



# Blurring the Boundaries of IS

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## A Strategy for IS Education at The Olayan School Of Business\*

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\*Views represented here are of the author and not necessarily of the institution

# AUB Campus in Beirut

## Aerial View

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# History of OSB at AUB

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- Business education dates back to 1900.
  - In 2000, established as School of Business (later named the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business, "OSB").
  - Over 6,000 BBA graduates
  - 350 undergraduates and 60 graduates annually
  - Spring 2009 – 12,000 m2 facility
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# OSB Goals

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- UG/Grad programs “developing and enhancing global managerial leadership in the Middle East region and beyond.”
  - The School’s undergraduate program accentuates a liberal arts-based operational focus.
  - OSB expects to receive AACSB (the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) International Business Accreditation ... soon
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# OSB Organization

## Multi-disciplinary clusters (tracks)

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- Finance, Accounting and Managerial Economics (FAME)
  - Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship (MM&E)
  - Business Information and Decision Systems (BIDS).
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# BIDS focuses on IS AND Decision-making

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- Reflects blurring of boundaries between the information that is provided and the modeling and analysis necessary to facilitate decision-making.
  - For the global, digital and knowledge-based economy requires a new type of manager - able to solve problems in an information-rich business environment
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# Forces driving IS strategy at OSB

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- A first world education in a third world infrastructure – 85% OSB graduates take jobs throughout the region.
- Employers drawn to Lebanon to recruit and open offices (call/support centers, consultancies) for “cheap” Western-educated multi-lingual graduates
- Few BIDS students (~2%) – Finance 45%, Marketing 27%, Accounting 13%
- OSB moving towards generic BBA (emphasis down to 3 electives)

# IS Employment in Lebanon

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- Software development is a growth area driven by outsourcing interests of regional and multi-national companies.
- 1/3 of Lebanese firms get 75% of all receipts from regional and Western markets
- IT services are expected to grow 23% annually from US\$57mn market in 2005
- Emerging local implementation market (e.g., ITG Holdings)

# Emphasis Hours in Selected IS Programs (English) in Lebanon

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Institution	School	Emphasis Hours
American University of Beirut	OSB	36 Core + <del>1</del> 59
American University of Technology	Business	41 Core + 23
Lebanese American University	Business	30 Core + 21
Lebanese International University	Business	33 Core + 33

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X Ethics and operations management now core courses

# IS strategy within OSB

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- Blur the boundaries between disciplines embedded in our OSB tracks – appeal to non-IS students
    - n IT Audit
    - n Market Analytics
  - Separate BI/DS – move away from traditional IS to business analyst
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# Attracting interest in IS via core MIS course

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- New textbook emphasizing why (not what) IS –Using MIS 2e (Kroenke)
  - Assign most effective teachers [see CAIS: Firth et al, Looney/Akbulut]
  - Collaboration with major IS employers (e.g., ITG Holding)
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# Conclusions

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- As part of a liberal arts university, IS at OSB faces many constraints
  - BIDS track positioning itself to meet emerging market demand for business-side of IS)
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# Thank You

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