

# CHARTER OF THE SAINT JOSEPH UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

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## CHAPTER 1: MAIN OBJECTIVES AND MISSIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY

### Article 1: Constitution

Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth (USJ - Saint Joseph University of Beirut), founded and animated by the Society of Jesus (Compagnie de Jésus), is a private Lebanese university, with its Head Office in Beirut. It is constituted in conformity with Article 10 of the Lebanese Constitution on freedom of education and with the Law of December 26, 1961, which regulates higher education in Lebanon on the basis of pluralism.

### Article 2: Professional Concern and Cultural Mission

Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth intends, through its diversified network of higher education institutions, to accomplish the functional and cultural mission, which is that of any university. Through its teaching programs, it makes it easier for its students to acquire an education that allows them to engage in meaningful activities within their society, preparing them for the professional life they aspire to and consider attainable. This functional mission, or professional concern, comes within a more fundamental service that constitutes the cultural mission of Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth, which is dedicated to the promotion of human beings. Therefore, Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth works on offering its students access to an authentic culture that is enhanced by specialization, embracing various techniques, whether theological, philosophical, scientific, medical, legal, economic, political or literary.

### Article 3: Importance Attributed to Research

Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth, like any other university, cannot confine itself to acting as a center of dissemination of acquired knowledge; it strives to be a stimulating environment for cultural and scientific research, and sustainable development. On one hand, this university research is necessary for the education of students, namely those pursuing Master's and PhD degrees, and contributes to instructors' lifelong learning. On the other hand, Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth would consider itself as failing to achieve a part of its mission if its members were not actively participating in the implementation of research programs, especially those that are of special interest to Lebanon, the Near-East, and at the international level, be it in research centers affiliated to Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth, or in collaboration with independent centers equipped with greater resources.

### Article 4: Complete Human Promotion, Supportive of Spiritual Values

Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth carries out its teaching and research task from the Christian perspective it has upheld since its founding. The human promotion that it targets is not limited to the acquisition of a culture and the mastery of a technique; it is open to the fundamental questions that are asked in every person's conscience about the ultimate meaning of life. This openness is the usual path towards the acknowledgement of a God, transcending all human values, who gives life its full meaning and safeguards human freedom against any oppression. It is to this God that the Lebanese Constitution pays tribute.

This perspective implies religious freedom and does not impose any legal obligation on members of the university community; particularly, it does not accept any form of discrimination based on confession or other grounds. However, it requires all those who participate in the life of Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth to commit to the promotion of a spirit of personal liberty and openness to spiritual life. Members of all religious communities, whose diversity is a characteristic of the Lebanese society, are invited to participate together in this promotion, which implies mutual knowledge and esteem.

The service of complete human promotion, supportive of spiritual values, implies the development and confrontation of all the disciplines to which the university activity is devoted. Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth acknowledges the right of every discipline to develop within the freedom of research, according to its own principles and methods. However, it does not consider that this necessary autonomy of disciplines implies their simple juxtaposition within Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth. On the contrary, it considers that the mission of Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth is to promote an interdisciplinary collaboration at the service of the human being and their unity.

#### **Article 5: Multiculturalism**

“University pluralism”, as is the rule in many countries, has a specific character in Lebanon: it reflects the will of the Nation to safeguard and develop the richness of its cultural identity. *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth*, faithful to its history, intends to especially promote the Arabic, French and English language culture as it is integral to the Lebanese cultural identity. Aware of the risks Lebanon might face should each university unilaterally engage in its own cultural line, *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* declares that it is ready to collaborate with any association of universities in Lebanon that can promote a national cultural policy. This mention of the French language alongside the official Arabic language is in conformity with Article 11 of the Lebanese Constitution; it does not exclude, at *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth*, studying other languages and using them in teaching and research.

#### **Article 6: Confessional and Political Independence. Freedom of Reception and Judgment**

*Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* does not accept being exclusively at the service of a certain social class or ethnic community; therefore, it attaches a special importance to diversifying the recruitment of its instructors and students. It also rejects being subjugated by an ideology and intends to safeguard freedom of information and dialogue on its campus, as long as this does not harm public order and teaching activities. While it belongs to a certain society, it hopes it can be its ferment.

#### **Article 7: Promotion of Participation Structures**

Participation is a necessity not only for the atmosphere of *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth*, but also for the type of society it intends to promote. The structures of *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* are thus open to the participation of everyone within the university community. Instructors participate in the management of *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth*; students participate in the development of their curricula; researchers participate in the creation of research teams and the definition of their projects; employees participate in the organization of their working conditions.

However, this participation has its limits, defined by each individual's competencies and the need to avoid diluting responsibilities. The bylaws of each one of the university bodies set these limits.

#### **Article 8: Concern of Facilitating Lifelong Education**

*Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* offers lifelong education or refresher programs to those who are already engaged in a professional activity. To this end, it provides a part-time student status in some of its teaching departments and participates in the establishment and functioning of post-professional training centers.

### **CHAPTER 2: PERSONALITY AND AUTONOMY OF THE UNIVERSITY**

#### **Article 9: Public Mission**

As a private establishment with a scientific and cultural non-profit character, *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* assumes a public mission of higher education and research. Therefore, it enjoys a legal personality and an administrative, scientific and financial autonomy.

#### **Article 10: Legal Personality**

Legal personality means a center of organized collective interests that are legally protected by the power granted to its officials to represent and defend it. Article 1 of the present Charter determines the name, the Head Office and the nationality of *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth*. Its interests, or missions, are clarified by the other articles of the first chapter of the Charter. *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* bodies, within the powers they are entrusted with by their bylaws, fulfill the University's obligations, exercise its rights and assume its civil responsibility.

#### **Article 11: Decentralization**

By virtue of the university decentralization principle, the legal personality of *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* does not reduce the decentralization that is recognized to the institutions that compose it; rather, it allows them to independently exercise their interests according to their bylaws and within the limits of their independence.

#### **Article 12: Administrative Autonomy**

Administrative autonomy of *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* means autonomy of constitution and management. By virtue of autonomy of constitution, the University Board has the power, by a three-quarters majority of its members, to amend the bylaws of the central organization, that will be approved by the Board of Trustees, provided such amendments do not contradict the provisions of the Charter or of the Lebanese legislation. Similarly, the boards of the institutions that compose *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* have the power to draft and amend their bylaws, under the same conditions, with the help and approval of the University Board. If necessary, these amendments are subject to the authorization stipulated in the Lebanese Law.

By virtue of management autonomy, the various bodies of the University exercise the powers given to them by the bylaws without any intervention by any authorities that are external to the University.

#### **Article 13: Scientific Autonomy**

Scientific autonomy of *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* means its autonomy as to the choice of instructors, the selection of students, the definition of its teaching and research programs, the determination of the required levels for the degrees. When this selection of students, this definition of the degrees, or the practice of the corresponding professions are governed by laws or conventions, the University has the right to request participation in the drafting of these laws or conventions and in their amendment in order to express its opinion.

#### **Article 14: Financial Autonomy**

Financial autonomy of *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* means that it is up to the University to manage its patrimony, increase its resources and distribute them into operational, research and equipment budgets, according to development strategies ratified by the Board of Trustees. This autonomy does not hinder the right of public or private bodies that fund *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* to control the use of these funds. Moreover, this autonomy does not authorize the University to make profits, as profits are forbidden by Article 9 of the present Charter.

### **CHAPTER 3: RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SOCIETY OF JESUS AND THE UNIVERSITY**

#### **Article 15: Loyalty to the Charter**

Having assumed the responsibility of founding *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth*, the Society of Jesus cannot stay outside its life. It does not aim to be the sole actor nor to prohibit initiatives and developments, but on the contrary, to encourage and support them. However, such initiatives and developments cannot constitute a real progress unless they adhere to the principles – as outlined in the present Charter – of intellectual honesty and moral rigor in teaching and research, respect of freedoms, promotion of social justice, and openness to spiritual transcendence. The Society of Jesus works on safeguarding this loyalty.

#### **Article 16: Teaching and Administration**

This responsibility justifies that the bylaws of *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* reserve the right to Rectorship to one of the members of the Society of Jesus. It is also normal for members of the Society to teach at *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* or participate in its administration, provided they are not exempted from the common candidacy qualifications.

#### **Article 17: Spiritual and Social Activity**

It is important for *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* to be capable of offering its instructors as well as its students an environment that supports their full development, by allowing them to nurture their faith and by responding to the moral and spiritual issues raised by each discipline. It is also important for *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* to be able to facilitate the social training of its members as well as their collaboration to the efforts that aim at concretely improving the living conditions of underprivileged areas and modifying the economic structures by instilling in them a greater sense of justice. The Society of Jesus shall oversee this spiritual and social activity.