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2021 Arab Region

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Welcome

Welcome to the October 2020 QS Higher Education Report featuring the 2021 Arab Region Rankings.

The release of this report and its associated rankings are timely, published just over a month after the first virtual QS MAPLE Conference and Exhibition in September 2020. We had originally planned on holding QS MAPLE 2020 in March, but sudden travel restrictions at the time caused a postponement.

In this Higher Education Report, we bring you some of the highlights of MAPLE 2020.

While we were disappointed to not meet in person to discuss *Building World-Class Universities*, the sudden postponement refocused discussions on another area of interest for the region, economic diversity and globalization. Over the two-day event, experts and higher education leaders, as well as our first non-human speaker, Sophia the Robot, discussed *Innovative Middle East and Africa*, centered on the opportunities and difficulties within the region as many countries continue towards their Vision 2030 strategies.

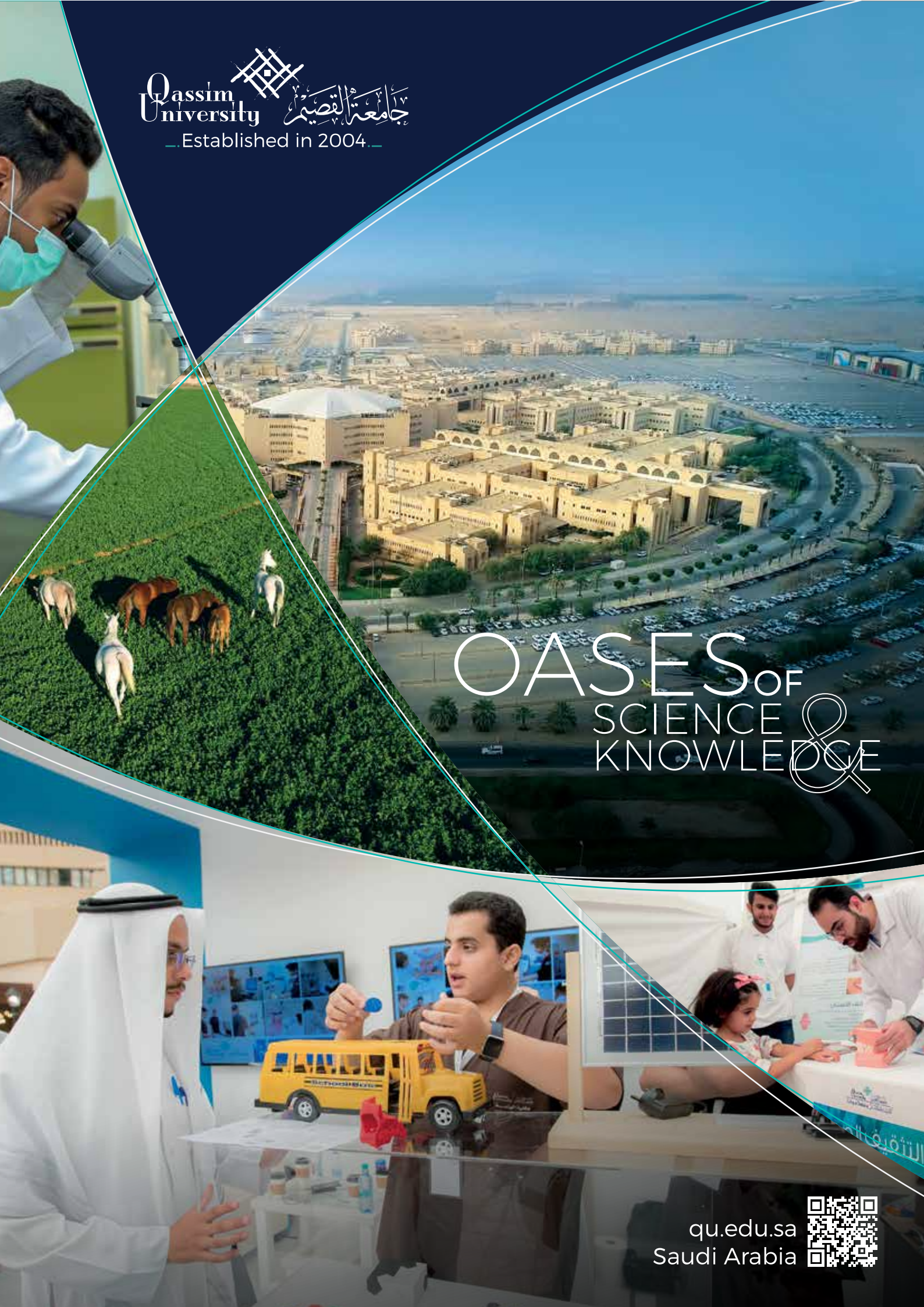
In this Higher Education Report, we bring you some of the highlights of MAPLE 2020 as well as the QS and Elsevier roundtable, a closed-door event held a day prior to the conference and exhibition. The hour-long discussion covered several areas of interest for university leaders within the region, revealing which concerns overlap and across which countries.

Outside of the Arab region alone, this month's report unpacks the post-lockdown plans of universities, the thoughts of students, and the possibilities for the future.

I look forward to seeing you in person at MAPLE when circumstances allow and virtually at the next MAPLE in March 2021.

Anton John Crace

Editor
QS Quacquarelli Symonds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Arab Leaders' Thoughts

By Monica Hornung Cattan,
Head of Programs, QS Quacquarelli Symonds

In the lead up to the 2020 MAPLE Virtual Conference and Exhibition in September, QS and Elsevier hosted a roundtable with higher education leaders from the Middle East and Africa, centered on the areas of consideration for university vice chancellors and presidents. Using Elsevier and Ipsos MORI's 2020 report, *Challenges university leaders face in an ever-changing world*, to frame discussions, the roundtable uncovered areas in which the strategic planning of institutions in the Middle East and Africa both correspond and differ from others around the world.

Leaders also noted they needed to communicate the quality and benefits of online degrees.

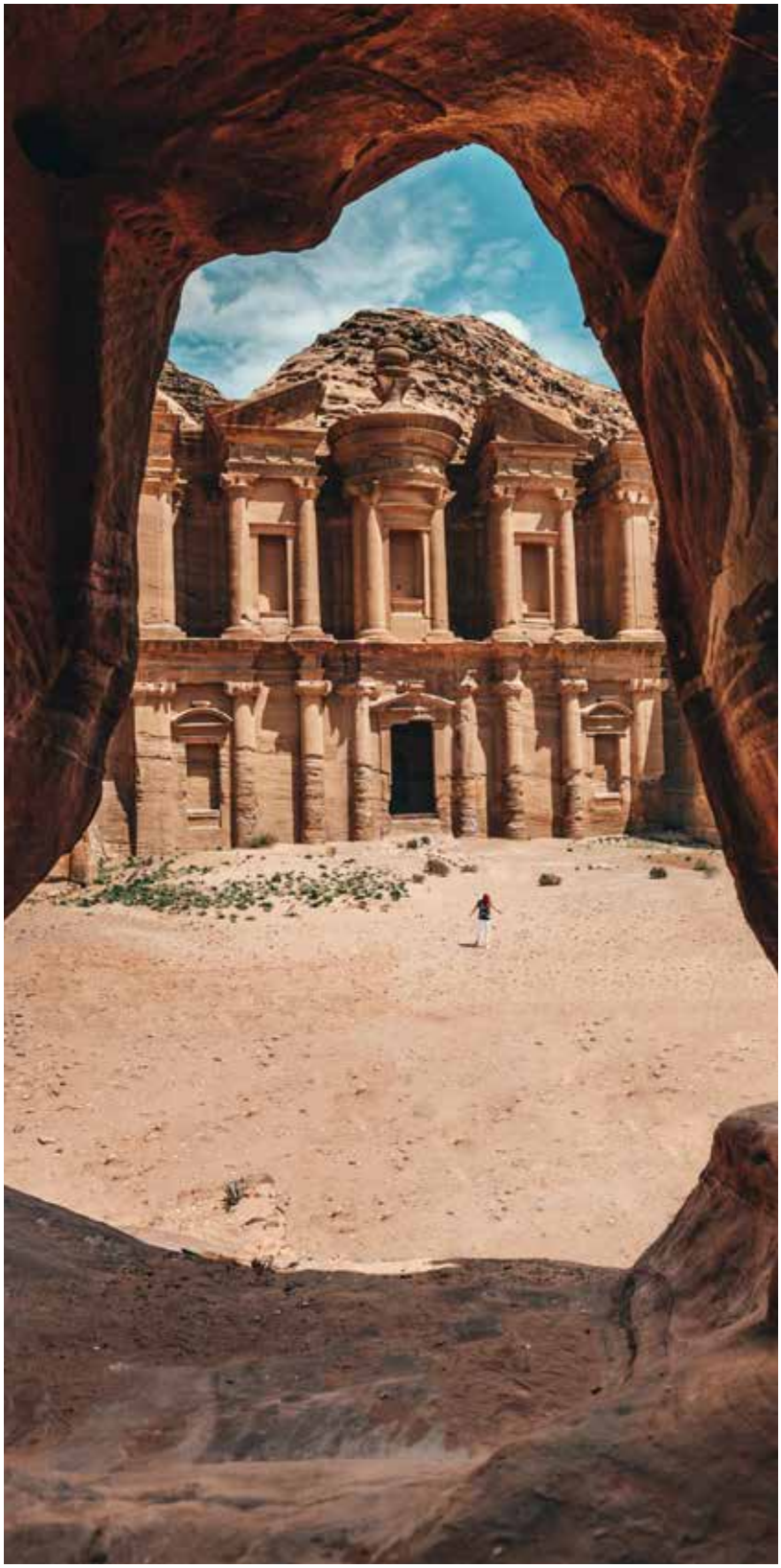
While the historical context of the discussions will remain firmly rooted within a period of uncertainty and lockdowns due to COVID-19, the roundtable further highlighted that universities' overall sensitivities in September 2020 were more or less unchanged compared to up to a decade earlier. Rather than completely overhauling higher education, at that point in time at least, the coronavirus pandemic has sped up changes. Leaders at the roundtable also noted this was creating both positive and negative impacts overall.

Elsevier and Ipsos MORI's report as well as the points raised by university leaders broadly fell into one of eight topics: Developing Strategy, Nurturing Culture, Benchmarking Performance, Building Brand, Driving Research Quality, Establishing Partnerships with Industry, International Collaboration, and Demonstrating Impact.

Digital transformation pre-COVID-19

While online education has ramped up significantly during the global pandemic, due in large part to necessity as campuses remain closed, the university leaders were clear to point out much of the digital transformation of university education had already been underway. In some cases, one leader noted, digital and online had been under discussion for over a decade.

Instead, the leaders said COVID-19 had been an accelerant for digital transformation rather than a catalyst.



For the region, however, leaders highlighted concerns around the progress of development, particularly for areas underserved by infrastructure. Some gaps in the availability of high-speed internet, for example were putting strains on their ability to continue their efforts towards advancing education access. Additionally, institutions with more advanced experience of digital delivery were in a better position during COVID-19 to continue students' education. The leaders called for more collaborative support between institutions in the region to push all up to the same level.

Collaboration and research

The acceleration of digital transformation across university campuses, however, did present several opportunities to bolster an institution's impact and level of external collaboration, according to one leader. The technology that has accompanied the online has created new areas of research, particularly around Artificial

Intelligence, the Internet of Things, the Internet of Energy, and Digital Twins.

Just as digital transformation has created new areas for higher education research, the technology has also facilitated new ways to undertake collaborative partnerships. According to one leader, this itself represents a potential reshaping of university relationships, and speculated institutions should shift their interests from seeing themselves as predominantly competitors to predominantly collaborators.

Community and industry

As institutions strive to bolster the inter-university research collaboration, a significant opportunity within the region is to similarly bolster industry and private sector partnerships. This, according to some leaders, would also see a significant improvement in research and employability output.

While doing so, however, other leaders said they were mindful of ensuring they continue to serve the needs of the community. One leader said they were particularly mindful that research and collaboration, which has its own set of benefits in terms of global reputation, did not supplant local community engagement. The leaders said universities in the region were balancing local and international needs simultaneously.

The acceleration of digital transformation, however, did present several opportunities.

Culture

Despite the possibilities provided by the rise of digital education, some leaders also noted they needed to communicate the quality and benefits of online degrees. One raised concerns that in some areas of the region, an online degree was not viewed as positively as an in-person degree.

The leaders said as a consequence, they were working more closely with the community, industry, and society more broadly to convey that message better. In the same way institutions need to continue to engage with the community around their research, they also must work to change societal perceptions of the value of online and digital education.

As much as COVID-19 has caused significant negative disruption in higher education, the pandemic could potentially push positive changes in the way society view virtual education. In the same way opinions on work and working from home have changed, and the way business and connecting with peers has been altered, this period could be a watershed moment. It is an opportunity to change the way the Arab region views the value of new education practices and in turn become a world leader, according to the roundtable speakers.

This is an abridged version of an upcoming larger report.

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Arab Region Rankings Overview

By Dr Andrew MacFarlane,
Rankings Manager, QS Quacquarelli Symonds

Welcome to the QS World University Rankings: Arab Region 2021, our annual insight into the top performing institutions in the Arab region.

In what has been a challenging year for the higher education sector across the globe, the level of engagement from institutions in the Arab region has been tremendously encouraging.

We aim to provide students with our original data and insights to help empower them to make the best decisions for themselves. To do this, we rely on the support of institutions in the region to ensure that their data is up-to-date, accurate and full. The institutions we evaluated this year worked hard with us to verify data and check accuracy.

The 2021 edition saw 160 institutions ranked, up from 130 last year. This increase is not only a result of more sustained efforts around data collection and institutional engagement, but a sign that absolute performance, in terms of reputation, research, and teaching is on the rise.

To add further support to this, we have seen an increase of 15 percent in papers and 20 percent in citations, more than double the global growth in the same period. By institution, the average citation increase in the Top 100 for the Arab Region is almost 23 percent more than the previous year. There is a clear push in the region to intensify research, and this is paying off for overall performance.

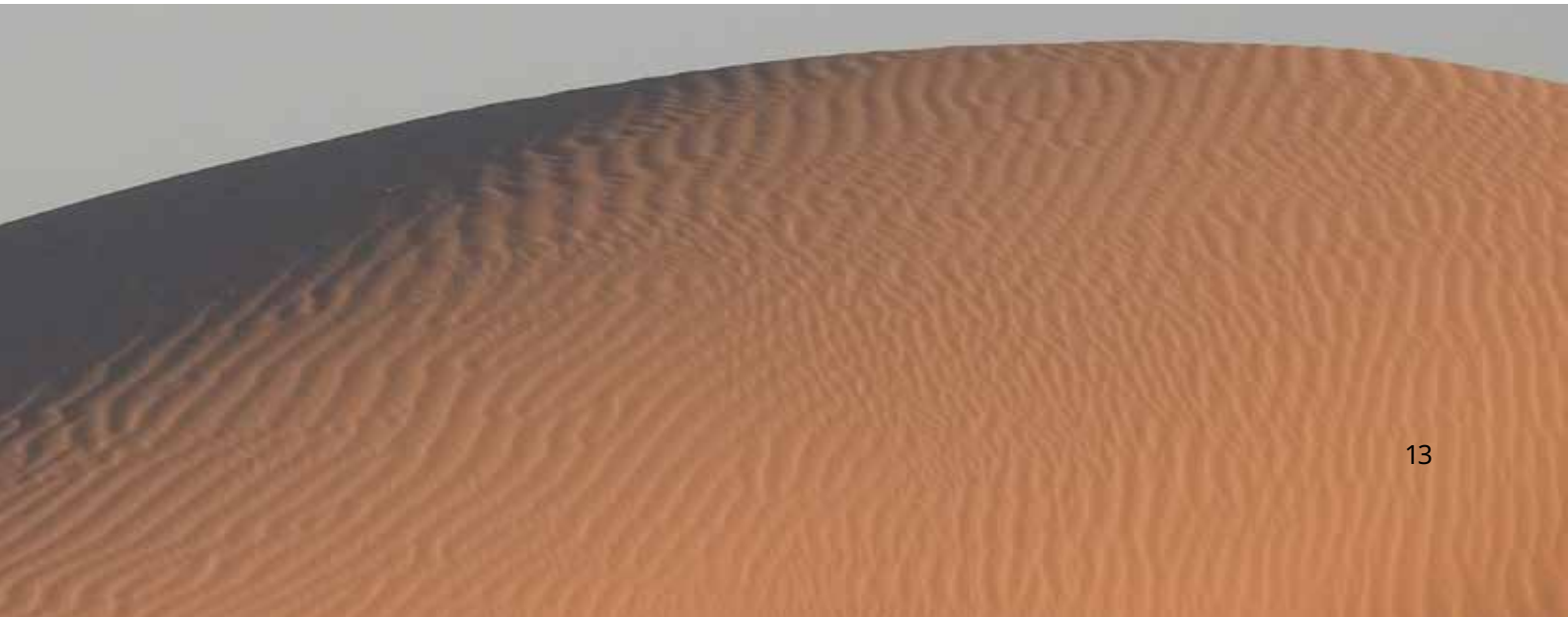
We have maintained a consistent methodology this year. This allows students and institutions alike to benchmark historical performance more easily. Therefore, we can begin to look at what the top performing institutions have in common, and some areas for growth from emerging institutions.

In line with any QS ranking, reputation forms a crucial component of the success of the top institutions.

Encouragingly, we have seen solid year on year increases in the international nominations received in our Academic Reputation surveys. We saw a 37 percent increase in academic nominations of our 2019 and 2020 ranking, and a further 31 percent between our 2020 and 2021 rankings. The majority of nominations in the region are coming from Engineering and Technology, which when taken together with the increase in citations in this field (23 precent), indicates a strong focus on sciences from the region.

Reputation is a hard-earned metric that takes time to build and effort to nurture. Institutions that score well in this tend to have well-rounded faculty offerings, a strong culture of research, and well-established global partnerships. Institutions with strong scores in reputation also tend to score well in our other indicators, bolstering the unsurprising truth that well-rounded institutions offer high quality education to their students.

Equipping students for life after graduation is an especially important role for institutions, particularly as many students face uncertain futures. In our annual QS Global Employer Survey, we looked at the skills most important to employers in the Middle East region, and the skills of graduates that they are least satisfied with. The most important skills were flexibility, communication, and problem solving. Professional experience was the most sought after characteristic of the global employers we surveyed. It is paramount that institutions prepare their students for the realities of the global workplace. By ensuring that work experience is woven into the fabric of their education, as well as integrating these soft skills into the learning experience, institutions will be supporting their students' futures in the region and beyond.



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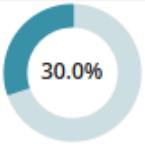
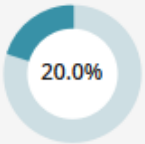
METHODOLOGY:
INDICATORS & WEIGHTINGS

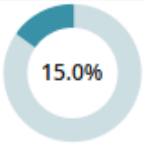
The **QS World University Rankings : Arab Region** have been published since 2014. The method retains key indicators of the global ranking, such as Academic Reputation, Employer Reputation, and Faculty to Student Ratio, but also considers a set of performance metrics carefully tailored for the region.



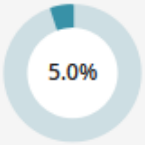
Academic Reputation
Taken from the annual survey conducted by QS designed to evaluate the perceptions of academics from around the world regarding the best institutions in terms of research. This year, over 102,500 responses were recorded globally.



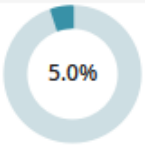
Employer Reputation
Taken from the annual QS survey aimed at gathering the views of employers around the world on the institutions providing the best professionals. This year around 52,000 responses were analysed.



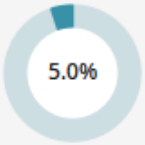
Faculty Student
This is the ratio between the number of academic staff and number of students. A higher number of teachers per student is an indirect indicator of the commitment of the institutions to high-quality teaching.



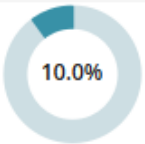
Staff with PhD
This indicator attempts to assess the quality of training of the academic staff, detecting the proportion of them that have reached the highest level of education in their area of expertise. This is an indirect measure of the commitment of universities to high-quality teaching and research.



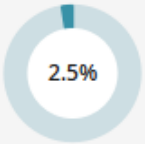
Citations per Paper
This ratio measures the average number of citations obtained per publication, and is a proxy of the impact and quality of the scientific work done by universities. Underlying data of papers and citations is indexed by Scopus. The paper and citations counts are normalized in an attempt to equalize the influence of citations across the five broad faculty areas.



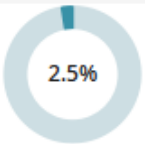
Papers per Faculty
This indicator seeks to determine the average number of scientific publications (papers) produced per faculty and evaluates the productivity of research institutions. Data is extracted from Scopus. Indexed papers in the last five full years are used (from 2014 to 2018 for the 2021 edition). The paper count is normalized, ensuring that citations achieved in each of the five broad faculty areas are weighted equally.



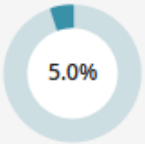
International Research Network
Using data provided by Scopus, this indicator assesses the degree of international openness in terms of research collaboration for each evaluated institution. The Margalef Index, widely used in the environmental sciences, has been adapted to estimate the richness of the selected international research partners for a given institution.



International Faculty
The International Faculty Index is simply based on the proportion of faculty members that are international. It is a proxy measure for how internationally attractive the university is to academic staff.



International Students
The International Students Index is based on the proportion of students that are international. It is a proxy measure for how internationally attractive the university is to students.



Web Impact
This indicator seeks to assess the effectiveness with which institutions are making use of new technologies. Baseline information is provided by the Ranking Web of Universities (www.webometrics.info), although the results are refactored to exclude the Excellence indicator, which is already considered in the metrics related to scientific research.

2021	2020	Institution Name	location	Academic Reputation	Employer Reputation	Faculty Student	Papers per Faculty	Citations per Paper	International Faculty	Staff with PhD	International Students	International Research Network	Web Impact	Overall
1	1	KING ABDUL AZIZ UNIVERSITY (KAU)	SA	99.9	100	96.4	99.4	100	72.1	96.4	74	100	98.2	100
2	2	AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT (AUB)	LB	99.3	100	92.3	93.7	83.7	48.5	98.7	79.3	94.3	100	97.2
3	4	QATAR UNIVERSITY	QA	93.2	91	96.6	98.1	96.7	99	100	97.3	98.8	92.3	96.9
4	3	KING FAHD UNIVERSITY OF PETROLEUM & MINERALS (KFUPM)	SA	99.7	88	99	100	99.2	96.7	88.7	36.4	95.9	96.1	96.6
5	5	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES UNIVERSITY	AE	97.7	98	93.3	89.5	69.6	99.2	100	61.1	93	91.9	95.9
6	6	KING SAUD UNIVERSITY (KSU)	SA	99.8	67	92.1	96.8	90.9	56.4	100	30.8	100	100	90.6
7	7	AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH	AE	96.2	97	68.1	95.6	67.5	100	100	100	56.8	81.8	88.3
8	8	SULTAN QABOOS UNIVERSITY	OM	82.3	71	97.6	92.5	57.9	82.3	100	10.1	98.2	83.5	84.3
9	12	KHALIFA UNIVERSITY	AE	70.3	61	99.6	100	93.2	100	100	67.3	98.6	66.7	82
10	10	UNIVERSITY OF JORDAN	JO	98.7	98	32.4	48.6	35.3	14.4	100	52.8	98	98.5	81.4
11	9	THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO	EG	99.1	93	79.4	67.5	23.9	58.2	72.5	8.3	40.1	100	81
12	11	CAIRO UNIVERSITY	EG	100.0	96	21.9	32.8	38.2	2.3	46.5	15.2	99.5	99.7	75.4
13	13	JORDAN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	JO	91.4	90	54.7	35.7	43.2	10.4	11.9	56.8	57.3	84.7	71.4
14	15	LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY	LB	65.7	98	61.2	32.5	88.7	64.4	67.4	65.2	29.2	73.4	69.3
15	14	AIN SHAMS UNIVERSITY	EG	93.0	86	23.8	14.9	31.2	12.1	48	8.1	98	54.2	67.9
16	17	UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH	AE	80.6	72	12.9	72.8	38.2	100	89.7	100	72	60.3	67.2
17	22	UMM AL-QURA UNIVERSITY (UQU)	SA	74.2	48	93.7	14.6	38.7	78.2	49.8	39.7	63	86.3	66.2
18	16	ALEXANDRIA UNIVERSITY	EG	92.7	71	14.4	13.8	42.5	2.3	67.7	9.6	91	90.3	65.6
19	18	UNIVERSITÉ SAINT-JOSEPH DE BEYROUTH	LB	60.0	99	80.1	36.2	42.3	52.1	6.4	36	10.6	73.1	62.4
20	20	ZAYED UNIVERSITY	AE	64.9	66	60.9	48.7	41.4	100	62.2	6.6	58.9	60.7	62.4
21	25=	LEBANESE UNIVERSITY	LB	71.7	96	11.6	16.8	29.7	25.7	100	55.7	43	84.8	61.8
22	21	KUWAIT UNIVERSITY	KW	76.5	58	10.8	42.4	65.4	21	100	49.7	89.5	13.8	59.3
23	19	UNIVERSITY OF BAGHDAD	IQ	74.7	60	69.3	11	6.8	1.2	23.9	1.2	66.7	43.4	57
24	24	AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN DUBAI	AE	52.2	83	41.6	35.6	8.8	100	100	100	5.2	31.8	54.1
25	23	UNIVERSITY OF BAHRAIN	BH	66.2	66	14.8	22.6	51.7	71.1	50.1	51	47.4	44.3	52.6
26	36	UNIVERSITY OF BALAMAND	LB	29.5	80	99.9	12.5	48.3	10.5	95.4	39.4	9.8	27.6	52.3
27	28	NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY-LOUAIZE (NDU)	LB	38.8	91	54	28.6	65.9	49.9	16.3	46.2	15.9	28.3	50
28	31	MANSOURA UNIVERSITY	EG	65.3	34	9.2	19.1	49.8	2.2	70.4	8.8	97.3	78.3	49.8
29	37	APPLIED SCIENCE UNIVERSITY OF BAHRAIN	BH	43.5	79	62.8	3.8	-	98.3	100	58.2	5.3	9.1	49.5
30	30	HOLY SPIRIT UNIVERSITY OF KASLIK	LB	26.5	76	83.6	8.6	50.6	70.7	94.4	55.8	7.8	21.2	49.4
31	25=	KING KHALID UNIVERSITY	SA	58.4	14	88.1	11.8	24.4	95.8	21.8	5.3	55.7	50.3	48.2
32	32	ASSIUT UNIVERSITY	EG	61.3	27	26.7	19.8	53.7	17.6	65.6	4.4	82.7	54.8	47.3
33	33	KING FAISAL UNIVERSITY	SA	79.0	28	23.6	14.6	47.7	74.8	10.5	5.9	42.6	54.5	46.4
34	28	YARMOUK UNIVERSITY	JO	66.3	58	3.7	34.4	7	2.5	100	29.9	26.3	51.5	46.2
35	45	AJMAN UNIVERSITY	AE	43.4	82	15.7	12.2	7	100	90	100	9.7	32.6	45.9
36	27	ABU DHABI UNIVERSITY	AE	49.7	54	17.7	67.3	33.8	100	48.7	100	25.2	28.9	45.8
37	46	AN-NAJAH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY	PS	36.8	64	18.6	17.4	30.1	19.5	57.2	36.3	57.6	97.1	44.9
38	42	PRINCESS SUMAYA UNIVERSITY FOR TECHNOLOGY	JO	33.5	55	32.3	72.2	77.3	39.6	100	50.3	8.9	32.5	44.2
39	61-70	PRINCESS NOURAH BINT ABDULRAHMAN UNIVERSITY	SA	45.9	63	50.5	5.1	8.9	43.8	18.8	53.3	22.1	28.5	42.5
40	38	ALFAISAL UNIVERSITY	SA	13.7	10	75.6	73.3	97.5	98.4	100	97.5	42.9	26.2	42.5
41	49	HELWAN UNIVERSITY	EG	34.0	61	6.2	11.1	52.5	1.3	100	3.7	77.7	39.5	42.2
42	41	CANADIAN UNIVERSITY OF DUBAI	AE	36.5	47	50.6	20.3	-	100	100	100	11.7	15.9	41.8
43	40	IMAM ABDULRAHMAN BIN FAISAL UNIVERSITY (IAU) (FORMERLY UNIVERSITY OF DAMMAM)	SA	33.8	21	96.3	14	26.9	68.3	1.2	9.6	64.2	30.9	41.6
44=	34	ARABIAN GULF UNIVERSITY	BH	20.6	15	98.8	32.9	49.2	71.8	100	100	16.9	19.7	41
44=	81-90	PRINCE MOHAMMAD BIN FAHD UNIVERSITY	SA	30.7	37	26.6	50	98.2	100	93.8	40.4	28.7	20.5	41
46	43	AHLIA UNIVERSITY	BH	37.5	39	64.9	23.4	1.9	77.3	97	76.5	5	8.2	40.5
47	35	UNIVERSITY OF KUFA	IQ	37.7	64	71.4	7.4	3.7	4.7	1.1	1.4	20.6	24.5	39.8
48	47	GERMAN JORDANIAN UNIVERSITY	JO	37.6	51	51.3	39.1	48	31.5	2	46.5	20.1	24.6	39.7
49	39	THE HASHEMITE UNIVERSITY	JO	37.4	49	8.8	49.8	20.7	7.9	85.9	22.6	56.8	43.3	39.6
50	48	BEIRUT ARAB UNIVERSITY	LB	40.3	67	23.5	23.5	18.9	38.7	2.2	60.1	24.2	35	38.8

2021	2020	Institution Name	location	Academic Reputation	Employer Reputation	Faculty Student	Papers per Faculty	Citations per Paper	International Faculty	Staff with PhD	International Students	International Research Network	Web Impact	Overall
51-60	44	AL AZHAR UNIVERSITY	EG	55.5	-	-	-	28.1	-	29.8	21.1	66.5	34.2	-
51-60	61-70	AL QUDS UNIVERSITY THE ARAB UNIVERSITY IN JERUSALEM	PS	-	-	33.2	-	72.5	26.8	66.4	14	44	52.8	-
51-60	50=	AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF RAS AL KHAIMAH (AURAK)	AE	-	-	90.8	86.3	30.9	100	100	100	24.3	-	-
51-60	51-60	BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY	PS	37.7	47	-	14.9	63.7	11.2	-	12.9	37.7	98.7	-
51-60	61-70	GULF UNIVERSITY FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (GUST)	KW	-	-	-	58	37.6	97.2	99.1	36.2	-	-	-
51-60		ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF LEBANON	LB	-	-	100	-	-	15	100	100	-	-	-
51-60	51-60	PRINCE SULTAN UNIVERSITY	SA	-	-	71.3	44	23.5	97.4	-	59.7	27.7	23.3	-
51-60	50=	SUEZ CANAL UNIVERSITY	EG	-	-	57.1	17.9	58.5	-	44.8	-	74.8	33.9	-
51-60	51-60	UNIVERSITY OF DUBAI	AE	-	-	19.2	77.6	53.2	100	100	99.4	-	-	-
51-60	61-70	UNIVERSITY OF KHARTOUM	SD	34.8	44	-	38.7	-	-	-	-	52.2	74.8	-
61-70	51-60	AL NAHRAIN UNIVERSITY	IQ	-	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
61-70	61-70	AL-IMAM MOHAMED IBN SAUD ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY	SA	34.7	-	22.1	-	57.9	25.9	-	20.1	55.7	52.1	-
61-70		AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF THE MIDDLE EAST (AUM)	KW	-	41	-	27.7	-	100	58.2	34.9	40.1	-	-
61-70		BRITISH UNIVERSITY IN DUBAI	AE	-	-	-	100	99.5	100	100	100	-	-	-
61-70	51-60	GERMAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO	EG	41.6	51	20.3	18.7	-	11.2	-	-	-	34.2	-
61-70	51-60	ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY IN MADINAH	SA	-	-	20	-	-	65.5	90.8	100	-	36.2	-
61-70	61-70	JEDDAH UNIVERSITY	SA	-	-	82.4	23.1	41.8	88.8	84.1	37.3	33.2	-	-
61-70	61-70	MUSTANSIRIYAH UNIVERSITY	IQ	-	-	50.6	-	-	-	100	-	27.2	22.7	-
61-70	71-80	UNIVERSITÉ DE TUNIS EL MANAR	TN	34.4	-	34.4	32.4	-	-	31.9	-	74.6	-	-
61-70	61-70	UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY - IRAQ	IQ	-	-	99.6	26.2	-	-	-	-	43.3	27.3	-
71-80	101-110	AL AIN UNIVERSITY	AE	-	-	-	33.9	-	100	100	100	-	-	-
71-80	81-90	AL BALQA APPLIED UNIVERSITY	JO	-	-	-	16.2	41.7	-	96.7	15.1	30.1	55.9	-
71-80	51-60	DAMASCUS UNIVERSITY	SY	41.4	39	-	-	-	-	91.5	-	-	-	-
71-80	111-120	FUTURE UNIVERSITY IN EGYPT	EG	-	58	43.7	-	51.2	-	-	31	-	-	-
71-80	61-70	NAJRAN UNIVERSITY	SA	-	-	68.1	-	100	81.9	95.4	-	-	23.6	-
71-80	71-80	QASSIM UNIVERSITY	SA	37.3	-	36	-	-	69.4	-	16.4	43.2	46.4	-
71-80	71-80	TANTA UNIVERSITY	EG	-	-	-	-	75.6	-	-	-	79.5	41.1	-
71-80	71-80	UNIVERSITÉ DE MONASTIR	TN	-	-	88.9	38.9	-	-	21.8	-	44.5	-	-
71-80	51-60	UNIVERSITY OF BABYLON	IQ	-	-	35.6	17.9	-	-	18.8	-	25.5	53.6	-
71-80	81-90	ZAGAZIG UNIVERSITY	EG	-	-	-	16.4	44.3	-	71.1	-	83.6	41.9	-
81-90	71-80	BRITISH UNIVERSITY IN EGYPT	EG	-	-	46.8	16.5	24.2	-	-	8.3	19.4	25.9	-
81-90	81-90	EFFAT UNIVERSITY	SA	-	-	27	39.7	87.8	99.7	100	42.4	-	-	-
81-90	71-80	ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF GAZA	PS	-	-	-	16.3	47.6	-	81.5	-	25	77.6	-
81-90	111-120	SOUTH VALLEY UNIVERSITY	EG	-	-	-	41.9	68.2	-	100	-	67.1	25.7	-
81-90	81-90	TAIBAH UNIVERSITY	SA	-	-	-	18.3	44.8	66.7	-	11.6	69.4	37.5	-
81-90	71-80	UNIVERSITÉ DE CARTHAGE	TN	-	-	80.9	20.2	29.8	-	-	-	62.9	-	-
81-90	61-70	UNIVERSITY OF BASRAH	IQ	-	-	30.1	-	-	-	-	-	33.6	-	-
81-90		UNIVERSITY OF MOSUL	IQ	-	-	64	-	31.6	-	-	-	30.6	-	-
81-90	71-80	UNIVERSITY OF NIZWA	OM	-	-	36.1	36.2	78.6	99.4	-	16.9	33.2	-	-
81-90		UNIVERSITY OF SADAT CITY	EG	-	-	99.9	-	82.4	-	-	93.6	-	-	-
91-100	101-110	AL-AHLIYYA AMMAN UNIVERSITY	JO	-	-	24.2	-	-	36.1	100	100	-	23.6	-
91-100	111-120	AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN THE EMIRATES	AE	-	-	37.7	-	-	100	100	100	-	32.7	-
91-100	91-100	BENHA UNIVERSITY	EG	-	-	-	-	60.6	-	39	16.8	70.8	56.5	-
91-100	101-110	CADI AYYAD UNIVERSITY	MA	-	-	-	35.2	29.1	-	100	-	50.8	80.4	-
91-100	101-110	MAJMAAH UNIVERSITY	SA	-	-	67.1	-	61	78.5	-	-	22.2	42.6	-
91-100	91-100	MUTAH UNIVERSITY	JO	-	-	-	17.9	-	7.2	100	47.5	-	26.9	-
91-100	71-80	PHILADELPHIA UNIVERSITY AT JORDAN	JO	-	-	-	18.1	-	21.9	69.6	99.5	-	91.2	-
91-100	81-90	PRINCE SATTAM BIN ABDULAZIZ UNIVERSITY	SA	-	-	58.8	16.4	-	66.9	-	-	65.4	27.1	-
91-100	81-90	UNIVERSITÉ DE SOUSSE	TN	-	-	92.2	-	-	-	-	-	20.9	-	-
91-100	101-110	UNIVERSITY OF TABUK	SA	-	-	-	16.7	73.9	60	-	-	79.6	30.2	-
101-110	71-80	AL AKHAWAYN UNIVERSITY IFRANE	MA	-	-	32.3	39.1	26.1	53.4	64.4	-	-	41	-
101-110	91-100	AL ZAYTOONAH UNIVERSITY	JO	-	-	-	24.9	30.2	10.4	96.5	90.4	-	48.9	-
101-110	91-100	APPLIED SCIENCE PRIVATE UNIVERSITY - JORDAN	JO	-	-	-	26.7	-	17.4	83.9	96.7	-	-	-
101-110	91-100	ARAB ACADEMY FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND MARITIME TRANSPORT	EG	-	-	37	-	-	-	-	36.9	-	48.3	-
101-110	101-110	FAYOUM UNIVERSITY	EG	-	-	29.8	-	71.2	6.2	49.3	-	37.6	-	-
101-110	111-120	TAIF UNIVERSITY	SA	-	-	-	26.5	-	87	64.6	-	44.1	32.4	-

2021	2020	Institution Name	location	Academic Reputation	Employer Reputation	Faculty Student	Papers per Faculty	Citations per Paper	International Faculty	Staff with PhD	International Students	International Research Network	Web Impact	Overall
101-110	121-130	UNIVERSITÉ ANTONINE	LB	-	43	47.5	-	-	25.1	-	8.1	-	-	-
101-110	91-100	UNIVERSITÉ HASSAN II DE CASABLANCA	MA	-	-	-	18.4	-	-	74.2	-	56.9	-	-
101-110	81-90	UNIVERSITÉ MOHAMMED V DE RABAT	MA	-	-	-	44.9	-	-	-	-	48.6	34.2	-
101-110	101-110	UNIVERSITY OF ANBAR	IQ	-	-	39	-	26.6	-	93.9	-	29.9	-	-
111-120	111-120	AL HUSSEIN BIN TALAL UNIVERSITY	JO	-	-	-	33.7	25	-	100	-	25.4	-	-
111-120	91-100	AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	LB	-	45	21	-	-	5.6	-	32.2	-	-	-
111-120	91-100	BENI-SUEF UNIVERSITY	EG	-	-	-	18.7	76.7	-	26	-	59.8	25.1	-
111-120		MIDDLE EAST UNIVERSITY JORDAN	JO	-	-	-	-	-	35.9	100	77.3	-	49.5	-
111-120	91-100	MINIA UNIVERSITY	EG	-	-	19.3	-	43.9	-	40.7	-	51.9	30.4	-
111-120	111-120	NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	OM	-	-	37.8	-	-	95.4	-	56.8	-	-	-
111-120	81-90	SUDAN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	SD	-	-	29.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	46.9	-
111-120	91-100	UNIVERSITÉ DES SCIENCES ET DE LA TECHNOLOGIE HOUARI-BOUMEDIENE	DZ	-	-	23.9	50.6	-	-	-	-	35.8	37.9	-
111-120	81-90	UNIVERSITY OF KERBALA	IQ	-	-	19.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
111-120	101-110	UNIVERSITY OF PETRA	JO	-	-	-	-	-	8.7	92.4	81.7	-	26.8	-
121-130	121-130	AL ALBAYT UNIVERSITY	JO	-	-	-	31.8	28.3	-	100	26.9	27.2	23.7	-
121-130	121-130	AL BAHA UNIVERSITY	SA	-	-	38.5	-	24	69.7	19.9	-	29.3	-	-
121-130		ARAB AMERICAN UNIVERSITY	PS	-	-	-	-	-	18.1	51.1	99.9	-	-	-
121-130		DHOFAR UNIVERSITY	OM	-	-	-	71.8	-	100	-	11	43.3	-	-
121-130	111-120	JAZAN UNIVERSITY	SA	-	-	22.9	-	26.6	85.1	-	-	40.7	31.6	-
121-130	121-130	KAFRELSHEIKH UNIVERSITY	EG	-	-	-	16.9	86.9	-	-	-	58.2	31.7	-
121-130	121-130	MENOUFIA UNIVERSITY	EG	-	-	-	15.7	32.2	-	-	-	79.9	26.8	-
121-130	101-110	UNIVERSITÉ ABOU BEKR BELKAID TLEMCEN	DZ	-	-	-	20.8	-	-	100	-	21.8	43.7	-
121-130	111-120	UNIVERSITÉ DE TUNIS	TN	-	-	-	16.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
121-130		UNIVERSITÉ IBN TOFAIL	MA	-	-	-	49.7	-	-	-	7.5	43.1	87.3	-
131-160		AL AZHAR UNIVERSITY OF GAZA	PS	-	-	-	-	31.2	8	61.3	-	-	-	-
131-160		AL JOUF UNIVERSITY	SA	-	-	33.1	-	-	81.6	-	-	-	25	-
131-160		AL-YAMAMAH UNIVERSITY	SA	-	-	-	24.5	-	95.2	48.7	28.3	-	-	-
131-160		ARAB OPEN UNIVERSITY KUWAIT	KW	-	-	-	15	-	97.9	23.5	100	-	-	-
131-160		ASWAN UNIVERSITY	EG	-	-	-	-	34.6	-	-	6.5	34.4	26.5	-
131-160	121-130	DAR AL-HEKMA UNIVERSITY	SA	-	-	56.7	-	-	66.8	-	84	-	-	-
131-160		ISRA UNIVERSITY - JORDAN	JO	-	-	-	-	-	22.1	100	98	-	-	-
131-160		JERASH PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	JO	-	-	-	-	-	12.5	100	86.2	-	-	-
131-160		PALESTINE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY	PS	-	-	43	-	-	6.1	-	9.1	-	-	-
131-160		RAFIK HARIRI UNIVERSITY	LB	-	-	31.4	36.5	-	-	86.2	30.1	-	-	-
131-160	121-130	SALAHADDIN UNIVERSITY - ERBIL	IQ	-	-	56.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
131-160		SOHAG UNIVERSITY	EG	-	-	-	17.8	60.7	-	-	-	56.6	39.1	-
131-160	111-120	SOHAR UNIVERSITY	OM	-	-	-	26	49.7	94	-	-	-	-	-
131-160		TAFILA TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY	JO	-	-	29.2	23.5	-	-	97.3	-	-	-	-
131-160		TIKRIT UNIVERSITY	IQ	-	-	68.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
131-160		UNIVERSITÉ BADJI MOKHTAR DE ANNABA	DZ	-	-	24.2	24.9	-	-	-	-	48.7	-	-
131-160	111-120	UNIVERSITÉ DE BEJAIA	DZ	-	-	29	18.9	59	-	-	-	22	23.5	-
131-160		UNIVERSITÉ DE GABÈS	TN	-	-	-	62.1	61.2	-	-	-	21.7	-	-
131-160		UNIVERSITÉ DES SCIENCES ET DE LA TECHNOLOGIE D'ORAN MOHAMED BOUDIAF	DZ	-	-	65.8	17.8	-	-	-	-	25.3	-	-
131-160		UNIVERSITÉ MOHAMMED PREMIER UMP	MA	-	-	-	51	-	-	-	-	64.5	-	-
131-160	101-110	UNIVERSITÉ SIDI MOHAMED BEN ABDELLAH	MA	-	-	-	15.1	-	-	100	-	22.3	23.2	-
131-160	121-130	UNIVERSITY OF ALQADISIYAH	IQ	-	-	39.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
131-160		UNIVERSITY OF BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY	SA	-	-	31	-	-	74	-	62.3	-	-	-
131-160		UNIVERSITY OF DIYALA	IQ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	89.1	-
131-160		UNIVERSITY OF DUHOK	IQ	-	-	40.7	-	23.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
131-160		UNIVERSITY OF HAIL	SA	-	-	28.6	-	32.6	69.5	-	6.1	26.6	25.2	-
131-160		UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, SANA'A	YE	-	-	-	-	49.7	-	-	20.2	-	27.3	-
131-160	121-130	UNIVERSITY OF SULAIMANI	IQ	-	-	36.4	-	34.3	7.1	20.7	-	-	-	-
131-160		WORLD ISLAMIC SCIENCES AND EDUCATION UNIVERSITY	JO	-	-	26.1	-	-	10.4	100	76.7	-	-	-
131-160		ZARQA UNIVERSITY	JO	-	-	-	-	-	17.4	100	95.1	-	-	-

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Innovative Arab Region

By Anton John Crace,
Editor, QS Quacquarelli Symonds

The Arab region is in the middle of change. The past ten years have seen monumental and historic advances within the region, and education has played a central role.

Among the educational changes throughout the 2010s, overall positioning on the world stage has improved. Arab universities within the top 300 of the QS World University Rankings doubled, from 2017 ranking to 2021.

As changes in higher education have taken place, the Arab region has also seen significant economic shifts. Governments are placing an emphasis on building knowledge economies and market diversification, looking at their education systems' past successes as a foundation and using those systems to build into the future.

In preparing for the coming decade, regional leaders discussed opportunities at the first QS MAPLE Virtual Conference and Exhibition in September, under the

theme *Innovative Middle East and Africa: Higher education-led economic diversity and globalization*.

The untapped

Many countries within the Arab region are in the process of economic diversification, most notably through Vision 2030 development plans established in countries including Qatar, the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Each share goals to boost economic prosperity, with aims to reduce dependency on natural resources through investment and support of knowledge-based economies.

A key component of these plans is education, which, according to the World Bank's 2018 E*xpectations and Aspirations: A New Framework for Education in the Middle East and North Africa*, has "a large untapped potential to contribute to human capital, well-being, and wealth".

The report, following the World Bank's *Human Capital Index*, also notes the Middle East and Africa has the lowest ratio of human capital to total wealth, despite conversely having a significantly higher investment in education and higher levels of education attainment.

The reasons for this disparity are complicated, but the World Bank lists them broadly as four interconnected tensions between credentials and skills, discipline and inquiry, control and autonomy, and tradition and modernity.

We've taken each step in success to the next level

Among its recommendations to combat these tensions, the report highlights growing collaborative partnerships and meaningfully implementing technology.

"Technology presents a unique opportunity to help to deliver high-quality education in a more efficient and effective manner," the report notes.

Diversification and outreach

The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education (AGFE) in the UAE has been working within this cross-section of tensions since its foundation in 2015 and has seen significant success but providing scholarships and opportunities for underserviced, high achieving students as well as through partnering with others to increase access to education.

One of the largest philanthropic organizations in the Arab region, its goals include preparing 50,000 Emirati youth for higher education and work and elevating the livelihoods of a further 150,000 Arab youth by 2025. Its third goal aims to leverage its knowledge and technology partnerships to promote lifelong learning.

"The reality is we didn't do any of this alone," explains Chief Executive Dr Sonia Ben Jafaar on the foundation's achievements.

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

BSc. of Pharmaceutical Sciences & Pharmaceutical Industries

BSc. of Oral & Dental Medicine

BSc. of Commerce & Business Administration

BSc. of Economics & Political Science

BSc. of Computers & Information Technology

BSc. of Engineering & Technology

POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMS

- MSc. Operative Dentistry
- MSc. Endodontics
- MSc. Biological Dental Materials
- MSc. Fixed Prosthodontics
- MSc. Prosthodontics
- MSc. Oral Maxillofacial Surgery
- MSc. Orthodontics
- MSc. Pedodontics
- MSc. Public Health & Preventive Dentistry

- MSc. Pharmaceutics & Pharmaceutical Technology
- MSc. Medicinal Chemistry
- MSc. Pharmaceutical Analytical Chemistry

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Among those achievements, AGFE has grown from 50 students graduating a micro-master's program in partnership with MIT, to 1,200 students undertaking blended introductory courses.

Along the way, AGFE has also co-created training for faculty and staff and most recently helped form a consortium in the region, while continuously reflecting back on its achievements to improve student outcomes.

"Many of the MENA states are making great strides towards addressing key economic, societal, and development challenges that deeply impact the Arab workforce and communities."

"We've taken each step in success to the next level," says Dr Ben Jafaar.

"We started out slow, each time we learn, we move to a greater reach with higher aspirations and... we rely heavily on the insights of our partners."

Increasing the number of options for students to undertake online education, however, is not the only action required to achieve the foundation's goals of improving those learning outcomes and building lifelong learning, she tells QS.

"Online learning done well takes purposeful effort, just like face-to-face learning," she says, adding once an online learning opportunity is created, ensuring students can access it still remains "a complex endeavor".

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"What this [means], in term of an example, would be purchasing technology and broadband access and delivering it to areas that were actually under lockdown [due to COVID-19] at the time with special precautions and permissions from local authorities," she says.

Like the recommendations of the World Bank, AGFE's work in online education and educational partnerships predate the COVID-19 pandemic, but bringing together a team of highly-educated professionals in their fields who are eager to learn from each other has created a culture of ongoing improvement and adaptability, notes Dr Ben Jafaar.

"What that allowed us to do is to react quickly and adapt to our programming and with our partnerships," she says.

The result of their efforts saw students graduate from the Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair school of Advanced Computing in May, despite not being able to take in-person classes.

Continuing progress

"Many of the MENA states are making great strides towards addressing key economic, societal, and development challenges," observes Haifa Al Kaylani, Founder and Chairman of the Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF).

"Many of them are actually on target to achieving key goals by 2030."

Established in 2001 in London, AIWF shares AGFE's vision of improving the quality of life and economic output of the Arab world through educating young people and connecting businesswomen throughout the region. Over its two-decade history, its mission of "Building Bridges, Building Business" has seen it accumulate over 1,500 associations, individuals, corporations and partnerships from 45 countries.

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Al Kaylani is explicit in the reasons behind why she believes diversifying the Arab workforce will lead to greater returns on investment.

“Estimates include that the MENA region would benefit from a 50 percent boost in economic output if women were to participate in the workforce to the same extent as men,” she says, adding that growth has the potential to be even more impactful due to the region’s significantly higher levels of investment in infrastructure and education.

“Education is about creating a hub of knowledge and a hub of purpose while recognizing the key role that technology plays. The MENA needs further to drive by fully harnessing education and technology,” she says.

“[But] a second key factor in preparing the region is gender equality, and we are witnessing in MENA countries that the gender equality agenda towards Vision 2030 is not only progressing but actually thriving.”

To aid the goal of gender diversity in the region, AIWF also launched the Young Arab Women Leaders initiative with PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2011 to equip young women with the skills to start, grow and lead their own successful businesses.

“Many of these young women now are in STEM subjects and STEM professions,” says Al Kaylani.

The current stoppages caused by the COVID-19 pandemic should also be viewed as an opportunity to reflect upon the coming decade according to Al Kaylani, who notes it is an “optimum time… to invest in an enabling environment for economic growth”.

“What we need now is sustained focus on powering economic growth through education, gender diversity, and decent work, by engaging in collaboration, in dialogue, and cohesive multi-stakeholder data-driven implementation.

“Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, we have in 2020 an opportunity to collectively commit our efforts towards creating a thriving, powerful region economy with a vibrant, inclusive society, above all with equality for opportunity for all.”

Traditionally modern

Creating a world-class higher education system that supports the economic aspirations of the Arab region requires careful consideration, says Hugh Martin, Registrar and Chief Administrative Officer of the British University in Dubai, UAE.

Installing WEIRD principles - Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich Democracies - into the Middle East, says Martin, “doesn’t help produce any amount of success, let alone economic success”.

Martin, who joined the UAE’s British University in Dubai after a wealth of experience in higher education in the UK and US, says the region will meet its goals through considering its own strengths and needs.

"The success of industries and universities in the Middle East and the UAE, particularly, will be based on Emarati in the UAE, Saudis in Saudi, Omanis in Oman and so on, beginning to run... [and] develop their own universities," he says.

Collaboration within the region and outside of it must adhere to a guiding principle of equitable partnership, he tells QS.

"It's no good people like me just coming into this region, dropping in with a set of skills, and then disappearing again."

Vice President for Academic Affairs at UAE's American University in the Emirates, Professor Abhilasha Singh, further adds that as well as bringing talent into region, universities should also be boosting their collaborative output with others.

Increasing the number of options for students to undertake online education, however, is not the only action required.

"There is a strong need to communicate the values [of research partnerships] to the greater world," she says, pointing to the 2020 Rankings' findings that the region's universities lag behind others in academic reputation.

"These things have been emphasized by the National Higher Education Excellence Framework in the UAE, where a percentage of collaborative publications, partnerships and especially the resulting research partnerships with Top 200 universities is one of the indicators now. The region understands the leading and the lagging indicators."

While these are some of the greatest growth prospects, Professor Singh counters speculation the region is starting entirely from scratch, saying she believes it is already socially, economically, and technologically advanced, with an appreciation and openness to knowledge creation and dissemination.

Instead, she says, as collaboration becomes more sophisticated, the focus of universities should be to refine their efforts towards gathering and contributing to global best practice in higher education, while remaining relevant to a localized environment.

AIWF's Al Kaylani agrees, pointing to the many advancements seen within the Arab region over the past decade and similarly encourages students, educators and business to renew their efforts over the coming decade.

"We have achieved a lot but the journey continues. There's a lot more to do," she tells QS.

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Post-lockdown

By Martin Ince,
Writer and Journalist

Nobody knows exactly how higher education will be changed when the world gets going after the COVID-19 pandemic. But Nick Petford has a clear idea of how his own routine will alter.

As Vice Chancellor of the University of Northampton (UN) in the UK, he is accustomed to a tough daily commute into the office. When the English lockdown ends, however, he says he plans to make that journey just twice a week, running the institution mostly from his home office.

"When we get to a period of economic recovery, international exposure will still be valuable."

There are much deeper and wider effects to the global COVID-19 lockdown. The sudden, worldwide spread of the virus owed much to the growing availability of international travel, and its effect on lengthy supply chains, with deep roots in China, has drawn attention to the fragility of the globalized world.

UN's student body is 12 percent international, mainly from India, China and other Asian nations.

"Our international applicant numbers this year were the highest ever," says Petford.

"We will find out soon how many of those turn into a cash deposit. That is the real proof that the student will come. At the moment we are preparing for a cut in the number of overseas students we receive."

Hector Escobar sees this issue from the perspective of a Chilean student finishing an International MBA at emlyon business school in France.

"Business relationships could [become] more remote, so it is very important to have professionals who understand the context of different countries and cultures, who have a high capacity to adapt to change, and who are international leaders," he says.

On the other side of the world Cheryl de la Rey, Vice-Chancellor of Canterbury University in New Zealand, is confident recruiters will continue to value international awareness as a positive attribute among graduates.

"At a time of high unemployment, recruiters may decide to favor local applicants," de la Rey tells QS.

"But when we get to a period of economic recovery, international exposure will still be valuable. Part of the problem to solve [is] visa issues for international [applicants]."

In any case, she adds, the pandemic has proved yet again the need for thought and action on a global scale.

"It started in one small part of the world and spread at an amazing and destructive pace. The need for an international approach to this sort of issue will grow," she says, suggesting there will be a vital and continuing role for globally-aware individuals.

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Hou Yung-Chi, Chief Executive of Taiwan higher education quality body HEEACT and Associate Dean of Education at NCCU University in Taipei, also expects the negative effects of the pandemic on international higher education to continue for a few years at most.

"Next year, universities will be trying to complete courses at a time when students are reluctant to travel. A year later, things may well be easier for students and universities, especially if a vaccine has been developed against the virus."

Will students shun risk?

At the same time, experts say the aftermath of the pandemic is bound to cause potential international students to think about risk in a new way. While overseas study is one of the safer life choices for young people, COVID-19's rapid spread may influence the thinking of some applicants.

Ongoing analysis within QS' coronavirus pulse survey also shows prospective international students are paying closer attention to health and safety.

"There will be caution among students who saw how international travel was stopped, and prevented them from getting home," de la Rey says.

She adds some nations, including her adopted home of New Zealand, will come out of COVID-19 with their reputations enhanced.

"New Zealand's reaction to the pandemic makes it an even more attractive place for international higher education, and this is an opportunity," she says.

QS' pulse survey supports has similarly found a positive brand and student decision-making impact in countries that have responded to the coronavirus, a point Escobar confirms.

"When I decided to come to France, I considered ... the country's safety and health system," he explains.

"Living and studying abroad has always entailed risks, and I think these are more evident today than ever before. But as Europe continues to recover, it will encourage more students to take this option."

How far for distance learning?

A plethora of institutions have already announced plans to deliver courses remotely, in part or completely.

The idea that high-quality education calls for human contact is a fundamental one for many students as well as for their professors, however, and from Escobar's perspective, enthusiasm for distance learning is building.

"There might be increased interest in distance education. There are schools that are adapting fast to this new methodology," he notes.

"However, [success] will depend on schools being able to offer a differentiated proposal that adds value to candidates, and above all, that the graduates start to succeed after completing their studies."

In Canterbury, too, de la Rey sats digital transformation of universities requires careful and ongoing consideration. She says distance learning "goes with the grain" of courses that are essentially about professional development.

But for a full degree course, "students would miss campus interaction", and universities should consider how best to replicate that experience. The upshot is likely to be that teaching will become "more flexible", blending digital and presence methods.

Technology improves all the time, though, and de la Rey points out, "Virtual reality and immersive technologies have reached a point where this barrier is not insurmountable."

Canterbury students already use virtual labs. Taken together, these developments point to a future block model in which most of a degree course is taken remotely, calling for only a limited amount of time on campus.

UN teaches many practical subjects that might seem to require presence teaching, but Petford says technology now allows nurses to learn diagnosis on screen. The same goes for paramedics, podiatrists, midwives and other medical professionals.

"As the technology has gone beyond PowerPoint, it has become possible to use immersive approaches to give students all the key data and decision points. After all, the same approach already works when pilots learn to fly on a simulator," he says.

Petford points out distance learning also now prepares students with digital tools and technologies that "are the future of the workplace".

Digital quality

"I expect individual subject choices to become more important to students and employers, and the choice of institution less so," Hou says.

De la Rey adds existing subjects may push further significant change to the configuration of subjejcts and boost multi-disciplinarianism over the next few years.

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"We are keen on knowledge areas rather than on disciplines. For example, we might combine public health and human behavior [into a new knowledge area]," she says.

Petford, also sees student expectations changing fast, and says, "There might be demand for a course that puts economics and epidemiology alongside one another".

"Universities... now have a great opportunity to be creative," he says.

"We might have five or six entry points in a year instead of one or two. And there will be more emphasis on the civic role of universities."

This new set of priorities for students also impacts organizations which exist to inform students, such as QS. As Hou sees it, rankings offer students a means to quickly screen options.

Subject rankings will grow in importance over time as subject choice becomes a bigger consideration, she continues.

Hou also sees opportunities for quality assurance agencies such as hers.

"Distance learning will call for new teaching methods," she says.

At the moment, only some quality assurance agencies assess distance learning programs.

"They will need to respond to new modes of learning," says Hou.

"That will mean thinking of new indicators of quality."

While students will want reassurance about course quality, universities and graduate recruiters will want to know what they are learning in a world where big set piece exams are less relevant than in the past.

De la Rey expects open-book assessment to become more important in the new world and thinks future examinations will focus on engagement and understanding, not on specific granular facts. She agrees students will demand more information on the courses they are considering, an area which corresponds with findings of the *ISS*.

It will be especially important, she says, to find more ways to guarantee the quality of teaching, to assess how different forms of delivery work out in practice, and to be sensitive to changing student expectations of teaching.

In Petford's view, the next step may well be "a period of global reflection in which universities think how they work with students at all levels". New forms of teaching will be part of the picture, but there will also need to be a new spirit of flexibility in all the ways universities and their students interact.

Higher education in a post-COVID-19 world is still being shaped, but institutions find themselves in the drivers seat to usher in momumental change.

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