of a business school."

He believes it is very important for business schools on the African continent not merely to import ideas and teachings from the US and European business world, but to adapt them to the needs of developing countries. He believes in thought leadership and the need to provide local and international students with the skills they need to take on the challenges of this decade's emerging markets.

"We don't want to recreate Harvard in Africa," he says. "We need something that goes beyond that to address the specific

challenges that Africa has. If we use the accreditations as a quality improvement exercise but keep our focus on our own context I believe we are on the right path.

"The GSB believes it is the responsibility of all business schools on the continent to change negative perceptions of Africa by ensuring that African business schools realise their potential, and these accreditations can help us to do this," says Baets.

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