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Ministry of Higher Education,
Research & Innovation

Oman Higher Education Report 2025:

Oman's immense higher
education potential





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Opening remarks from H.E. Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation



With great pride and enthusiasm, I am pleased to present the foreword to the Oman Higher Education Report 2025. This publication represents a meaningful milestone in Oman's ongoing commitment to academic excellence, international collaboration, and progress rooted in knowledge and innovation.

Oman's higher education landscape has experienced a profound and inspiring evolution over the past few years. Guided by the principles of Vision 2040 and a strong dedication to nurturing human potential, we remain steadfast in our investment in quality education, innovation, and global partnerships. The Oman Higher Education Report 2025 showcases the progress we have made, while also reflecting our collective ambitions and the challenges we must face with unity and purpose.

This report comes at a defining moment in our educational journey. Across the country, our institutions are actively embracing a culture of research excellence, aligning academic programmes with the job market and industry needs at both the national and international levels, as well as integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into their core missions. We take great pride in seeing Omani universities earn both regional and international recognition—not merely through rankings, but through their growing impact on science, technology, society, and the broader economy.

A noteworthy highlight is Sultan Qaboos University's impressive ascent in the QS World University Rankings 2026, advancing 28 positions to secure the 334th spot globally. This significant achievement underscores the university's academic excellence and growing research impact. Similarly, the inclusion of three Omani universities in this edition stands as a testament to the progress and commitment of our higher education system.

In the same spirit of progress, Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS) and Sohar University proudly achieved 5 QS Stars in 2024. This distinction reflects the college's dedication to academic excellence, global engagement, student support, and innovation. These accomplishments highlight the growing strength and ambition of private higher education in advancing Oman's knowledge-driven economy.

In the QS World University Rankings: Arab Region 2025, Omani institutions continue to demonstrate strong regional performance, reflecting the nation's growing academic standing:

- Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) proudly holds the 8th position.
- University of Nizwa is ranked 64th.
- Dhofar University secures the 87th spot.
- Sohar University ranked 100th.
- National University of Science and Technology follows closely at 114th.
- German University of Technology in Oman (GUtech) ranks 116th.
- A'Sharqiyah University is placed within the 161–170 band.

I wholeheartedly commend the unwavering efforts of our academic leaders, faculty members, researchers, students, and institutional partners whose dedication continues to shape a brighter, more resilient and more sustainable future for higher education in Oman. Their collective commitment is the driving force behind our progress. I also extend my sincere appreciation to QS for its ongoing collaboration and support in promoting data-informed dialogue, transparency, and global benchmarking—essential pillars in our journey toward excellence.

Let this report serve as an invitation for all of us—to reflect on our achievements, celebrate our progress, and, above all, embrace innovation. Together, we will persist in our efforts to create a higher education system that empowers individuals, drives national development, and establishes Oman as a prominent hub for knowledge, research, and innovation.

Her Excellency Prof Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim Al-Mahrooqi
Minister of Higher Education, Research and
Innovation (MoHERI)
Sultanate of Oman

Remarks from Chairman of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit



The focus of Education, Learning, Scientific Research, and National Capabilities' priority is a cornerstone of our national agenda, representing our unshakable commitment to establishing a knowledge-based economy. This priority focuses on developing the national educational system at all levels to establish an environment for scientific research and innovation and to create a system that

enables and nurtures national talent within the education sector,—ensuring that graduates possess the competencies, capabilities, and skills needed to compete in the labour market while meeting the productivity and quality standards required for long-term national development.

In this regard, international university rankings, with QS serving as a major global benchmark, have become an indispensable guide. These rankings establish standards of quality, transparency, and excellence. They promote introspection, healthy competition, and give institutions the opportunity to achieve global renown. QS rankings provide more than just a position on a list; they are a strong instrument that allows academic institutions to reflect, compete, and improve in accordance with the highest worldwide standards.

We encourage all universities in the Sultanate of Oman to actively and proudly engage in global ranking systems. Not as an end goal, but as a pathway for continuous improvement. Institutions may expedite their advancement and contribute meaningfully to global academic debate by aligning with international standards, benchmarking performance, and supporting research and innovation.

The path to higher rankings starts with a conviction in quality and a dedication to transparency. It necessitates strategic vision, data-driven leadership, and a strong belief in the potential of our academic community. In Oman, our universities are taking this journey straight on, establishing strong international relationships, investing in research, and improving student achievement. As we pursue our national goals under Oman Vision 2040, higher education is a cornerstone of development and opportunity.

We have already begun observing the practical benefits of our collaborative efforts. Sultan Qaboos University has made a historic leap in the QS World University Rankings for 2026, rising 28 places from 362nd to 334th. This achievement is the university's highest-ever ranking and underscores its unwavering pursuit of academic excellence. The university is showing growth and improvement in important categories such as academic reputation, international research collaboration, graduate employability and sustainability.

Equally noteworthy is the inclusion of three new Omani universities in this edition of the QS Rankings. This achievement represents a significant milestone for Omani higher education, setting a positive precedent for the inclusion of other Omani institutions among the world's top 500 universities.

Such achievement reaffirms our national resolve to improve educational outcomes, develop research capacities, and achieve the goals specified in Oman Vision 2040. These achievements are more than just milestones; they are the consequence of strategic planning, institutional excellence, and national unity in action.

His Excellency Dr Khamis bin Saif Al Jabri
Chairman of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation
Follow-up Unit
Sultanate of Oman

Foreword



Oman is strongly positioned as a leading centre for higher education in the Gulf and broader Middle Eastern region. With a well-established focus on educational reforms and diversification of its economy, Oman shows great potential for becoming a hub for quality higher education, attracting both regional and international students. The country’s stable political environment, commitment to educational development and strategic geographical location make it an appealing destination for academic and research institutions.

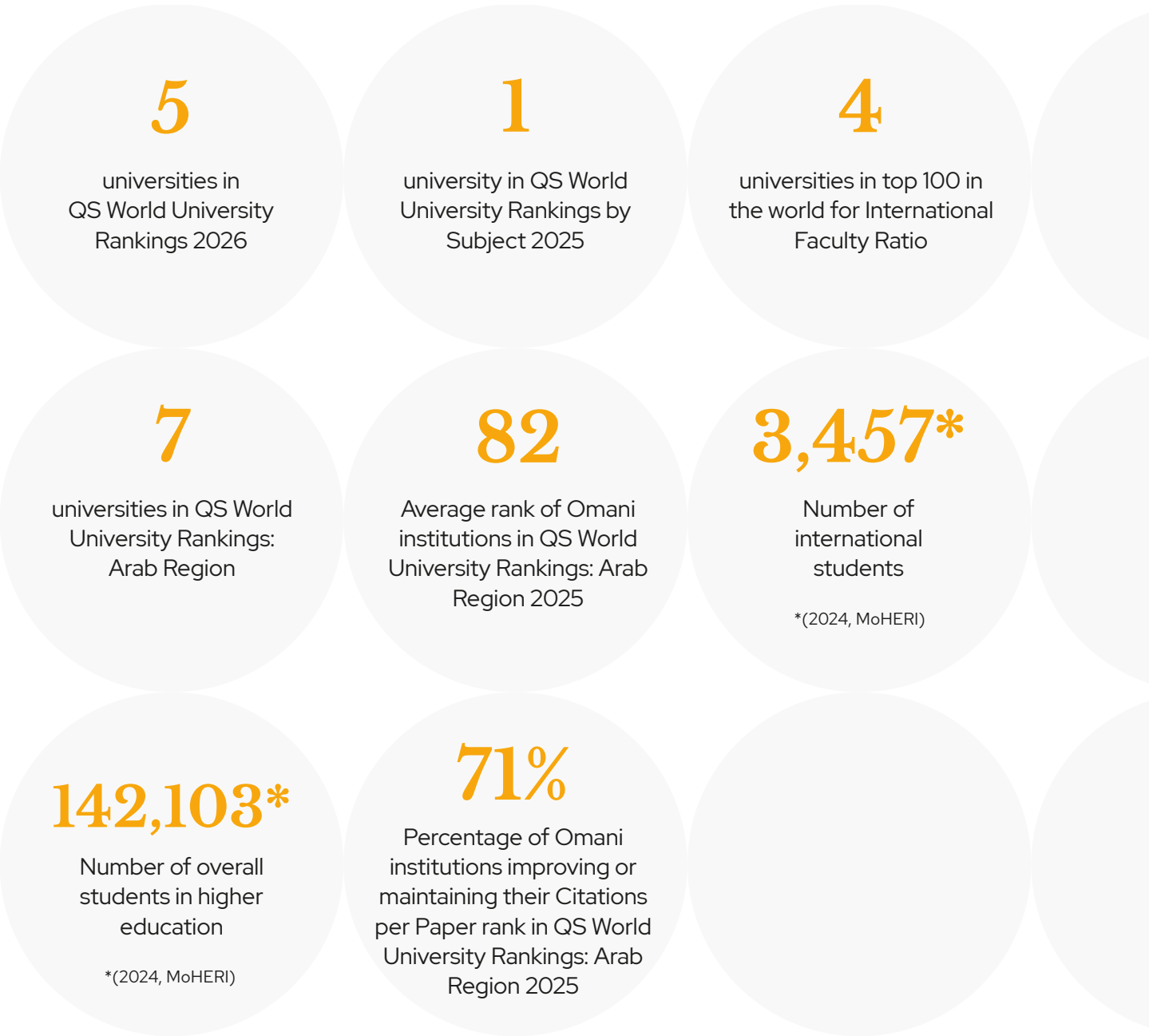
Oman’s Vision 2040 is a key framework that emphasises the development of a knowledge-based economy, and higher education plays a central role in this transition. The vision priorities expanding and improving the quality of education and enhancing Oman’s human capital through universities, colleges and research institutions. Oman is poised to become a regional leader in higher education, driven by strategic government investments, an emphasis on research and increasing international collaboration.

By leveraging its strengths in infrastructure, human capital, and its positioning as a regional hub, Oman can transform its higher education landscape into one that not only serves its own population, but also attracts international students, researchers, and academic institutions. Continued investment in quality, innovation and global partnerships will ensure that Oman’s higher education sector becomes increasingly competitive on the world stage.

What I have seen in recent times is that incorporating the voices of students, faculty, and alumni in storytelling efforts ensures authenticity and relatability. These personal stories illustrate vibrant campus life, diverse communities, research opportunities and impactful work, while working towards carving out the higher education landscape that is just within arm’s reach for the Omani authorities.

Dr Ashwin Fernandes
Executive Director, QS

Key statistics for Omani higher education



Executive summary

Higher education institutions in Oman

Oman’s higher education sector is undergoing a significant change, influenced by the objectives outlined in Oman Vision 2040, which emphasises the creation of a knowledge-based economy. This sector shows a commitment to quality, innovation, and aligning educational standards with global expectations and workforce demands.

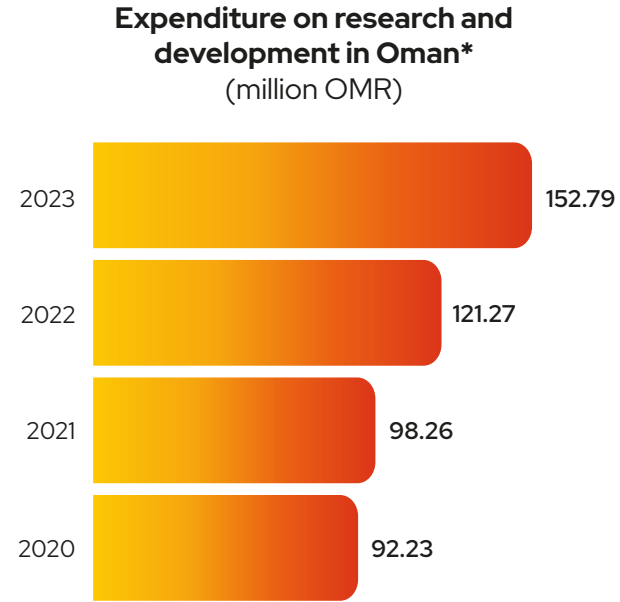
Omani higher education institutions (HEIs) have reached impressive milestones in obtaining international recognition. In the QS World University Rankings 2025, there were just two universities from Oman ranked – and in the 2026 edition, this has increased to five. Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) achieved an increase of 28 places in the QS World University Rankings 2026, now positioned 334th worldwide. University of Niza, Dhofar University and Sohar University make their mark in the world’s top 1,000 universities, while the Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS) stood out as the inaugural institution in the country to attain 5 QS Stars in 2024.

Number of Omani HEIs in QS World University Rankings	QS World University Rankings	Year
1	375 : SQU	2021
1	368 : SQU	2022
1	384 : SQU	2023
1	454 : SQU	2024
2	362 : SQU 1001-1200 : Sohar University	2025
5	334: SQU 761-770: University of Nizwa 851-900: Dhofar University 951-1,000: Sohar University 1001-1,200: German University of Technology in Oman	2026

Focus on research

Research has emerged as a crucial element of Oman’s academic landscape. In 2024, HEI’s publications rose 36.9% from the previous year. This increase in research is primarily supported by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MOHERI) with its Block Funding Program (BFP). BFP was launched in 2018 to provide financial support for research projects from all academic institutions in Oman. It targets PhD holders, postgraduate students, and undergraduate students. Since its inception, it directly led to a significant increase in research productivity in Oman.

By 2023, the private sector’s contribution to research and development expenditures saw a 44.6%* increase compared to 2022. This jump illustrates the sector’s dedication to bolstering research capabilities and fostering industry collaboration. Overall expenditures on research and development from all sectors saw a significant increase from 121.27 to 152.79 million OMR (26% increase) between 2022 and 2023. During the same period, the number of full-time researchers experienced a jump of 79.4%.

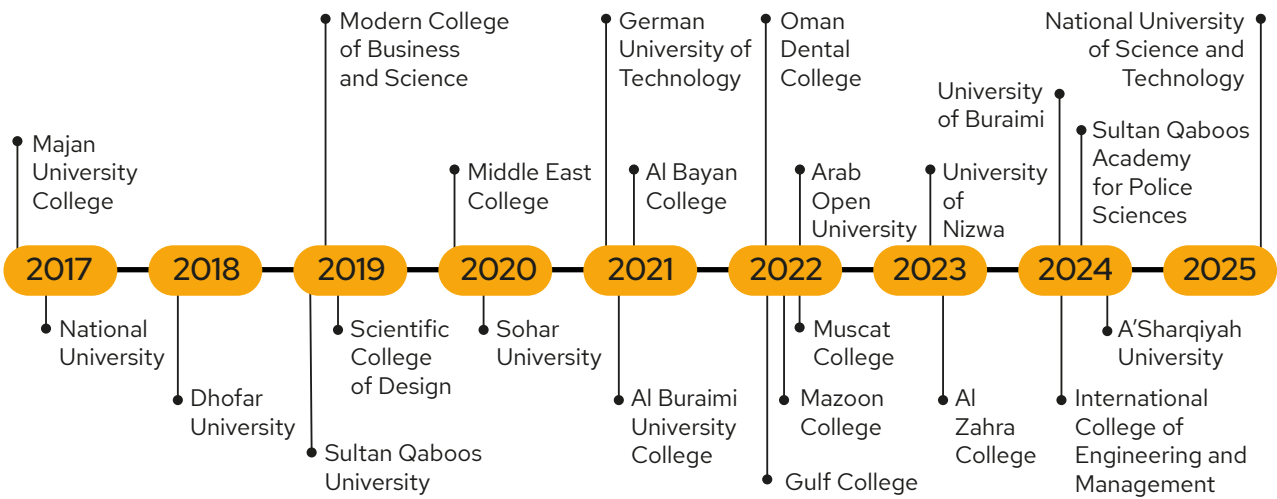


*National Centre for Statistics and Information

Private higher education institutions accredited by OAAQA*

*Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education

**Source MOHERI



The number of research centres in private higher education institutions reached 21 in 2024, which contributed significantly to the increase in the number of published research articles.

Quality Assurance of Higher Education

To uphold a continuous quality improvement standard, Oman has implemented comprehensive evaluation systems through the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA). This authority oversees three essential systems: the National Institutional Accreditation System, which evaluates institutions’ capacity to meet rigorous quality standards, Oman Qualifications Framework, and the National Academic Programme Accreditation System, which guarantees that academic programmes adhere to both local and international standards as well as labour market necessities. The institutional accreditation process has been operational since 2010.

The national Vision

In line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, Omani universities are actively forming international partnerships, enhancing student outcomes, and revising curricula to better equip graduates with the essential skills for a dynamic global workforce. The primary goal is to cultivate a generation of highly skilled national professionals who can drive innovation and support sustainable development across various sectors.

These developments underscore Oman’s strategic commitment to educational excellence, global competitiveness, and the long-term aspirations for national prosperity and resilience.

Understanding Oman’s higher education

Oman is a vibrant hub of higher education, boasting several universities that cater to a diverse range of academic interests. The roundtable discussions offered a comprehensive look at what makes Oman special and where there’s room for growth. In this paper, QS takes a detailed look at both opportunities that exist and areas of improvement. As always, QS is committed to being a strategic partner in helping Oman realize its higher education potential.

Oman Vision 2040 Targets for universities

Target number of Omani universities in top 500 of QS World University Rankings	
2030 target	2040 target
Three universities	Four universities

Current advantages

Oman’s higher education system offers several advantages that make it an appealing destination for both local and international students.

Affordable education

Higher education in Oman is relatively affordable. Tuition fees are generally lower, and the cost of living is also more affordable, making it an attractive option for international students.

Cultural and linguistic exposure

As an Arabic speaking nation, Oman offers a great opportunity to learn Arabic in a safe, welcoming and friendly environment. Omanis are known for their hospitality and welcoming nature while taking pride in preserving their traditions and culture. This makes Oman a home to a diverse international community, which is highly advantageous to the student population as it promotes holistic personality development during a student’s formative years. Cultural awareness, embracing diversity, and celebrating differences are essential to the workforce of tomorrow.

Strategic location and political stability

Oman’s location at the crossroads of the Middle East, Africa, and Asia makes it a strategic point for trade, business, and cultural exchange. This offers students opportunities for internships and networking within a region that is growing in economic significance. Oman’s political stability serves as a crucial element in encouraging students and scholars to consider Omani universities and colleges as highly desirable destinations for their academic pursuits.

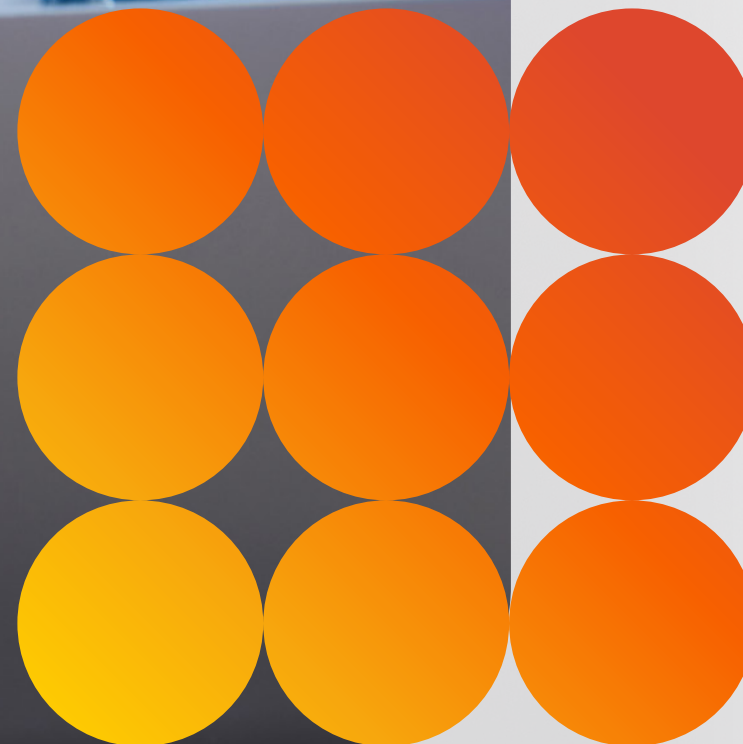
Research opportunities focusing on sustainability

Oman is increasingly investing in research and development, particularly in fields like oil and gas, renewable energy, and environmental sustainability. This provides students with opportunities to engage in cutting-edge research. Oman is focused on sustainable development, which is reflected in its educational programmes. Students can pursue fields related to sustainability, renewable energy and environmental management, contributing to Oman’s Vision 2040 for economic diversification and sustainable growth and adding to the global skill pool in these fields.

Omani institutions focus also on digital transformation, with specialisations in AI, cyber security, big data, Internet of things, and smart cities. All of these fields contribute to Oman’s sustainability, economic and digital transformation, and global standing.



Oman's higher education landscape



Oman as a regional player in the Middle Eastern region

Nations in the Arab region are transforming into knowledge-based economies and have placed great emphasis on bolstering their higher education systems. This strategic shift is reflected in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2024, where Arab universities have demonstrated remarkable improvements.

Fueled by significant investments in education and research, countries like Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar are not only enhancing their educational frameworks but are also aligning them with their ambitious national visions. These blueprints aim to diversify economies and reduce oil dependency and foster innovation.

The QS World University Rankings by Subject were compiled after a comprehensive analysis that encompassed over 16,400 university programmes worldwide from more than 1,500 universities across 95 countries. The Arab region’s commitment to advancing academic and research excellence is becoming increasingly evident in the latest results. We will explore how the confluence of these factors is reshaping the educational landscape of Oman in the Arab world, preparing it to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving global economy.

While Western universities continue to lead in the QS World University Rankings, it’s clear that regional players are now stepping up. The emergence of new universities and overall improvement rates are indicative that universities in the Arab region and Asian subcontinent continue to make great strides towards the betterment of their student population.

Omani institutions in the QS World University Rankings 2026

334	Public Sultan Qaboos University
761-770	Private University of Nizwa
851-900	Private Dhofar University
951-1,000	Private Sohar University
1001-1,200	Private German University of Technology in Oman

Omani institutions in the QS World University Rankings: Arab Region 2025

8	Public Sultan Qaboos University
64	Private University of Nizwa
87	Private Dhofar University
100	Private Sohar University
=114	Private National University of Science and Technology
116	Private German University of Technology in Oman (GUTECH)
161-170	Private A’Sharqiyah University

QS Stars ratings:

5 Stars	Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS)
5 Stars	Sohar University



Historical context

Education in Oman has deep roots, beginning with informal and religious learning systems that date back centuries. Before the 20th century, mosques and Quranic schools served as the primary centres of education, focusing on Quran sciences, Arabic literacy, arithmetic, and Islamic law. Learning was primarily guided by Islamic scholars and manuscript-based study circles were prominent in intellectual hubs in Nizwa, Sohar and Rustaq.

However, a significant transformation began in 1970, marking the start of an educational renaissance in the country. This period saw a commitment to widening access to education for all. At the time, Oman had three formal schools serving fewer than 1000 students. In 2025, Oman has a total of 1287 schools serving more than 821,950 students.

The establishment of Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) in 1986 marked a pivotal moment as it became the first public university in Oman, opening doors for many aspiring scholars and professionals. The evolution of Oman’s education system reflects a deep commitment to fostering knowledge and opportunities for the entire nation. The second milestone was the licensing of private higher education in the mid-nineties of the last century. Consequently, in 1995 and 1996, Majan University College—Oman’s first private higher education institution—and the Modern College of Business and Science—Oman’s first fully private-sector higher education institution—were established, marking a significant milestone in the private sector’s contribution to higher education. Today, Oman boasts a diverse higher education sector with both public and private institutions, and national priorities have shifted toward research, innovation, international partnerships and aligning global academic standards.

Higher education institutions in Oman

Oman boasts numerous public and private higher education institutions that effectively contribute to the growth and advancement of the sector. The public sector is represented by several institutions, with Sultan Qaboos University being the first and the oldest.

Sultan Qaboos University is one of Oman’s standout institutions, often considered the country’s flagship university. It offers an impressive variety of programmes across disciplines, including Arts and Social Sciences, Commerce and Economics, Science, Engineering, Medicine, and Health Sciences, making it an excellent choice for students with diverse passions.

Meanwhile, the private sector holds the lion’s share, represented by 25 universities/colleges/university-colleges. Private higher education makes numerous contributions in terms of academic programmes, research, international cooperation, and international students. Private institutions are characterized by high dynamism and remarkable integration of new technologies, enabling them to have a significant mark in incorporating new technologies that support teaching and learning. MoHERI plays a distinct role in supporting these private institutions through numerous programmes such as internal scholarships, research and scientific publications funds, and support for faculty professional development.

Oman’s Public Universities and Colleges:

1. Sultan Qaboos University
2. University of Technology and Applied Sciences
3. Military Technological College
4. College of Banking and Financial Studies
5. College of Health Sciences
6. Vocational Colleges
7. College of Sharia Sciences
8. Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences

Oman’s Private Universities and Colleges

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. A’Sharqiyah University (ASU) | 14. Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS) |
| 2. Al Buraimi University College | 15. Muscat College |
| 3. Al Zahra College for Women | 16. Muscat University |
| 4. Arab Open University – Oman | 17. National College of Automotive Technology (NCAT) |
| 5. Bayan College | 18. National University of Science & Technology |
| 6. Dhofar University | 19. Oman College of Management & Technology |
| 7. German University of Technology in Oman (GUTech) | 20. Oman Dental College |
| 8. Global College of Engineering and Technology (GCET) | 21. Oman Tourism College |
| 9. Gulf College | 22. Scientific College of Design |
| 10. International College of Engineering and Management (ICEM) | 23. Sohar University |
| 11. Majan University College | 24. University of Buraimi |
| 12. Mazoon College | 25. University of Nizwa |
| 13. Middle East College (MEC) | |

A'Sharqiyah University (ASU)

Location: Ash Sharqiyah North Governorate

A'Sharqiyah University (ASU) is a distinguished private higher education institution established in 2009 in the Sultanate of Oman. The University offers a comprehensive portfolio of academic disciplines across engineering, applied and health sciences, business administration, arts and humanities, and law. ASU proudly serves a vibrant student body of 9,229 learners enrolled in 39 undergraduate and 14 postgraduate programmes, spanning from bachelor's to doctoral levels. In January 2024, ASU attained full institutional accreditation from the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education.

The University is also recognised in the QS World University Rankings: Arab Region. ASU maintains strategic academic and research partnerships with several QS-ranked global institutions, including George Washington University, University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Tampere University, University of Pavia, University Malaya, and University Tenaga Nasional. The University actively fosters innovation through its Research, Innovation, and Technology Transfer Center and specialised Energy and Sustainability Research Center.

Al Buraimi University College (BUC)

Location: Al Buraimi Governorate

Al Buraimi University College (BUC) was established in 2003. The college offers academic programmes at the bachelor's level in Business Administration, Accounting, Human Resources, Marketing, Finance and Banking, Business Economics, English Language and Literature, Translation, Computer Science, Software Engineering, Information Systems, Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, and Law. It offers MBA, master's, and PhD programmes in Law. The college obtained institutional accreditation from the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA) in 2021.

BUC has an academic affiliation with California State University, Northridge, USA (QS World University Ranking: Sustainability ranking 1181– 2000), Ain Shams University, Egypt (QS World University Rankings 2026, rank 542), and the University of Jordan (QS World University Rankings 2026, rank 324). More than 2,500 students are registered in different academic programmes in the college.

Al Zahra College for Women (ZCW)

Location: Muscat Governorate

Established in 1999, Al Zahra College for Women (ZCW) is the first and only private women's college in Oman, located in Muscat. The college comprises five academic departments—Business, Language and Literature, IT, Design, and Law—and a General Foundation Program that prepares students for specialised studies. ZCW offers a range of diplomas, bachelor's, and postgraduate programmes, including an MBA in Digital Business Management.

The college received institutional accreditation from OAAAQA in 2023. While primarily focused on teaching, ZCW is expanding its research and innovation activities and maintains international academic affiliations, including with globally ranked universities. Though it has not yet entered the QS rankings, ZCW continues to build a strong reputation as a leading institution dedicated to female empowerment and academic excellence in Oman.

Arab Open University (AOU) – Oman

Location: Muscat Governorate

Founded in 2002 by the Arab Gulf Fund for Development (AGFUND) in partnership with The Open University – UK, the Arab Open University (AOU) operates across nine countries, with its Oman branch established in 2008. AOU Oman offers a range of undergraduate, postgraduate, and diploma programmes in Business Studies, Computer Studies, Language Studies, Education, and Law, with many degrees validated by The Open University – UK. Programmes include BA, BSc, MBA, MSc, and MEd degrees, along with diplomas in areas such as AI, Cybersecurity, and Early Childhood Education. In November 2022, AOU Oman achieved institutional accreditation from OAAAQA.

The university ranked 171–180 in the 2025 QS World University Rankings: Arab Region, while its UK partner ranks globally in the 105–150 band by subject. With 3,718 students, AOU Oman promotes innovation and research through its newly launched Center for Innovation (2024), enhancing student engagement and academic excellence.

Bayan College

Location: Al Batinah South Governorate

Established in 2006, the college offers academic programmes in Media Studies, English Studies, Social Sciences, and a General Foundation Programme. It provides eight bachelor's degrees, including Broadcasting, Public Relations, Journalism, Advertising, Visual Communication, English Literature, English Professional Writing, and Human Development and Family Studies. Additionally, six diploma programmes are available in similar fields, catering to students seeking practical and foundational knowledge. At the postgraduate level, the college offers two master's degrees: one in English Language and Literature and another in Communication.

The institution earned its accreditation on 29 July 2021 and maintains an academic affiliation with Purdue University Northwest, USA, although it currently holds no QS ranking. With a student body of 112, the college maintains a close-knit learning environment. It also houses one research centre focused on supporting academic inquiry and development in its core disciplines, aiming to enhance student engagement and faculty research output.

College of Banking and Financial Studies

Location: Muscat Governorate

Established by Royal Decree in 1983, the College of Banking and Financial Studies (CBFS) operates under the auspices of the Central Bank of Oman. With an enrolment of approximately 2,000 students, the College offers a diverse portfolio of 15 academic programmes spanning Diploma, Bachelor's, and Master's levels. These programmes are designed to meet the evolving needs of the global knowledge economy and encompass high-demand disciplines such as Accounting, Auditing, Finance, Investment, Data Science (Artificial Intelligence and Business Analytics), Digital Marketing, and Human Resource Management. CBFS was granted institutional accreditation by the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA) in 2019. In response to the accelerating digital transformation of the economy, CBFS launched the Centre of Excellence in FinTech in 2022, focusing on cultivating innovation, fostering digital competencies, and promoting entrepreneurship in financial technology. CBFS also holds Gold-status recognition as a teaching partner of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), affirming the quality and relevance of its professional education pathways.

College of Sharia Sciences

Location: Muscat Governorate

The College of Sharia Sciences was established in the Sultanate of Oman in 1976 and is considered one of the leading academic institutions in Islamic studies. A bachelor's and master's degree in Fiqh and its Usul (Islamic Jurisprudence and Principles), a bachelor's and master's degree in Usul al-Din (Fundamentals of Religion), and a master's degree in Islamic Economics are among the accredited academic programmes offered by the College. All programmes are also offered via a distance learning platform to promote wider access to education. The College, which has over 1,000 students and a specialised research centre focusing on Sharia sciences and modern Islamic thought, is dedicated to academic excellence and community service.

Dhofar University (DU)

Location: Dhofar Governorate

Dhofar University (DU) was established in January 2004. DU offers a range of programmes in various disciplines like Engineering, Science, Humanities, Education, Computer Sciences, Business & Management, and Law. The programmes comprise 15 Diplomas, 26 Bachelors, 13 Master's, and one Teaching Diploma Program. DU was accredited nationally by Oman Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA) in December 2018 and is now going through the re-accreditation process. Moreover, DU is ranked 87 among universities in the QS World University Rankings: Arab Region and is currently third in Oman. DU entered the QS World University Rankings 2026 at 851-900.

DU has a Department of Research that is supported by research committees at the university and college levels, along with the research focal point for managing internal and external grants. DU also has a Research centre that focuses on niche research areas of regional importance.

German University of Technology in Oman (GUtech)

Location: Al Batinah South Governorate

German University of Technology in Oman (GUtech), established in 2007 in Al Batinah South Governorate and affiliated with RWTH Aachen University, offers a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Undergraduate degrees include Computer Science, Cyber Security, Artificial Intelligence, Applied Geosciences, International Business and Service Management, Logistics, Urban Planning and Architectural Design, Environmental Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Process Engineering, and Geoengineering. Postgraduate degrees include MSc in Computer Science, Applied Geosciences, Architecture and Urban Planning, Hydrogen Economy and Technology, MEng in Industrial Production and Manufacturing, MBA in Business Administration, and PhD in Applied Geosciences. GUtech received international accreditation from ACQUIN in 2009 and institutional accreditation from OAAAQA in July 2021.

It was ranked 116th in the QS World University Rankings: Arab Region 2025. GUtech hosts the Research Centre Indian Ocean, the Oman Hydrogen Centre, and the Building Technology Standardization Centre, forming an interdisciplinary platform dedicated to sustainability, heritage, innovation, and supporting Oman's research and industrial development. GUtech entered the QS World University Rankings 2026 at 1001-1,200 position.

Global College of Engineering and Technology (GCET)

Location: Muscat Governorate

The Global College of Engineering and Technology (GCET), founded in 2014, is a private higher education institution in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman. The College is affiliated with the University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol, UK, on a franchise basis. GCET delivers a portfolio of UK-accredited undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Engineering, Computing, Urban Planning and Environmental Management, and Technology, with plans to expand its offerings in line with national priorities and global trends. GCET is committed to providing high-quality education aligned with international academic standards while being responsive to the local and regional needs of Oman and the MENA region.

The College's mission is built on academic excellence, innovation, and community engagement, aiming to produce industry-ready graduates. GCET's facilities, dedicated faculty, and student-centred approach create a dynamic academic community that supports lifelong learning and professional development. With a growing reputation for excellence in engineering and technology education, GCET aspires to become a leading institution in the region for innovative, research-informed, and practice-led teaching and learning.

Gulf College

Location: Muscat Governorate

Gulf College, established in 1990 in Oman, began as a vocational training provider and evolved into a higher education institution in 2003. It gained institutional accreditation from the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA) in 2022. In academic partnership with Cardiff Metropolitan University (UK), the College offers undergraduate degrees in fields like Accounting, Business, Marketing, IT, and Computer Science, with specialisations including AI, Data Analytics, and HR Management. Postgraduate programmes include MSc in Entrepreneurship, AI and Machine Learning, and MBA pathways in Project Management, Finance, Islamic Finance, and more. Gulf College also provides its own General Foundation Programme.

The College's Research Department supports quality research, fosters academic-industry collaboration, and integrates research into teaching to enhance student learning and institutional impact. Programmes are offered both full-time and part-time to accommodate diverse student needs.

International College of Engineering and Management (ICEM)

Location: Muscat Governorate

Established in 1995, the International College of Engineering and Management (ICEM) pioneered in delivering specialist, niche engineering, safety, and management programmes. ICEM also operates a robust vocational training facility that complements its academic offerings. ICEM received institutional accreditation by OAAAQA in the 2023-24 academic year, and its programmes are accredited by various international professional bodies.

Undergraduate offerings include degrees in Fire Safety Engineering, Well Engineering, Health & Safety, Facilities and Construction Management, with new Maintenance Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing programmes launching in 2025. Postgraduate degrees include Fire Safety Engineering, with Health & Safety Management set to launch in 2025. ICEM is affiliated with the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) in the UK and is currently pursuing a QS ranking.

Majan University College (MUC)

Location: Muscat Governorate

Majan University College (MUC) was established in 1995 as the first private higher education institution in Oman and has continued to be at the forefront of higher education in the Sultanate ever since. In December 2017, Majan achieved institutional accreditation from the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA), maintaining its reputation as a trailblazer by being the first higher education institution in the country to do so.

In September 2024, MUC became the first higher education institution in Oman to be successfully re-accredited by OAAAQA. MUC is affiliated with the University of Bedfordshire, UK that offers undergraduate programmes in Business Administration with eight pathways, Marketing, E-Business, Accounting, Finance, Islamic Banking, Business Analytics with Artificial Intelligence, Finance and Technology (FinTech), Computer and Internet Applications, Networking, Computing with three pathways, Data Science (Cybersecurity Pathway), Data Science (Digital Archives Pathway) and English Language programme. These are delivered in both full-time and part-time mode. At the postgraduate level, Majan offers master's programmes in Business Administration, Computer Science, and Applied Linguistics from the University of Bedfordshire and its MUC MBA (taught in Arabic).

Mazoon College

Location: Muscat Governorate

Established in 1999, Mazoon College is a private academic institution that offers quality higher education across four key disciplines: Economics and Business Studies, English Language, Computing and Informatics, and Humanities. The College provides six diplomas, 15 bachelor's, and three master's programmes, including in fields such as Business, Computer Science, Psychology, and Criminal Justice. Mazoon received institutional accreditation in October 2022 and maintains an academic affiliation with Missouri University of Science & Technology, USA, ranked 527 in QS' to: affiliation with Missouri University of Science & Technology, USA, ranked 628 in QS World University Rankings 2026.

The College emphasises employability, research innovation, and lifelong learning. Its Research Centre fosters collaborative research across diverse fields, promoting ethical inquiry and academic excellence. Mazoon College prepares graduates to thrive in an evolving global landscape with a student-centred mission and strong academic support.

Middle East College (MEC)

Location: Muscat Governorate

Established in 2002, Middle East College (MEC) in Muscat, Oman, is a leading private HEI with over 4,400 students. MEC offers 25 undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Engineering, Business, Technology, and Logistics Management, developed in partnership with Coventry University (UK) and Breda University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands). The College's strong industry engagement with over 170 partners across Oman and the GCC in developing rounded graduates contributed to MEC being ranked as Oman's top private HEI for graduate recruitment by the Oman Economic Review in 2023.

With over 900 academic publications and 6,600 citations, dedicated institutional research centres, viz, Technology Transfer Office, AI Research Centre, Innovation Hub, MEC is ranked 5th among Omani HEIs for scientific research publications (Scopus, 2024) and in the Edurank Global 2025 rating. MEC's commitment to excellence is reflected in its top ratings for teaching quality and research performance by the OAAAQA-ISA in 2020. The college is also ISO 27001:2013 certified for its Information Security Management System.

Military Technological College

Location: Muscat Governorate

The Military Technological College (MTC) is a leading higher educational institution under Oman's Ministry of Defense since its establishment through a royal directive in 2014. The institution provides targeted vocational and academic courses, from diploma to bachelor's degree levels, across numerous engineering fields, such as civil, mechanical, marine, systems, aeronautical, and geomatics engineering. The University of Portsmouth (UK) validates MTC's programmes, and its global QS ranking listing guarantees adherence to international academic standards. The Sultan's Armed Forces and different national security agencies benefit from the technically skilled graduates produced by MTC, which maintains an enrolment of about 2,570 students. A Research Management System and Metaverse Learning Centre represent the College's established research platforms, demonstrating its dedication to innovative applied research in military and defense technologies.

Modern College of Business and Science

Location: Muscat Governorate

Established in 1996, the Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS) is Oman's first fully private-sector-founded higher education institution. Accredited by OAAAQA since 2019, MCBS offers 69 academic programmes and pathways at diploma, bachelor's, master's, and PhD levels across business, law, IT, AI, data science, and game development. It was the first in Oman to launch an American MBA and remains the only institution to offer a bachelor's in aviation management, airport management, BS in Game Development and Animation, and a master's in Islamic finance.

MCBS has received a prestigious QS 5 Star rating and maintains strong global partnerships with the University of Missouri–St. Louis and Franklin University. Located in Muscat, the smart campus serves over 4,000 students and features cutting-edge digital infrastructure. In 2024, the college officially launched research centres for Sustainability (Estidama), the Innovation X centre, and reintroduced Entrepreneurship. It expanded executive education through The Academy, affirming its role as a driver of future-ready talent and national development.

Muscat College (MC)

Location: Muscat Governorate

Founded in 1997, Muscat College (MC) is one of Oman's oldest private higher education institutions, operating under MoHERI supervision and accredited by OAAAQA. In affiliation with globally ranked universities—the University of Westminster, University of Stirling, and University Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah—MC offers five diplomas, nine undergraduate, and two master's programmes in Management, Commerce, and IT. The college aligns its academic offerings with Oman Vision 2040, preparing graduates to support national progress. Muscat College's Research Centre, established in 2012, manages 35 funded projects and promotes staff-student collaboration, international partnerships, and professional development.

The College is enhancing its academic quality, research impact, and global visibility to secure a QS ranking. MC fosters innovation, academic excellence, and community engagement, offering a dynamic and inclusive learning environment to shape future leaders and professionals.

Muscat University (MU)

Location: Muscat Governorate

Established in 2016 by a Ministerial Decree, Muscat University (MU) offers a diverse range of academic programmes in disciplines including Business and Management, Engineering and Technology, and Transport and Logistics, alongside a General Foundation Program. With 52 undergraduate, postgraduate, and vocational programmes, MU aims to provide comprehensive education for its 3,500 students. MU has developed an action plan to meet the eligibility requirements and formed a QS Ranking Committee to implement the plan and track progress.

The university is also enhancing its research capacity, with three proposed research centres: Financial and Operational Risk, Logistics and Supply Chain Innovation, and New Energies. The New Energies Research Center (NERC) is nearing final approval, with industry feedback incorporated. Muscat University continues to build a strong foundation for academic excellence and future international recognition.

National College of Automotive Technology (NCAT)

Location: Muscat Governorate

Established in 2015, it was upgraded to a college in 2017. The National College of Automotive Technology (NCAT) is a private institution specialising in engineering, technology, and business programmes for the automotive sector. NCAT offers a bachelor's and a diploma programme approved by MoHERI, along with 15 vocational programmes accredited by the Institute of Motor Industry (IMI) at Levels 2, 3, and 4.

Additionally, the college offers over 30 short courses. NCAT's bachelor's and diploma programmes are affiliated with Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur (IUKL), ranked 8th in ASEAN by AppliedHE and awarded 5 stars in Teaching and Facilities by QS. NCAT currently serves around 400 students and plans to launch a dedicated research centre soon.

National University of Science and Technology

Location: Muscat Governorate

Established in 2018, the National University of Science and Technology was formed through the merger of Caledonian College of Engineering and Oman Medical College, founded in 1996 and 2001, respectively. The university offers 41 programmes across engineering, medicine, pharmacy, advanced technology, and maritime studies, at foundation, undergraduate, and postgraduate levels. In 2024, the university completed its OAAAQA audit, with the accreditation result pending.

The MD programme received TEPDAD accreditation, while the pharmacy and engineering programmes are undergoing international accreditation with ACPE and IET. Ranked 5th in Oman and 114th in the Arab Region by QS, the university partners with Glasgow Caledonian University, the University of South Carolina, and the University of West Virginia. With 4,871 students, the university fosters research through four centres: Environmental Science & Technology, Artificial Intelligence, Medical Research, and Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Oman College of Health Sciences

Location: Seven branches across the Sultanate of Oman

Oman College of Health Sciences (OCHS) was established by Royal Decree No. 18/2018, issued on June 6, 2018. Oman College of Health Sciences operates through seven branches in Al Dakhiliyah, Al Dahaira, North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah, North Al Sharqiyah, South Al Sharqiyah, and Dhofar, which offer nursing programmes only. The main Branch (Muscat) offers undergraduate programmes (Bachelor's degrees) in Nursing, Pharmacy, Medical Laboratory, Medical Imaging, Physiotherapy, and Health Information management. The total number of students enrolled in OCHS in all branches is 3053.

Oman College of Management and Technology (OCMT)

Location: Al Batinah South Governorate

Established in 2004, Oman College of Management and Technology (OCMT) is a private higher education institution located in Halban, Al Batinah South Governorate, Sultanate of Oman. The college specialises in disciplines such as business, information technology, and design, offering eight undergraduate degree programmes. OCMT is committed to applied education and practical learning outcomes tailored to labour market needs.

The College received its institutional conditional accreditation from the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA) in 2023. OCMT maintains an academic affiliation with Yarmouk University in Jordan and plans to pursue a QS ranking, ensuring academic rigour and international benchmarking.

The College serves a diverse student body of over 1,200 students and is actively involved in research and innovation activities aligned with national priorities. It continues to enhance its academic and strategic profile through quality assurance, industry engagement, and regional partnerships.

Oman Dental College (ODC)

Location: Muscat Governorate

Oman Dental College (ODC) was established in May 2006 as a private, standalone institution and the only dental education provider in the Sultanate of Oman. It offers a five-year Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) programme, preceded by a one-year pre-dental Foundation Programme. The Ministry of Health licenses ODC to provide clinical services to the public. Its academic affiliation is with the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM), and approved by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI). ODC has been an associate member of the Association for Dental Education in Europe (ADEE) since 2012 and has undergone peer review.

In October 2022, ODC received accreditation from the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA). The college currently has 470 students enrolled in total.

Oman Tourism College (OTC)

Location: Muscat Governorate

Established in 2001, this institution offers specialised undergraduate programmes in Tourism & Hospitality Management, Tourism Marketing, Event Management, and Business Enterprise with pathways in Innovation & Entrepreneurship and Service Management. The college also provides five diploma programmes and customised vocational courses tailored to industry needs.

Currently, the institution holds conditional accreditation for the 2024 academic year. It is affiliated with Technological University (TU), Dublin, Ireland. With a student population of 521, the college maintains a strong focus on delivering high-quality education in tourism, hospitality, and business.

This institution continues to develop its academic offerings and build industry partnerships, ensuring students receive an education that is practical and aligned with global standards.

Scientific College of Design (SCD)

Location: Muscat Governorate

The Scientific College of Design (SCD), a private college established in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman in 2004, specializes in the fields of creative arts and architecture and offers a rich array of 13 academic programmes, spanning two diplomas, eight bachelor's degrees, and three master's degrees. As an ongoing commitment to quality, SCD received institutional accreditation from the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education in 2019 and international recognition of its programmes by the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 2022 and in 2023 the National Association of Schools of Art and Design in the United States of America.

With a community of approximately 1,100 students, SCD provides a holistic educational experience that integrates liberal arts, humanities, and social sciences with specialised design education, fostering both academic excellence and creative innovation.

Sohar University (SU)

Location: Sohar, Al Batinah North Governorate

Established in 2001, Sohar University is the first private university in Oman, strategically located in Sohar's industrial hub. It offers 47 academic programmes across six faculties, covering Engineering, Business, Education & Arts, Law, Computing and IT, and Language Studies, spanning Diploma, Bachelor's, Master's, and 5 PhD Programmes. The university received institutional accreditation in October 2020 and has achieved remarkable global recognition, including a QS World University Ranking in the 951-1,000 category, Top 100 in the Arab Region, and a 5-Star QS Rating in Teaching and Research. It also ranks #1 in sustainability among Omani private universities.

Sohar University promotes a strong research culture through its Research & Innovation Center. It contributes to over 2,000 Scopus-indexed publications and 258 externally funded research and consultancy projects, reinforcing its commitment to academic excellence and Oman Vision 2040.

Sultan Qaboos University

Location: Muscat Governorate

Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) is the realisation of the promise announced by the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said during the 10th anniversary of Oman's National Day in 1980. The university opened its doors to students in 1986. The campus portrays the rich heritage of Oman and Islam while incorporating all the efficiencies of modern life. Nine colleges are present on campus: Medicine and Health Sciences, Nursing, Engineering, Science, Agriculture and Marine Sciences, Education, Arts, and Social Sciences, Economic and Political Sciences, and Law, offering 63 undergraduate degree programmes and 111 postgraduate degree programmes. SQU was accredited by the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA) in 2019. The university has 14 research centres related to various disciplines. In 2025, SQU was ranked 362 in the QS World University Rankings and 8th in the QS World University Rankings Arab Region. Seventeen subjects from SQU were also ranked in the QS World University Rankings by Subject, with two subjects from the university in the top 100 in the world.

University of Buraimi (UoB)

Location: Al Buraimi Governorate

University of Buraimi (UoB) is a private university in Oman, established in 2010, under the supervision of MoHERI. In 2024, the university earned OAAAQA full institutional accreditation. UoB comprises four distinguished colleges: Business (CoB), Engineering (CoE), Health Science (CoHS), and Law (CoL). UoB currently has a total of 3,479 registered students. The University has a dedicated Sustainable Development Research and Innovation Center.

UoB collaborates with internationally ranked institutions, deeply aligned with Oman’s Vision 2040, fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and student success in a globally connected academic environment. The UoB application for the QS World University Rankings: Arab Region is being processed.

University of Nizwa (UoN)

Location: Nizwa, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate

The University of Nizwa (UoN) is Oman’s prominent non-profit academic institution. It was established in 2004 and operates independently and without academic affiliations. UoN offers a diverse portfolio of 120 academic programmes, including 49 bachelor’s degrees, 31 diplomas, two higher diplomas, 34 master’s degrees, and five PhD programmes, serving more than 12,000 students across disciplines such as sciences, engineering, health science, business, arts, and education. The UoN is nationally accredited by the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA), underscoring its commitment to high academic standards and continuous improvement.

UoN fosters a dynamic learning environment that encourages creativity and innovation, supported by research centres like the Natural and Medical Sciences Research Center, the Center for Consultancy Services and Innovation Transfer, the Alkhalil bin Ahmed AlFarahidi Center, and the Entrepreneurship Center. The QS Arab University ranks UoN as second among Omani universities. It is the top private university in the country, reinforcing its reputation as a leading academic institution in the region.

University of Technology and Applied Sciences

Location: Eleven branches across the Sultanate of Oman

The University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) is Oman’s largest public higher education institution, established by Royal Decree No. 76/2020. Headquartered in Muscat, it operates 11 branches across the Sultanate and a dedicated College of Education in Al Rustaq, serving over 47,000 students. UTAS offers more than 110 academic programmes at Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Bachelor’s, and Master’s levels through six specialised colleges. It evolved from the Colleges of Applied Sciences (since 1973) and Colleges of Technology (since 1984). UTAS is home to the ALESCO Research Chair in AI Ethics, reflecting its focus on responsible innovation. The university publishes over 740 peer-reviewed papers annually and secures more than 490,000 OMR in external research funding.

Areas of focus for Oman to actualise its higher education potential

Among its many advantages, Oman is integrating technology in the learning process and improving the quality of teaching staff. These advantages present significant opportunities for investment in specialised sectors, innovation in educational delivery via online learning platforms, and the development of international partnerships. Sustained and persistent focus on innovation, research, and the alignment of educational programmes with the needs of the labour market will be crucial to achieving long-term growth.

Presented below are four crucial areas which Omani universities are focusing on, to actualise the market potential.

Regional enablement for greater international visibility

Oman is home to several high-quality universities, both public and private. The Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), established in 1986, is a key pillar of the nation’s higher education system, offering a broad range of undergraduate, postgraduate, and research programmes.

In recent years, private universities and colleges have emerged as valuable contributors to the higher education sector, providing competitive offering in terms of academic programmes and scientific research that not only meet local needs, but also align with international standards. Many of these institutions have formed strategic partnerships with reputable universities around the world, enhancing the quality of education and exploring available opportunities to students through exchange programmes that foster a vibrant academic environment.

Research and innovation

Oman has made strides in developing a research-driven higher education system. The establishment of research centres and academic collaboration with international entities has opened new avenues for innovation. The government’s emphasis on research and development (R&D) in various sectors, particularly in science, technology, and engineering positions Oman as a potential leader in these fields. Universities in Oman are focusing on expanding their research capabilities and producing graduates who are equipped to drive innovation and contribute to the global knowledge economy.

Internationalisation and regional collaboration

Oman’s educational system is becoming increasingly internationalised, with many universities establishing partnerships with institutions from Europe, Asia, and North America. These collaborations not only enhance academic quality but also provide students with exposure to global standards and practices.

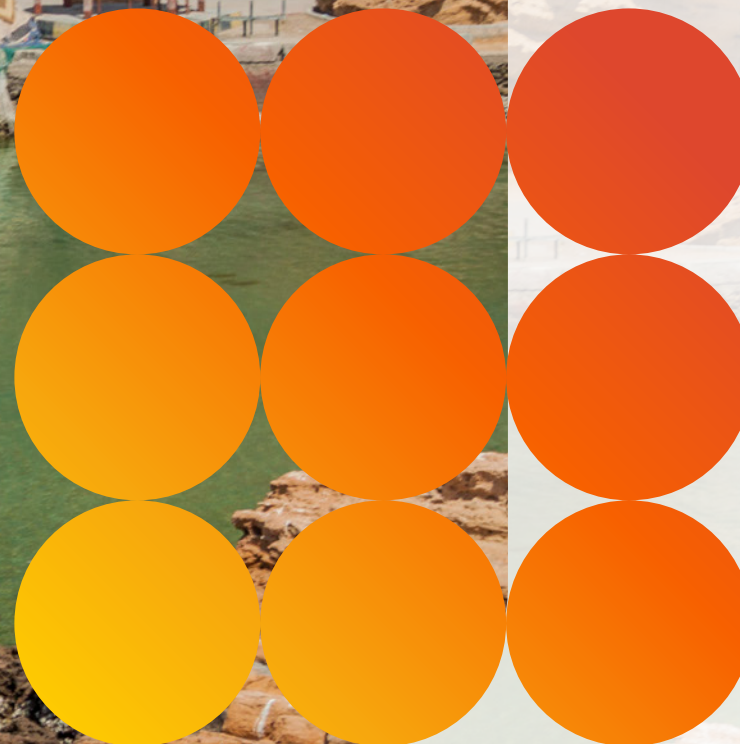
The country’s strategic location, ease of access to major cities in the region, and growing reputation as a stable, safe, and tolerant environment make it an attractive option for international students. Further partnership development will be key for Omani higher education.

Strong government support and investments

The Omani government has invested significantly in the education sector, with an emphasis on both the physical infrastructure (new campuses, facilities, and technological enhancements) and human resources (highly qualified faculty, academic exchange programmes). MoHERI has been instrumental in ensuring that the country’s educational offerings meet international standards. Through sustained marketing efforts at sharing and disseminating these narratives about their groundbreaking research, successful alumni, community engagement initiatives and contributions to global challenges, universities can create an emotional connection with academics globally, showcasing the impact of their contributions and making them more attractive to global audiences.



How Oman's history, economy and demographics impact higher education



History of Oman

Oman, officially known as the Sultanate of Oman, is a fascinating country located on the southeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. Its history is a tapestry woven over more than 100,000 years, filled with stories of human habitation dating back to prehistoric times.

Today, Oman stands as a unique blend of tradition and modernity, a testament to its resilience and strategic importance throughout history. From early prehistoric settlements to its status as a modern state, Oman’s rich heritage continues to shape its identity, drawing both locals and visitors to explore the stories that lie within its landscapes.



Population demographics

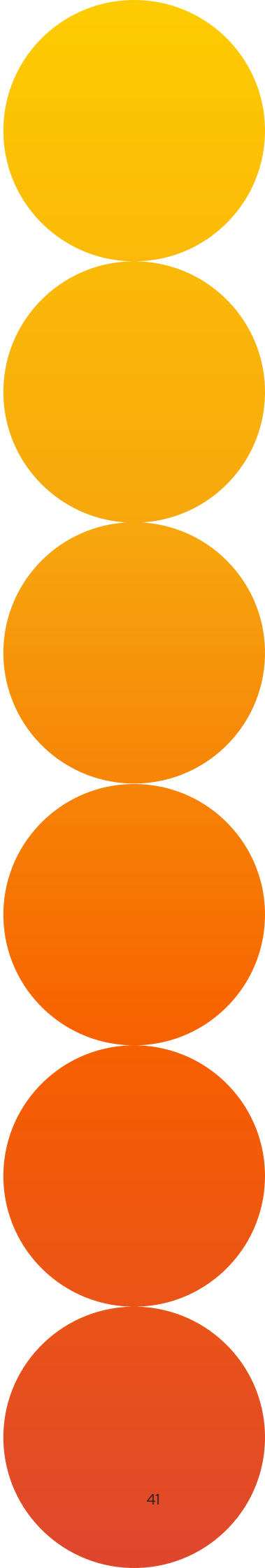
As of 2024, Oman is home to roughly 5.28 million people, reflecting a vibrant blend of cultures and backgrounds shaped by its rich history of trade and modern economic growth. The population has grown from around 456,000 in 1950 to more than 5 million today. This dramatic increase can be attributed to both natural growth and an influx of expatriates who come to work in various sectors of the economy.

Despite this growing number, Oman remains relatively spacious, with a population density of about 17 people per square kilometre. The population is notably youthful, with a median age of 29.5 years. The age distribution shows that a significant portion of the population falls within the younger age brackets. This youthful demographic, driven by high birth rates, presents both opportunities and challenges for economic development, especially if the workforce is effectively nurtured.

Urbanisation is another striking trend in Oman’s development. The growth of cities is driven by economic opportunities, and this urban shift has led to the need for improved infrastructure, housing, and public services to support the growing population. Expatriates form a significant share of the populace, making up about 40% of the total population. They come from various corners of the world, predominantly South Asia, and play a crucial role in keeping the economy vibrant.

Education is a priority for Oman, as seen in its literacy rate of over 95.7%. The government has made significant investments in higher education, fostering a skilled workforce essential for diversifying the economy beyond oil and gas. Institutions like SQU and numerous technical colleges are pivotal in this endeavour.

In essence, Oman’s demographic landscape is characterised by rapid population growth, a youthful spirit, and rich ethnic diversity. While the high percentage of expatriates and ongoing urbanisation offer exciting opportunities, they also present challenges that require thoughtful management to ensure sustainable development. This balancing act is vital for continuing Oman’s economic and social progress as it moves towards the future.



Economic structure and strong currency

Oman’s economy is largely fuelled by its oil and gas sector, which makes up a big chunk of its GDP. However, the country is actively working to diversify its economy through initiatives like privatisation and Omanisation, aiming to lessen its reliance on oil. In recent years, the services sector has been on the rise, especially in areas like tourism and financial services, which add to the overall economic stability.

Here are some key economic indicators to give you an idea of where things stand:

- **GDP:** As of 2024, Oman’s GDP is around \$110 billion.
- **GDP per Capita:** This stands at about US\$20,230 in 2024, showing a relatively high standard of living for many.
- **Inflation:** Oman records a low inflation rate, which helps maintain the purchasing power of its currency.
- **Unemployment:** The unemployment rate is quite low at around 1.5% in 2023.

The Omani Rial (OMR) is a strong currency pegged to the US dollar at approximately 1 OMR = 2.60 USD as of November 2024. This peg provides currency stability and shields the economy from exchange rate risks. A robust economy and a stable currency contribute to a supportive environment for higher education in Oman.



Here are some noteworthy intersections of these factors:

- 1. Investment in education:**
With a strong economy, the government can allocate funds toward enhancing higher education. This includes, upgrading facilities and offering scholarships to students, making education more accessible.
- 2. Attracting international students:**
A stable currency makes Oman an appealing destination for international students. The cost of living and tuition fees are generally lower than in many other countries, which makes pursuing education in Oman a financially viable option for international students from across the globe.
- 3. Quality of education:**
A thriving economy allows for better funding in education. This translates to hiring qualified faculty, providing advanced research facilities, and utilising modern teaching tools, all of which foster a higher quality of education.
- 4. Economic diversification:**
Higher education plays a pivotal role in diversifying the economy. By focussing on emerging sectors like tourism, financial services, and technology, Oman can reduce its oil dependency and create more job opportunities for graduates.
- 5. Partnerships and collaborations:**
With a stable economic environment, Oman is in a good position to forge partnerships with international universities and research institutions. These collaborations facilitate knowledge exchange, bringing valuable resources and expertise into the educational system.

In summary, Oman’s strong economic foundation and stable currency are key drivers for enhancing its higher education sector, creating opportunities for both local and international students.

Employment opportunities and status

Oman is on an exciting journey of economic diversification, gradually shifting away from its traditional reliance on oil and gas. This transition is creating a wealth of new job opportunities across various sectors, such as tourism, financial services, and technology. A key player in this transformation is higher education, which is vital in equipping the workforce for these emerging industries.

1. Tourism sector:

The tourism industry in Oman is blossoming, drawing both local and international visitors. This growth requires a skilled workforce, encompassing roles in hotel management, culinary arts, and travel and tourism management. With stunning landscapes and rich cultural heritage, there’s a growing demand for professionals who can enhance the visitor experience.

2. Financial services:

As the financial services sector in Oman expands, there’s an increasing need for skilled individuals in banking, insurance, and financial analysis. Higher education institutions are pivotal in producing graduates who are well-prepared to meet this demand, ensuring that the workforce is equipped with the necessary skills for success in this dynamic field.

3. Technology sector:

Oman is making significant investments in technology and innovation to propel economic growth. This focus also includes advancements in information technology, telecommunications and research and development. Universities are stepping up by offering degrees in computer science, engineering and information technology, thus nurturing the next generation of tech-savvy professionals.

4. Oil and gas sector:

While Oman diversifies its economy, the oil and gas sector continues to play a significant role as a key driver of national revenue. The sector demands a highly skilled workforce, including petroleum engineers, geoscientists, and safety specialists. Universities in Oman and abroad offer specialised programmes to prepare graduates for technical and managerial roles, ensuring the sector remains well-supported by local talent even as it adapts to changing global energy trends.

5. Logistics sector:

Oman’s strategic location along vital shipping routes has positioned it as a logistics hub in the region. With major investments in port development, road and rail infrastructure, and free zones, the logistics sector is creating a range of career opportunities in supply chain management, freight forwarding, and transport operations. Higher education institutions are playing a key role by offering specialised training and degrees that align with industry standards and the Sultanate’s Vision 2040 objectives.

6. Fisheries and food security sector:

The fisheries and food security sector is emerging as a national priority, with an emphasis on sustainability and innovation. Oman’s extensive coastline offers great potential for the growth of fisheries and aquaculture. This sector requires professionals in marine science, food processing, and environmental management. Educational institutions are contributing by developing programmes focused on marine biology, sustainable resource management, and agri-food technology to ensure a resilient and secure food system.

7. Manufacturing sector:

As Oman diversifies beyond oil, the manufacturing sector is gaining momentum, particularly in areas such as petrochemicals, construction materials, and consumer goods. This sector offers diverse employment opportunities for engineers, industrial designers, and quality control specialists. Universities and vocational institutes are working closely with industry to provide practical training and curricula tailored to the evolving demands of the manufacturing landscape.

8. Mining sector:

Oman’s mineral wealth, including copper, chromite, and limestone, is fuelling growth in the mining sector. This industry requires a technically proficient workforce skilled in areas such as geology, mineral exploration, and mine safety. Higher education institutions are increasingly offering programmes that focus on earth sciences, mining engineering, and environmental sustainability, preparing graduates for careers that support both economic development and responsible resource management.

9. Education sector:

The education sector in Oman continues to expand and modernise, with a focus on quality assurance, digital learning, and research development. There is a rising demand for qualified educators, curriculum designers, educational technologists, and academic researchers. Universities are not only training the next generation of teachers but also investing in leadership development and policy training to support national educational reform and capacity building.

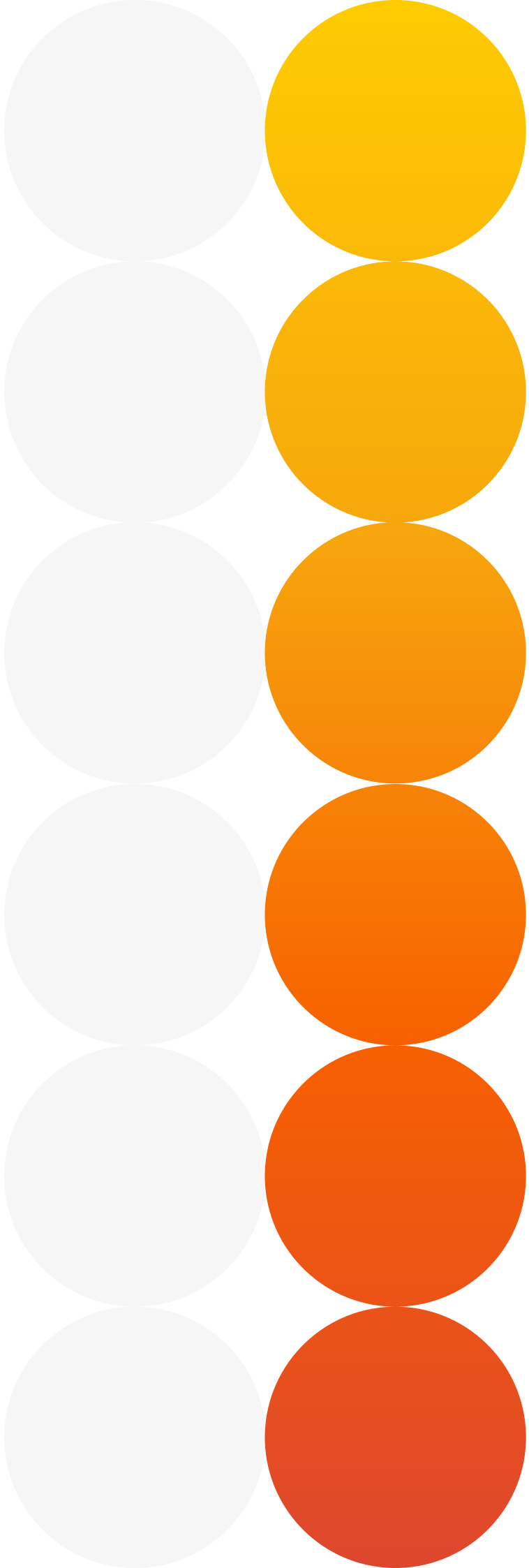
10. Telecommunications sector:

Oman’s telecommunications sector is rapidly advancing, driven by growing demand for digital connectivity and innovation. With investments in 5G, fibre-optic networks, and cybersecurity, the sector is creating roles for network engineers, software developers, data analysts, and digital transformation specialists. Academic institutions are adapting their programmes to reflect these changes, equipping students with the technical and analytical skills needed to thrive in an increasingly digital economy.

Higher education plays a vital role in shaping employment opportunities in Oman, and it’s heartening to see the government taking thoughtful steps to connect education with the demands of the job market. This alignment benefits not just the economy but also the individuals and communities involved.

In addition, the government offers scholarships and financial aid to students who are pursuing higher education, particularly in areas that are experiencing high demand. This support can be a lifeline for many students, enabling them to access quality education without the financial burden and, in turn, empowering them to contribute meaningfully to the economy after graduation.

Moreover, the partnerships forged between higher education institutions and various industries further enrich the educational experience. By providing students with practical training and job placement opportunities, these collaborations create a seamless transition from classroom learning to workplace readiness. It’s rewarding to see how these efforts collectively work toward not just individual success but also the overall prosperity of Oman.



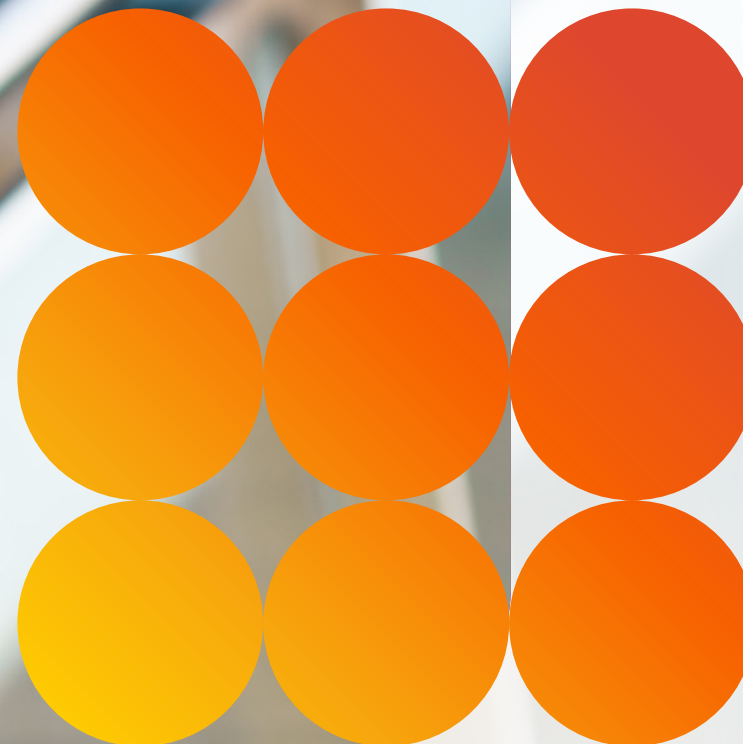
Growth of the higher education sector

Oman has truly transformed its higher education landscape over the past few decades. What once was a limited educational infrastructure has now blossomed into a vibrant system that serves a diverse and growing student body.

This remarkable progress isn’t happenstance; it stems from a combination of thoughtful government initiatives, fruitful international partnerships, and a strong emphasis on delivering quality education that meets the needs of today’s learners. It’s exciting to see how these efforts are shaping the future for students in Oman, providing them with opportunities and experiences that were once out of reach.



The current and future state of Omani higher education



The current and future state of Omani higher education

Recent developments

In recent years, Oman has made significant strides in enhancing its higher education system, aiming to support the growth of a knowledge-based economy. The government has recognised the importance of providing quality education that directly aligns with the evolving needs of the job market. To achieve this, the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation (MoHERI) was established.

This Ministry plays a crucial role in overseeing the higher education landscape, ensuring that academic standards are upheld and that students are well-prepared for their future careers. Through these efforts, Oman is not just investing in education but also in the potential of its people to thrive in an increasingly competitive world.

Focus on quality and relevance

Oman’s higher education system is dedicated to ensuring that its graduates are not only knowledgeable but also equipped with the skills that today’s job market demands. The government is actively working on reforms aimed at enhancing the overall quality of education. This includes raising academic standards and fostering partnerships with international institutions to bring in fresh ideas and practices.

Additionally, there’s a strong emphasis on making the most of local resources, both in terms of facilities and academic support. These efforts reflect a commitment to preparing students for successful futures in a rapidly changing world.

Future outlook

Oman’s higher education system is on the brink of exciting growth and transformation. With the government actively working to diversify the economy and lessen reliance on oil, there’s a strong push for developing higher education. This emphasis on quality and real-world relevance, along with forming international partnerships, is set to reshape the educational landscape in Oman. It’s all about ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to thrive in a fast-evolving global economy, so they are equipped to meet the dynamic needs of the future.

Oman’s higher education internationalisation plans

Oman is making significant strides in transforming its higher education landscape to better align with global standards. The aim is to elevate the quality of education while fostering international collaboration and equipping students with the skills they need to thrive in a globalised environment.

This initiative touches on various important aspects, including enhancing research capabilities, improving teaching and learning methods, building partnerships with institutions worldwide and engaging in community service. By focussing on these areas, Oman is not just enhancing its education system but also preparing its youth to be competitive and culturally aware citizens in an interconnected world.

Key areas of internationalisation

Research:

Oman is placing a strong emphasis on the role of research within its higher education landscape, recognising it as a key driver for innovation and development. At the heart of this initiative is SQU, which stands as the leading public university in the country. SQU is not only a hub of knowledge but also a beacon of collaboration, having established meaningful partnerships with international universities and research institutions.

These collaborations are more than just formal agreements; they bring together diverse perspectives, fresh ideas, and cutting-edge technologies. This dynamic exchange not only enhances the research capabilities of Omani institutions but also cultivates an enriching environment for students and faculty alike to thrive in the world of discovery and innovation. By fostering such relationships, Oman is paving the way for a vibrant research culture that resonates.

Teaching and learning:

Internationalisation in teaching and learning is all about bringing the world into the classroom. It means not just aligning our curricula with global standards but also weaving in diverse perspectives that reflect our interconnected globe. At SQU and other higher education institutions in Oman, there's been a dedicated effort toward obtaining international accreditation for their programmes.

This commitment ensures that the education provided meets rigorous global benchmarks. By doing so, these institutions not only enhance their credibility but also attract talented international students and faculty. This influx of diverse experiences and viewpoints truly enriches the learning environment for everyone involved, making the educational experience more vibrant and globally relevant.

International cooperation:

Oman is making great strides in fostering international cooperation through a variety of initiatives. At the heart of these efforts is the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation (MoHERI), which is dedicated to building strong connections with universities and institutions globally.

MOHERI is actively working to create joint programmes and exchange opportunities, as well as facilitating collaborative research projects. These efforts not only enhance Oman's educational landscape but also promote a spirit of partnership and shared knowledge with communities around the world.

Community services:

Internationalisation in education goes beyond just borders; it deeply intertwines with community engagement and service. In Oman, higher education institutions are making a meaningful impact through various community service projects that carry an international flavour. These initiatives provide students with rich experiences that foster a sense of global citizenship, allowing them to understand diverse perspectives and cultures.

Through their participation, students not only enhance their own learning but also play a vital role in uplifting their communities, creating a ripple effect of positive change and a brighter future for all.

Strategic plans and initiatives

Oman is making significant strides in the internationalisation of its higher education system with well-thought-out strategic plans. These initiatives aim to not only enhance the quality of education but also encourage groundbreaking research and innovation. Moreover, Oman is committed to building strong international partnerships that will enrich its educational landscape.

There's a notable emphasis on improving rankings and overall competitiveness in global higher education. Oman's institutions are continually striving to enhance the quality of education, boost research output, and foster international collaborations. This drive not only raises the profile of Omani education but also positions its graduates for success in an increasingly globalised world.

The future of higher education internationalisation in Oman looks promising. The government's commitment to economic diversification and reducing dependence on the oil sector will drive the expansion of higher education. The focus on quality, relevance, and international partnerships will continue to shape the higher education landscape in Oman, ensuring that it meets the needs of a rapidly changing global economy.

The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority and Quality Assurance (OAAAQA) plays a vital role in upholding the quality of education in Oman. Essentially, it is the guardian of educational standards in the country. Their main responsibilities revolve around several key areas:

- **Institutional accreditation:**

They ensure that institutions meet rigorous standards, helping students and parents choose reliable places for learning.

- **Programme accreditation:**

They also evaluate specific programmes within these institutions, making sure that the courses offered are up to par and relevant to students' needs.

- **Developing and maintaining the national qualifications framework:**

This involves creating a clear structure to understand and compare qualifications, so that everyone knows what to expect from their educational achievements.

- **Conducting quality enhancement reviews:**

Through regular reviews, the OAAAQA helps institutions improve and evolve, fostering a culture of continuous improvement in education.

By focussing on these areas, the OAAAQA is dedicated to providing a strong educational foundation for all students in Oman, ensuring that their learning experiences are meaningful and impactful.



Omani government initiatives

National strategies:

The Omani government has introduced the National Strategy for Education 2040, a visionary plan that seeks to elevate the quality of education across the country. This strategy is all about ensuring that education not only meets academic standards but also aligns closely with the evolving demands of the labour market.

By emphasising innovation, critical thinking, and the cultivation of essential values, the initiative aims to equip Omani students with the skills and competencies they need to thrive in their careers. Ultimately, this is about empowering the next generation and helping them become valuable contributors to society.

The National Innovation Strategy, approved by the Cabinet in 2017. It was developed through multisectoral involvement to provide a comprehensive map of data, initiatives, and monitoring KPIs.

Scholarships and financial aid:

The government supports students pursuing higher education both locally and abroad through extensive scholarships and financial aid. By offering scholarships and financial aid, this initiative is designed to attract bright minds and help them flourish. It ensures that talented individuals have the resources they need to access quality education and follow their dreams without the heavy burden of financial stress.

International partnerships:

Higher education institutions in Oman are actively forming meaningful partnerships with universities and research centres globally. These collaborations are more than just formal agreements; they create vibrant opportunities for students and faculty to exchange ideas and experiences. By sharing knowledge, cultures, and resources, these partnerships not only enrich the academic environment but also foster a sense of international community and collaboration, making the learning experience even more fulfilling for everyone involved.

The Omani government and various institutions have been making impressive strides to enhance higher education in the country. By rolling out strategic initiatives, offering scholarships, and forming international partnerships, they're not just boosting academic opportunities; they're also ensuring that the education provided is both high-quality and relevant to today's job market.

Research and innovation:

MoHERI runs many research and publication funding programmes, as well as capacity-building and innovation initiatives. These programmes address all three sectors, including academia, government, and industry. Recently, MoHERI focused on participating in several international events to provide Omani researchers and innovators with international exposure.

Besides, several other governmental organizations have also allocated resources to support research and innovation in Oman. Similarly, Oman established its first science park in 2018, known as "Innovation Park Muscat (IPM)." This national hub attracts key players in R&D from various fields. IPM also provides very attractive and competitive opportunities for local and international R&D companies to establish research and innovation centers in the heart of the capital city, Muscat.

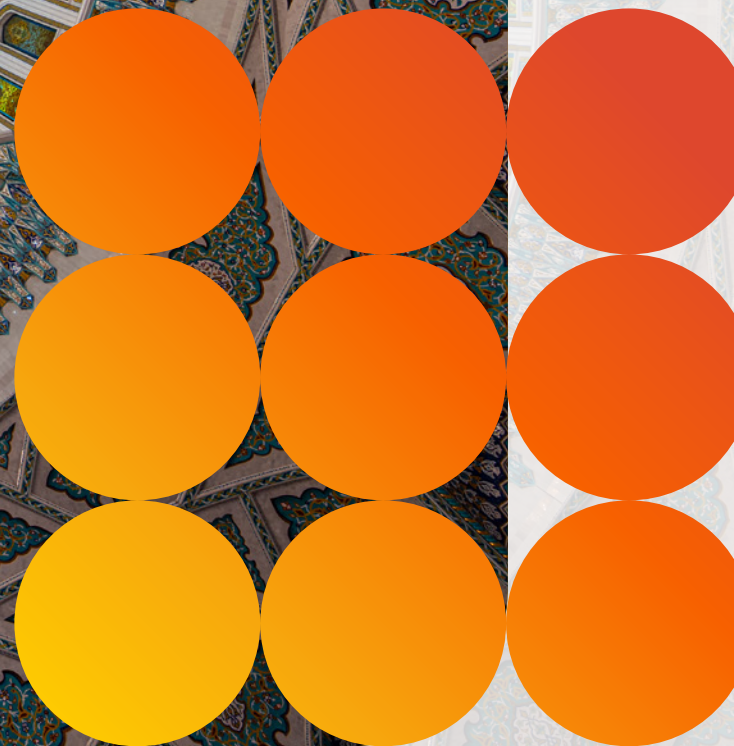
Research chairs:

The late Sultan Qaboos established 16 esteemed research chairs at prestigious universities worldwide, reflecting his commitment to education and international collaboration. These significant endowments are designed to form relationships between Oman and various nations and enhance the exchange of knowledge and research. These chairs serve as a bridge for academic cooperation and foster global advancement in various fields.

These efforts are important for Oman as it aims to diversify its economy and promote sustainable development, all while nurturing a skilled workforce that can compete on a global scale.

QS-Oman roundtable

QS recently hosted a roundtable with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI) in the Sultanate of Oman, to offer strategic partnership to develop the higher education sector. In the vibrant city of Muscat, the QS team met with dignitaries and leaders from the higher education sector in order to come up with an action plan to tap into the immensity and promise that is hitherto untapped in the Sultanate.



Reflections from the QS-Oman roundtable

Collaborations with MoHERI

In recent years, QS has joined forces with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation (MoHERI) to boost higher education in Oman. One of the standout initiatives was a roundtable discussion and seminar held on **June 9th, 2024**, in the vibrant city of Muscat, aimed at positioning Oman as a welcoming hub for international students.

This event saw senior officials, university leaders, educators, and industry experts come together to share their insights and discuss innovative strategies to make Oman an attractive destination for students from around the globe. The collaborative atmosphere was inspiring, highlighting a shared commitment to expanding educational opportunities and fostering a diverse academic community in the region.

The roundtable discussions offered a comprehensive look at what makes Oman special and where there's room for growth. One of the standout moments was when experts explored data from QS research, which highlighted successful destinations for international students and helped to draw some interesting comparisons with Oman's unique qualities. The seminar celebrated Oman's vibrant multicultural environment, its peaceful society, and its strategic position at the crossroads of Asia and Africa. It was inspiring to see how these factors can attract more global interest and collaboration.

Dr Ashwin Fernandes serves as the Executive Director for Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia at QS, and he has been a driving force behind educational success and career growth in these regions. His passion for fostering learning and international opportunities shines through in his work with universities in Oman, where he dedicates his efforts to helping them achieve excellence and build their capacities.

Since joining QS in 2012, Dr Fernandes has not only developed professional ties but also cultivated meaningful relationships with educational institutions, creating a network that supports both students and educators alike. His commitment to advancing education is truly inspiring, as he helps pave the way for future generations.



Impact on higher education

QS has played a pivotal role in fostering international collaboration in Oman, opening doors for Omani institutions and allowing them to connect with universities around the world. This collaboration not only enhances the quality of education but also makes it more appealing to students from different countries. Thanks to QS, Oman's universities have gained access to valuable data and insights that help them understand global trends and best practices. As a result, they've been able to attract international students, boosting their diversity and enriching the learning environment for everyone. Moreover, QS's initiatives have contributed to nurturing a skilled and competitive workforce in Oman. By aligning educational outcomes with global standards, they are helping students prepare for a future where they can thrive not just locally but on an international scale.

Higher education institutions play a crucial role in preparing individuals for the challenges and opportunities of the future. They are responsible for not just laying a studious foundation and critical thinking in students' minds, but also for helping them align their life and career goals in tangible ways to make a difference to the world tomorrow. But what sets the future-ready institutions apart from the rest of the crowd? There are three key differentiators:

1. Embracing change:

They have the ability to anticipate and adapt to emerging trends and technologies, ensuring that graduates are equipped to thrive in an evolving job market.

2. Holistic education:

These institutions prioritise a holistic approach to education, focusing on developing critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills, alongside technical knowledge.

3. Lifelong learning:

A commitment to lifelong learning is central to future-readiness, with institutions offering opportunities for continuous education and skill development to meet the lifelong needs of their learners.

The potential of higher education in Oman is growing rapidly, fuelled by both government initiatives and increasing demand for advanced skills in a modernising economy. Here's a summary of its key aspects:

1. Government investment and Vision 2040

Oman's government is heavily investing in the development of the education sector as part of its Vision 2040. This includes substantial investment in higher education institutions, research, and academic programmes to equip students with the skills needed to thrive in emerging sectors like technology, healthcare, and renewable energy.

2. Expansion of institutions and infrastructure

The higher education landscape in Oman has expanded significantly over the last few decades. The country is home to several public universities, such as SQU alongside numerous private universities and colleges.

3. International collaboration

Oman is actively working to build stronger international ties through partnerships with renowned global universities. This collaboration helps to enhance the quality of education, research, and innovation. These international partnerships not only provide Omani students with opportunities to study abroad but also bring international expertise and resources into the country.

4. Emphasis on research and innovation

Oman has increasingly recognised the importance of research in driving economic growth and solving societal challenges. Higher education institutions are being encouraged to prioritise research and innovation, with a focus on sustainable development, renewable energy, and technology. SQU, for example, has several research centres dedicated to areas like clean energy, environmental studies, and marine sciences.

5. Skills development for a diversified economy

There is a growing demand for skilled professionals in sectors like technology, engineering, healthcare, and business management. As part of its economic diversification efforts, Oman is aligning its higher education programmes with the skills needed in these key industries. This is reflected in the expansion of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) programmes, as well as the introduction of vocational and technical education programmes.



Key takeaways from the QS-Oman Roundtable

6. Increase in scholarships and study opportunities

The government offers numerous scholarships to Omani students to study abroad, ensuring they gain exposure to world-class education and global networks. This has led to a growing pool of Omani graduates with international qualifications, enhancing the country's human capital and strengthening its global competitiveness.

7. Private sector engagement

The private sector in Oman is increasingly engaged in shaping the future of higher education. Partnerships between educational institutions and industry are fostering more practical and applied learning opportunities, internships, and work placements. These collaborations aim to ensure that graduates are equipped with real-world experience and are ready to contribute effectively to the economy.

8. Cultural and social development

Higher education in Oman also focuses on promoting cultural, social, and ethical development. Universities and colleges in Oman offer a range of programmes in the humanities, social sciences, and arts, contributing to the holistic development of students and preparing them to be responsible global citizens.

9. Growing role of technology and online education

The role of technology in higher education is becoming more prominent in Oman. Online learning platforms and digital resources are enhancing access to education for students across the country, especially in remote areas. During the COVID-19 pandemic, universities in Oman quickly adapted to online teaching, which further accelerated the use of technology in the education system.

Recently, the Ministry of Higher Education, Research & Innovation (MoHERI) of Oman, in collaboration with UK-based QS Quacquarelli Symonds, hosted a roundtable discussion in Muscat to explore Oman's potential as an international student hub. Here are the key takeaways from the roundtable.

Oman's unique attributes

The seminar highlighted Oman's multicultural environment, peaceful society, and strategic location at the crossroads of Asia and Africa as factors that position the country favourably to attract international students. Oman's Vision 2040 is keenly focussed on strengthening education and promoting Oman's status as a regional educational hub.

Known for its welcoming and tolerant society, where diverse cultures coexist harmoniously, Oman promises to be a favoured destination for both domestic and international students to pursue higher education in. Oman's multicultural environment is appealing to international students who seek a safe, inclusive and supportive atmosphere while studying abroad. Oman offers a high standard of living, a safe environment and rich cultural heritage, making it an appealing destination for students seeking a balanced life between academics and personal well-being.

QS insights

Data from QS research were presented, showcasing successful international student destinations and drawing parallels with Oman's unique attributes, emphasising areas where Oman could enhance its appeal to international students. In collaboration with QS, Oman has the potential to make huge strides in moving towards its 2040 goals with confidence.



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